

silver lining

Once an overly bright and bland space, this sophisticated kitchen has been reinvented with sleek surfaces, a moody colour palette and superb functionality

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before



There's quite the colour revolution going on in the kitchens of Australia and leading the style charge is this sleek grey kitchen, the epitome of functional elegance. Welcoming, warm and supremely sturdy, this kitchen has become a haven for its owner, interior designer Fiona Austin. Employing a series of expert tricks learned over many a renovation, Fiona coaxed out the room's personality from behind a bland facade, creating a space that invites social interaction and family get-togethers.



GREY MATTER

Flooded with light, this kitchen was quite literally a dazzling space. "The room is really bright because we've got north-facing windows," says Fiona. With too much light bouncing around the room, the bright white colour palette created an uncomfortable and unworkable space (opposite, inset). Fiona decided to cast off tradition, opting for a warm grey scheme. Its soothing, nurturing look withstands the rigours of daily family life. "My last kitchen was white and always looked grubby – I have teenage boys – so I swore the next kitchen would be dark grey," she explains.

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STAY IN STYLE

The secret to the kitchen's renovation success is the subtle referencing of the home's mid-century heritage. The white room had been free of personality; now, its origins are paid homage by the 1960s-style parquet floor (finished in Whittle Waxes' Treatex Traditional wax), a PH5 pendant light by Poul Henningsen and Series 7 chairs by Arne Jacobsen from Corporate Culture.

CONFIGURATION

To keep costs down, Fiona elected to maintain the room's original layout, which was happily the best fit for the room. "I tried every configuration I could think of but it always came down to the fact that we had to be able to walk through the kitchen to the laundry and powder room at the end of the house," she explains. Fiona also wanted to work within the existing double brick walls – so in the end, the best solution was already in place.



COOKING ZONE

"I can't live without a stainless-steel workbench – it's the only material you can put really hot things on and it won't wear out or date," says Fiona of her gleaming bench and integrated sink. Cleverly wrapped up 200mm behind the cooktop, the benchtop is a breeze to wipe down. The splashback is fashioned from salvaged floor tiles, which saved money and worked with the colour palette. >



before

Savings-savvy LAMINEX LAMINATE IN FOSSIL WAS USED ON THE CUPBOARDS, GIVING THE KITCHEN ITS SLEEK AND SOPHISTICATED FEEL

LESSONS LEARNED

In hindsight, Fiona acknowledges that she would change a few minor details. "I definitely would use soft-close mechanisms on the drawers!" Fiona says with a laugh. "I also wish we had kept our single door fridge with the freezer below. I purchased a double-door fridge thinking that with two boys, we would have more space, but the double-door fridge takes up more floor space and has less capacity!" Still, it's a small price to pay for a slick and streamlined kitchen which will stand the test of time.



SITTING PRETTY

By widening the benchtops, including the width of the breakfast bar, Fiona has enhanced the kitchen's functionality. The 'Smarti' stools from Gordon Mather Industries tuck neatly underneath the breakfast bar, creating a user-friendly space without compromising the budget. The stone benchtop in Pietra from Stone Italiana complements the room's colour scheme.

MORE IN STORE

The cumbersome cabinetry was swiftly replaced by streamlined cupboards with the added luxury of a servery window – Fiona's husband's favourite detail. "It's an ideal way to connect inside with out. We can pass through dishes, food and drinks, and keep an eye on the kids in the pool," says Fiona. "I often wonder why my clients have separate outdoor kitchens when the main kitchen is so close by." Forgoing soft-close mechanisms on the drawers, Fiona was able to splash out on a Häfele 'Magic Corner' cabinet storage fitting, and a fabulous appliance cupboard that stashes the toaster and sandwich maker out of sight. Savings-savvy Laminex laminate in Fossil was used on the cupboards, giving the kitchen its sleek and sophisticated feel. 

Contact Fiona Austin of Austin Design Associates on (03) 9592 6411 or visit www.austindesign.com.au for more information.

budget breakdown

Flooring	\$2500
Stainless-steel benchtop and sink	\$5000
Stone benchtops	\$5000
Kitchen cabinetry	\$20,000
Smeg appliances including fridge, dishwasher, rangehood, cooktop and oven	\$10,000

total **\$42,500**