

# style meets substance

Beneath this kitchen's chic exterior lie 10 fabulous ideas that balance practicality with sophistication

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**1 IDEA TO STEAL...  
CONTRASTING COLOURS**  
It can be tricky to choose the right white without the room looking cold and clinical. "The key to using white without it looking stark is to select a warm white such as Dulux's Natural White," advises Fiona Austin, the interior designer behind this kitchen's sleek makeover. Navlam Sandblasted timber veneer in Arcadian Oak from New Age Veneers (from \$105.80/sqm) was used around the cooking zones and island bench to break up the white scheme. "Dark colours work well for island bench front panels, hiding scuff marks and giving the kitchen definition," she says.

**2 IDEA TO STEAL...  
MULTIFUNCTIONAL LIGHTING**

The secret to luminous light is the successful combination of task lighting and mood lighting. "Bright light should always be concentrated above the sink and preparation space," says Fiona. "You don't want shadows cast over the chopping board when you're wielding a sharp knife!" A dimmer switch is an inexpensive way to accommodate bright task lighting while you're cooking and soft and intimate lighting for informal family meal times. Hanging above the island bench, these Flos 'Romeo Moon' pendant lights by Philippe Starck, available from Euroluce, create a stunning focal point and tie in with the kitchen's modern look. Fiona purposely avoided a bulkhead above the window splashback to give the cupboards the illusion of 'floating' on the wall.

**3 IDEA TO STEAL...  
EMBRACE NATURAL LIGHT**

It's tempting to splash out on a splashback, but this clever design marries form and function with a window wall instead. "We cut an opening into the wall, which required a lintel [horizontal support] to hold it up," explains Fiona. "Because the window is behind the cooktop, we chose an aluminum frame rather than a combustible material like timber." Stone was run into the window and overhead cupboards hung low, rendering the frame invisible. The result is well worth the effort - natural light floods this space and opens up the room without compromising on valuable wall space.

**4 IDEA TO STEAL...  
SERIOUSLY SLEEK STONE**

The benchtop may have the look of marble but its a clever masquerade - it's actually a luxe-look, sturdy reconstituted stone. "We chose Jaipur in Vanilla (\$315/sqm) from Stone Italiana as it has a beautifully textured finish and a softly undulating surface," says Fiona. Reconstituted stone is hardwearing and also boasts the aesthetic qualities of a natural stone like marble or granite. >

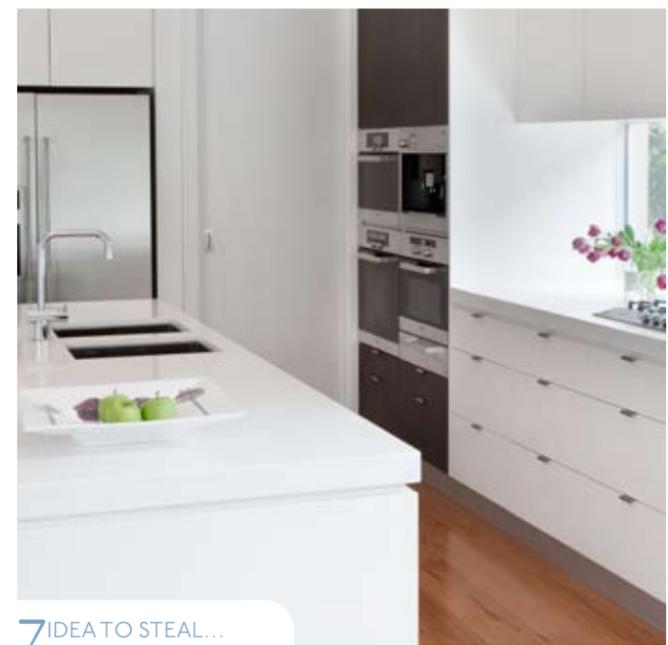
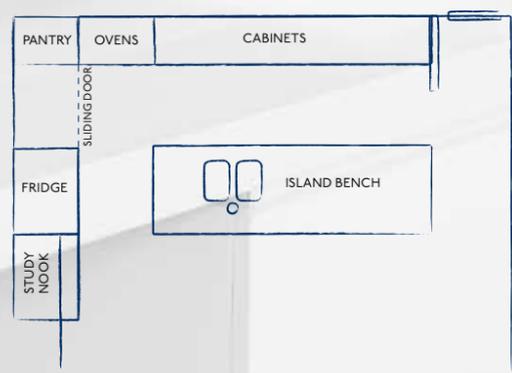


**6 IDEA TO STEAL...  
HARD-WORKING APPLIANCES**

A customised cooking zone increases productivity in this high-traffic kitchen, which houses two conventional ovens, a steam oven and a coffee machine. "Three ovens may seem a little excessive, but once people see the steam oven in action, they're hooked," says interior designer Fiona. Steaming is a super-fast way of cooking and helps food retain vitamins, nutrients and flavour. To achieve continuity, the appliances were all chosen from the same Miele range. "Their range is modular, which allowed us to include a warming drawer underneath the oven, lining up all the appliances perfectly," explains Fiona. The built-in coffee machine cleverly blends in with the other appliances, freeing up precious bench space.

