



# Kitchens

*They are one of the most expensive buying decisions we make in the home. Here, four experts share their tips on getting it right...*



## Niki Schäfer

Interior Designer and founder of the Henley House & Garden Show  
[nikischaferinteriordesign.co.uk](http://nikischaferinteriordesign.co.uk)

'Finding the right person to work with is the first stage. This needn't be a professional to start with, but you need to talk through exactly how you work in the kitchen. It's important to be clear what has annoyed you with the old space and where improvements are required.'

'Getting your personal working routine figured out is the first and most fundamental step'

Think through all your meals; the three dailies but also the bigger occasions, Christmas lunch or a dinner party, for example. The idea is to not have to cross the room excessively and have everything to hand. Of course, not everything

will be, and there has to be a certain amount of "zoning" as a result. Do you want the sink and the dishwasher together, for example? Or do you prefer the dishwasher near all the storage space? Getting your personal working routine figured out is the first and most fundamental step, then you can talk to a designer properly.'



## Helen Parker

Creative Director at DeVOL  
[devolkitchens.co.uk](http://devolkitchens.co.uk)

'Think about the style of your property and try to incorporate this into your choice of kitchen supplier and its design. This doesn't mean if it's a modern house you should have a modern kitchen, because mixing old and new works, but be sympathetic to your house and

its style. I love old houses with incredibly simple modern kitchens; I also love stark, simple buildings with a few select, even ornate, vintage pieces. Unfortunately, most people live in more normal properties and need the usual plethora of items in their kitchen, but they should still think about the age of their property and the proportions of the room. Some styles look great in a magazine, but just don't translate well into a small family kitchen, which needs to work hard and look good for years to come. So be prepared to sacrifice a little along the way, whether on storage or additional appliances, to get a cohesive kitchen space that is a pleasure to be in.'

## Hannah Cork

Interior Designer whose portfolio includes George and Amal Clooney's Sonning property  
[hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk](http://hannahcorkinteriordesign.co.uk)

'When it comes to colour, I would always anchor a strong scheme around an existing fixed piece, for example, a coloured range oven or coloured pendant lights. Then I suggest using this colour again as an accent, in splashback tiles or metal stools, to unite a considered room.'

If you have interesting bowls, jugs and vases with strong form, texture or colour, don't hide them away! Avoid a room of cupboard doors and design a kitchen with open shelving and storage to make your collected pieces a feature. In terms of materials, I love mixing raw materials for an edgy yet functional kitchen. Wood, concrete, brick and steel are a great combination!'



## Susie Rumbold

President of the British Institute of Interior Design  
[biid.org.uk](http://biid.org.uk)

'If you wish to paint your kitchen, paler colours are generally easier to live with and maintain. In a hardworking family kitchen, any chips or scratches in the paintwork will be more obvious on dark colours. In a contemporary open-plan living/kitchen/dining space,

it looks great to paint all the walls in one colour. You can then zone the areas for food preparation, dining and relaxing through the arrangement of the furniture, placement of rugs, and the use of bold art. If you do decide to introduce more than one colour, make sure it works to reinforce the zoning.'