



this page: Miele



The reign of the trophy kitchen is virtually over in the current cash-strapped economy. The dream kitchens of today aren't just about the sexiest six-burner hob, or the most exotic countertop materials. Cooking has returned to centre stage and remodelling budgets have indeed sobered with more thought surely required prior to spending. Yet, while kitchens may have a smaller footprint, they're smarter; glass tiles, quartz counters and dish drawers being examples that add sparkle and practicality.

Colin Lee of **Bulthaup** discusses practicality vs. show: 'There is the Japanese aesthetic concept of Wabi-sabi, which says that beauty lies in imperfection. Form that follows function alone is not enough. The kitchen is the central area in most homes, it's the communication hub of the family. In Milan, at the installation in Durini, we showed the kitchen as an ensemble of modular sculptural islands. This disseminates the traditional image: from one side one sees a worktop, unexpectedly on the other there's a seating possibility. Such versatility is key, a kitchen should be a place without boundaries that represents the soul of the home.' ▷



left: Bulthaup

below: Whirlpool



Multifunctional spaces are key in the current South African home, how best to make the kitchen an integral element?

Colin Lee: ‘A cutting-edge kitchen should reflect people’s individual personalities, they can be their own masters within this space yet feel at ease and able to communicate with family and friends. It’s an interior of creativity tailored to individual lifestyles. And it should be adaptable, able to grow with its environment, where people can define functions according to their needs and redefine them every day if they need to. Innovations – like the Bulthaup internal drawer system, functional boxes and pocket doors – allow for the creation of this unique space in which multifunction is definitely a key factor.’

‘Indeed, the kitchen has become the key multifunctional hub of the home and most are designed on the open-plan concept where the kitchen space opens into the dining, living and other areas’, says **Wendy Grater** of **Alpine**

German Kitchens / Poggenpohl. ‘In smaller homes, the open-plan concept makes most sense in maximising limited space while creating an expansive impression. In practice, the kitchen needs to play a number of roles – it should be practical from a cooking and storage point of view; it should also meet particular family requirements such as being a casual and formal dining area and home technology centre. It may incorporate a small desk that’s easily accessible for a laptop and /or an island unit with seating. The kitchen can provide an informal dining space while accessing a more formal dining area. Importantly, it needs to fit in aesthetically with the interior architecture.’

Lisa Buck of local high-end designer/manufacturers **Slavin & Company** summarises: ‘The more kitchens express themselves as the core of the home, the more the demand for multifunctional spaces increases. Activities beyond cooking – such as recreational or homework areas, casual seating for entertaining etc, now need to be identified in a far more disciplined manner.’ ▷