**5 IDEA TO STEAL...  
PERSONALISED SPACE**

Smart cooks know that a 'one size fits all' kitchen design isn't always the answer. The key to a successful space is to personalise the room so that it works with the way you live. This kitchen boasts four customised zones: cooking (ovens and cooktop), storage (pantry and fridge), food preparation (island bench) and organisation (study nook). "The ovens are grouped together at an ergonomically comfortable height, rather than being underbench," says Fiona. The kitchen's clever design means the family can cook together harmoniously, so these days the only disagreements are over what's on the menu.



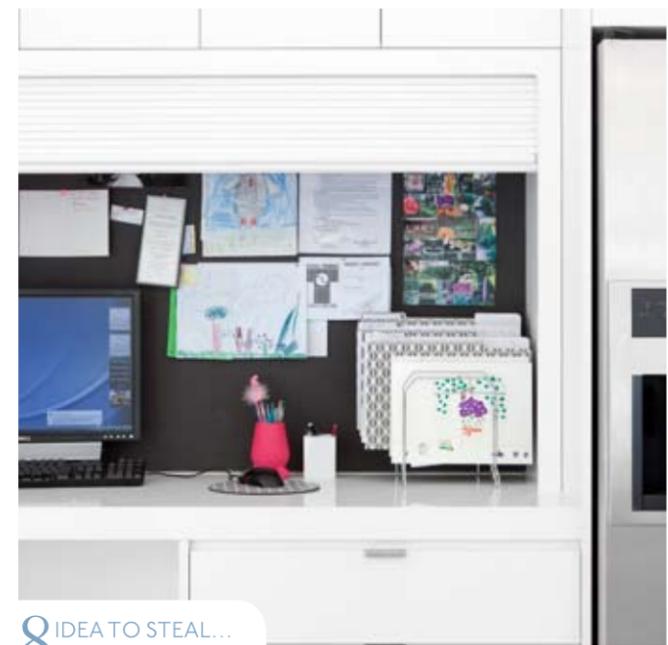
**7 IDEA TO STEAL...  
HIDDEN EXTRAS**

Look closely and you'll see stainless-steel kickboards installed around the cabinetry and island bench – not only are they practical and easy to clean, they also reflect the timber floors, allowing the cupboards to 'float'. "They're made with a laminate backing, which protects the steel from denting as stainless steel alone is quite soft," says Fiona. Another 'blink and you'll miss it' feature is the double underslung sink, which keeps the island bench looking super sleek.



**9 IDEA TO STEAL...  
INTEGRATED DINING**

If the kitchen is the heart of the home, the island bench is surely the heart of the kitchen. An incorporated dining space paves the way for increased family time – the children have a place to eat their breakfast and do their homework – and it provides the perfect place for guests to perch and chat to the cook. "It really socialises the kitchen," says Fiona. "It encourages interaction from both sides." The bold block of dark veneer helps to transform the island into a fabulous feature, and luxe lights induce the warm atmosphere of a living space rather than that of a practical workspace.



**8 IDEA TO STEAL...  
STUDY SPACE**

"A study nook is essential for a family kitchen," says Fiona. "It provides a dedicated space for all those items that would otherwise accumulate on the island bench." A pinboard attached to the wall allows notices, invitations and art to be clearly displayed – there's also plenty of room for a phone and computer, plus space for a stool to be stored under the bench when not in use. A shutter roller door, painted the same colour as the kitchen cupboards, neatly conceals any clutter.



**10 IDEA TO STEAL...  
PERFECTLY PLACED PANTRY**

Cunningly concealed, the pantry functions as both a storage room and preparation area. Along with open shelving to store essential ingredients and those all-important chocolate biscuits is a wall-to-wall shelf, boasting plenty of power points so that appliances can be easily plugged in. Best of all, messy cords are no longer on display for the world to see. "Open shelving at a shallow depth above the bench allows you to see all pantry items at a glance," explains Fiona, "and the pantry's sliding door means that any mess can be instantly concealed."