

DESIGN FEATURE OF THE MOMENT

metal kitchens

BEYOND WORKTOPS AND APPLIANCES, COOL-TONED METALS HAVE BECOME A DESIGNER-APPROVED CHOICE FOR EVERY INCH OF SLEEK COOKING SPACES

FEATURE Keith Flanagan



As far as unusual kitchen materials go, metal doesn't exactly make the cut – cooking spaces have long embraced shiny and easy-to-clean materials (most notably stainless steel). But today's designers are flexing cool-toned metal a touch further, applying it across more architectural features, incorporating even more sophisticated finishes and highlighting its ability to amplify light.

There are practical reasons for why metals work well in kitchens: they can take the heat, literally, and are easy to clean. While scratches and patina are part of their charm, they can achieve striking clean lines, and a growing interest in this material goes beyond durability.

'In the past, they had this futuristic, almost sci-fi look, but today manufacturers have introduced new surface finishes and combined them with warmer materials, giving them a more modern, inviting feel,' says Andrea Harbeck, founder of Germany's .PEAM, who used stainless steel in a recent kitchen project.

'Today, steel is detailed in a more architectural manner, offering a broader range of application options and enabling it to serve multiple functions,' notes Eva-Marie Prineas, principal of Sydney's Studio Prineas, who recently chose steel as a sleek trim for kitchen cabinetry and even an edgy kitchen doorway.

And while cool metallics are having a moment well beyond the kitchen, it seems no area in the cooking space is off-limits for steely accents. Whether to bring a streak of minimalism or a ray of light into the heart of the home, here are a few ways metals are upping the ante in home kitchens. ➤

1 NEW HORIZONS

Metal makes sense on high-touch surfaces in modern kitchens. But some designers are broadening the scope, applying it across architectural features that are beyond reach. In this layered kitchen, worktops are just the beginning: architects outlined terracotta-toned cabinetry with a metallic border, and stainless steel frames a doorway nearby. 'We carried the stainless steel surface through to line the portal between kitchen and living, creating a sense of depth while reflecting and bouncing natural light throughout the apartment,' says Eva-Marie Prineas, principal of Australia's Studio Prineas.

PROJECT BY Studio Prineas

2 SHINE BRIGHT

One brilliant reason to use metallics? Especially if you're renovating a small kitchen where every square foot counts, materials like stainless steel can help maximise light. So was the case in this galley kitchen, where owners opted

to install a lustrous design by Copenhagen's Reform. 'Reflect is our newest launch of metal kitchens, and because of the shiny stainless steel the light is reflected (hint, name of the kitchen), which makes it very beautiful,' says Michael Andersen, the company's co-founder and CSO.

PROJECT BY Reform

3 BRUSH UP

Mixing up the sometimes sterile look of metal sheets, many designers are opting for 'brushed' surfaces that are slightly more soothing. 'Brushed finishes are really forgiving and sealing them in this way allows for an even finish without a lot of marks from olive-oil soaked fingerprints,' says Loren Daye of New York's design studio Love is Enough. 'A brushed finish also has a dusty, ghostly quality to it that translates as "soft" to me and I believe it manifests beautifully in many metals - aluminium, steel, brass, copper. Cold to the touch but warm to the eye!'

PROJECT BY Love is Enough





COOL TOUCH

A little metal can go a long way, and some designers opt for a one-two-punch: a stainless steel worktop and splashback. In the Milan apartment above, the steely combo slices through cabinetry like a cool streak of minimalism. 'Architecturally speaking, we needed a reflecting material to interrupt the light blue monolith,' says Lucrezia Calvi, founder of interior architecture firm LCatelier. The contrasting steel, according to Lucrezia, helps emphasise the geometry and height of the cabinetry - all while creating a sterile counter for cooking.

PROJECT BY LCatelier

PHOTOGRAPH BEPPE BRANCATO. STYLING BY ALESSANDRA CHIARELLI



PHOTOGRAPH DAN PRESTON

HEADS UP

Metal is practical for kitchen surfaces thanks to its durability. But in the apartment above, designers chose one particular metallic accent for its beauty: a mirrored aluminium system shines across the ceiling. It's an aesthetic choice that happens to almost double the perception of space while bouncing natural light throughout the home. 'Although conventionally reserved for commercial spaces, we recognised its potential within this apartment,' notes Rodney Eggleston, director and principal architect of Melbourne's March Studio.

PROJECT BY March Studio ➤



LIGHT DUTY

Steel affords a certain amount of worthy visual weight. And while the kitchen above centres on a four-metre steel counter, there's a designer-approved way to pull off a similar look with less. 'A significantly more cost-effective option is front cladding with stainless steel foils,' says Andrea Harbeck, founder of Germany's .PEAM, noting that foils are often only a few millimetres thick and are easily applied to cabinet doors. 'The advantage is that they are lighter in weight and give a more airy appearance.'

PROJECT BY .PEAM

PHOTOGRAPH MAXIMILIAN BRIDTS