

Cabin fever. Inspired by the coastal landscape of Essex in the east of England, the Osea kitchen by Plain English has been nicknamed "The Urban Cabin."



spaces, and we should consider how we use them. Simon Richmond, managing director at Poggenpohl in the UK, argues that luxury can be as much about "the generosity of space" at one's disposal as the appearance.

OPEN AND SOCIAL

Our kitchens are increasingly functioning as social hubs, integrating study areas, television lounges, and dining zones with traditional cooking facilities. Incorporating relaxation areas allows guests to interact with us while we cook. "The kitchen is becoming more than the heart of the home; these days it requires an informal sitting area for family members or visitors to sit and accompany the home owner, who may be preparing a meal," explains Mark Wilkinson OBE, founder of London-based Mark Wilkinson Furniture.

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Lindsey Katalan

It's a transition that US kitchen design expert St Charles of New York has also noted, as Lindsey Katalan, creative director of its kitchen styling and sourcing service Curated, explains: "People are definitely gravitating toward the open-plan kitchen – the kitchen is, quite evidently, the most important room in the home."

So the desire to create something utterly bespoke and furnished to specific individual needs and whims has never been keener. "It's about designing a 'life-space' rather than a kitchen," explains Julian Bly, design director of bespoke design company Plain English.

Whatever you want can be yours, no matter how outrageous or off-piste your thinking; for example, Curated can source artwork to facilitate "a dynamic change to the aesthetic of the kitchen without a permanent commitment," explains Katalan. Plain English has seen a rise in the number of additional "rooms" that are integrated into the whole kitchen area, such as sculleries, boot rooms, and even safe rooms.

And, of course, with these design changes comes a desire for kitchens to incorporate the most up-to-date technology. This is, after all, a time when an Aga comes with an app and Netflix commissions celebrity-chef documentaries. Clients can have a wealth of smart kitchen gadgets at their

OUTDOOR KITCHENS

Cooking al fresco

Exterior "hubs" are increasingly a must-have home feature, particularly in warmer climates. "Outdoor kitchens are becoming an interesting niche of our market," explains Steven Salt, showroom manager at Boffi, which launched Open, its debut outdoor-specific kitchen concept (pictured below during Milan's Salone del Mobile), in 2014. Designed by architect Piero Lissoni, the open-faced structure has supporting sides that cleverly conceal the water, gas, and electrical connections.

