

**'It is important to be sure of the look you are going for.'**

maximiseyoursale

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## GUIDE TO A **bespoke kitchen**

By Odile Kipling of  
So Kipling

**Kitchens have become the heart of the home and great care should be taken when considering buying a new one. A kitchen has to fit your lifestyle and reflect your personality. If you have chosen to go for a bespoke kitchen, it can take several weeks or months between the initial design and fitting and careful consideration will save you money and time. Here is some helpful advice about how to start planning your ideal 'bespoke' kitchen space.**

**F**irstly, collect kitchen magazines, brochures, pictures... then choose one particular style you like or be daring and combine several...it is important to be sure of the look you are going for.

Take a look at your present kitchen; decide what works well for you and what doesn't. Make a list of all the drawbacks and determine where and how you could improve on functionality. For example, if you are a keen cook and enjoy baking, deeper work surfaces may be very useful. If you are taller than average, higher base cabinets will prevent backache when washing up and chopping veg and if you are having hip or knee problems, drawers and sliding shelves will be most appropriate. If you are stretched for space, but would love a walk-in larder cupboard, consider a fitted or free-standing larder with shelves on the doors.

Go through all your pots and pans, baking trays, chopping boards, plates, vases as well as tins, boxes and bottles you will need to store. Determine which items you use most and where you would like them in your new kitchen. Note the dimensions of the tallest pots, vases, tins, cereal boxes and bottles to ensure that adequate storage space is planned for. If you are thinking of buying new plates, check their size as some new designs don't fit in traditionally sized wall cabinets.

Do you recycle or would you like to recycle? If so work out how many bins you would need and where you would like them to be...whether concealed within a unit or free-standing.

You also need to decide what kind of appliances you are going to have and whether you would rather go for style, practicality or price? Remember that the exterior size of the appliance does not necessarily determine the size of the inside. Some 700mm cookers/ranges have a greater capacity than some 900mm cookers/ranges. This also applies to fridge-freezers, dishwashers and microwave ovens. And remember, if you are choosing to use different makes, make sure to get similar styles and colours which not only blend in with one another, but are also fitting with the style of your kitchen.

Work surfaces are also very important to the overall look and feel of the final design and need studying carefully as quality and price varies enormously.

Now that your basic needs have been determined, you can decide on the individual details that would suit you. For example an integrated coffee machine or scales, a fold-down TV/ radio or computer, a folding ironing board, a pull-out work-

surface, an island unit with extra storage space, simply a place to socialise or even a place for your friend to enjoy a cup of tea or a cocktail while you are giving the finishing touches to the supper or canapés.

Armed with all your information, talk to your kitchen designer and ask him or her to design a kitchen that fits your lifestyle, both aesthetically and ergonomically. You should receive a very detailed quote specifying the price for all the units, accessories, and work surfaces and, importantly, the price for fitting and extra work such as plumbing, electricity, etc. should you choose not to use your own electrician, plumber or builder.

And don't forget a truly bespoke cabinet-maker or kitchen manufacturer will be delighted to change and improve the design of your kitchen as you think of more practical or helpful details as time passes. She or he will help you turn your kitchen into a something unique, made just for you.

**Odile Kipling Design and cabinet-maker  
Director of So Kipling, quality bespoke  
kitchens and furniture.**

Tel. 01872 862 059

