

# Short-order chic

Designing a dream kitchen is easier than you think, writes **Susan Redman**.



**Harvey Norman Renovations** (above)  
Custom polyurethane cabinetry with CaesarStone benchtops.  
[www.harveynormanrenovations.com.au](http://www.harveynormanrenovations.com.au).

**Arent & Pyke** (left)  
Splashback and island bench are Calacutta gold marble, the back benchtop is CaesarStone, extending to barbecue bench; cabinetry is satin polyurethane in Dulux White Duck; front of island is blackwood veneer.  
[arentpyke.com](http://arentpyke.com).

**C**hoices. Options. Alternatives. These words can cause panic in the hearts and minds of the novice kitchen renovator. Initially, the excitement of choosing new finishes and the latest whiz-bang gadgets motivates the first-timer to embark on a course of designer discovery. But as the samples of stone, tile, laminate and veneer pile up, enthusiasm starts to wane, and with good reason: there are just too many choices. So to help you on your quest to be a master of kitchen design, we've compiled a step-by-step guide.



## Step 1: Stand firm on style

Choose a look, such as French country, retro diner, industrial chic, Norwegian wood or monochrome cool. Then grab some magazines and start scrapbooking—even a handful of photos of things you love is a great way to start. Next, “carefully analyse the pictures you collect”, says Sarah-Jane Pyke of interior design firm Arent & Pyke. “Work out what appeals to you regarding colour, planning, details and lighting,” she says. And don't forget, suggests Michelle Feng of Cullen Feng architects, “the kitchen's design should be integral with the design of the [whole] house, rather than have a separate style of its own”.

## Step 2: Colour your world

Opt for a couple of neutrals that fit your theme. For example, chalky cream and beige for French country, Arctic white and ash grey for industrial chic, or biscotti and pistachio for retro diner. “A warm, neutral palette is popular,” says Pyke. “When space is tight, keep things simple. Use one colour for vertical surfaces [cabinets and doors] and one for horizontals [benchtops].” Then, if you must, add a contrasting colour, such as vibrant bar stools. “Save bright colours for areas that can be easily changed, such as splashbacks,” says Feng.

## Step 3: Finishing school

Let your colour palette direct your selection of cabinetry, benchtops, taps and sinks. For monochrome cool, for example, choose square, stainless-steel handles or do away with handles



completely. If installed in an island bench, taps and sinks become the focus of the entertaining area, so for a minimalist look, choose something sleek and sculptural. In a Norwegian wood theme, add contrast by combining blonde veneers with white stone or stainless-steel benchtops.

## Step 4: Access all areas

An efficient kitchen layout balances “room to move” with the close proximity of three key work areas. “Food storage, food preparation and clean-up zones should form a triangular layout which follows a kitchen's work flow,” says Feng. “They need to be adequately spaced so tasks don't interfere with each other but not so far apart that work becomes

**Cullen Feng** (left)  
Stainless-steel benchtop, island bench and integrated sink; polyurethane-finish cabinetry; Karri Classic timber flooring; white colourback on clear glass splashback.  
[cullenfeng.com.au](http://cullenfeng.com.au).

tiring,” she says. “Carefully position dishwasher, fridge and oven doors to avoid conflict when opening.”

## Step 5: Secret storage

Maximise space through clever storage solutions for a clutter-free kitchen. “Use doors that fold, slide or flip up into cavities to conceal appliances, and bins with pop-up lids that attach behind doors,” says Feng. Other inventive ways to conceal appliances include lazy Susans in corner cupboards, pull-out pantries, plate holders in deep drawers, extra wide cutlery trays and integrated fridges and rangehoods.

## Step 6: Lighten up

Lighting is the jewellery of kitchen design. Get it right and it will make your kitchen a standout. “Good lighting in the kitchen is essential,” says Pyke. “We recommend a layered approach: put task lighting and ambient lighting on separate switches. If there is an island bench, pendant lights hung low can create atmosphere and add a “wow” factor. And a wash of soft light on the splashback (such as LED strips) can highlight a feature finish.”