



The ins and outs of KITCHEN CABINETRY

As the heart of the home your kitchen should represent your individual tastes and meet your unique needs. From drawers and handles, to cupboards and benchtops, Annie Slevison chats with Adrian Romandini, the owner and manager of Romandini Cabinets, about designing and installing cabinetry for the ideal kitchen.

*W*hether they are used for cooking up a storm, socialising with guests, or having Sunday breakfast at the island bench, kitchens are the hub of every house and functional cabinetry is an essential part of the space. There is a wealth of options in cabinetry design, so it is important to choose drawers and cupboards that match your unique aesthetic, and provide everyday convenience for you and your family.

Cabinetry designer Adrian Romandini has just finished renovating his family home together with his wife and business partner Maz, with whom he shares a passion for entertaining.

Here, he provides some expert advice on choosing the right cabinetry elements for the perfect result.

HEY THERE GOOD LOOKING

Designing your new kitchen is a highly creative endeavour that allows you the freedom to produce an area that will flow harmoniously with the rest of the home, or stand out as an interior feature. When deciding on the topography of the space, Romandini recommends taking inspiration from your own creative style. "Having a new kitchen built is an exciting prospect – it's a chance for you to add a personal touch to the space and make sure it suits your practical needs as well as your aesthetic tastes," he says. "A good design teamed with materials and finishes that draw and hold your interest will ensure the area is visually appealing."

Incorporating statement pieces throughout the space is a useful technique when livening up the area and making it your own. Romandini explains that your kitchen's existing floor plan will determine the feasibility of new ideas, and the clever use of attractive materials can help achieve a pleasing result. "Coloured appliances

and fittings are an ideal way to make a strong design statement, adding contrast, interest and style to the cabinetry," he says. And when dealing with a smaller area, Romandini suggests focussing on the power of illusion. "Adding a feature row of contrasting cabinetry can add depth to a plain kitchen," he says. For a sleek and refined look, you can lessen the visual impact of your kitchen's large appliances by integrating them with your storage units. "Hide your fridge and dishwasher behind matching cabinetry fronts for a truly streamlined area," Romandini adds.

WHAT'S TRENDY?

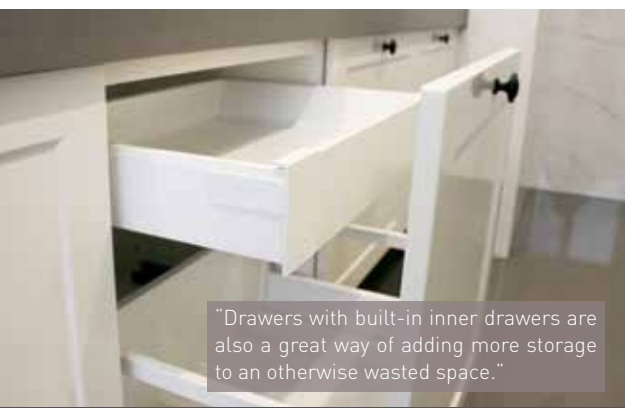
When designing the perfect kitchen, researching the latest trends of the season will help you achieve an updated and fresh aesthetic. For a modern expression, Romandini encourages colour blocking for an eye-catching effect. "All-black cabinetry teamed with a feature row of contrasting cabinets in a colour or timber grain [is a popular choice]," he says. Mixing black fittings such as sinks, taps and handles with coloured cabinetry is also a great way to achieve a contemporary feel.



Use mirror splashbacks to add depth to a small space.

ROMANDINI CABINETS' *Top hardware picks*

- BLUMOTION soft-close fittings ensure cabinetry doors and drawers close quietly and effortlessly.
- Blum SERVO-DRIVE offers electric motion opening and closing with a single touch on the cabinet front. This is particularly useful for a pull-out bin cupboard, as it can be opened when your hands are full.
- The Blum AVENTOS lift system swings the cabinet front up and over the head to give you easy access.
- Lincoln Sentry handles are quality products backed by an innovative company that offers extensive product guarantees.



"Drawers with built-in inner drawers are also a great way of adding more storage to an otherwise wasted space."



Romandini Cabinets manufactures convenient pull-out bin drawers with the top inner storage for garbage bags, as well as sink drawers that are designed around the plumbing to make optimal use of space.

If you prefer a softer palette, minimalist cabinetry in neutral tones will help create a calming environment. "Tongue-and-groove cabinets are having their moment," says Romandini. "Giving the appearance of traditional timber panelling to cabinet fronts, they are a great way to add visual interest and a warm ambience."

Romandini suggests incorporating Hamptons or French Provincial elements for cabinetry that will stay current. "Shaker-style doors are enjoying a resurgence – they have a classic style that doesn't date," he says. Teaming this look with light-coloured finishes and understated fittings will transform your kitchen into a fresh and airy space.

USER-FRIENDLY FEATURES

Along with giving the space personality, cabinetry is a major part of what makes a kitchen functional. Determining the main use of each area will help narrow down the design elements you should include. "Consider the work triangle – a basic but time-honoured principle for designing ergonomic, functional kitchens catered to the three primary tasks carried out between the cooktop, sink and refrigerator," says Romandini. This will also assist in choosing the best mix of drawers and cupboards for a practical space that everyone can enjoy using for years to come. "Consider your current situation as well as plan for the future; choose durable materials from the start and invest in high-quality, long-lasting options," Romandini adds.

Further, it is important to consider your new kitchen an investment. Spend some time getting to know what products you need for the space to be long-lasting. "Choose high-quality hinges and runners, as these are the engine of your kitchen. Blum products are durable, practical and covered by a lifetime manufacturer's guarantee," says Romandini.

For everyday convenience Romandini suggests designing cabinetry that will minimise stress when life gets busy. "Frequently used items should be in easy-to-reach pull drawers in base cabinets underneath benchtops of the main work area. These items can include cutlery, crockery, glasses and bins," he says.

MADE TO LAST

When it comes to investing in value, Romandini recommends home-grown goods for an optimal result. "We use Australian-made board material. This ensures new cabinetry will stand the test of time, as it complies with Australian standards and will withstand the Australian climate," he says.

If you plan to use and love your kitchen for a long time, seek out products that are reliable and will remain consistent. "Choose durable materials and invest in high-quality, long-lasting options. For family kitchens we recommend a painted two-pack polyurethane finish for the cabinet doors and drawers topped with durable quartz benchtops, which are non-porous," says Romandini. Polytec, Laminex, Caesarstone and Quantum Quartz are the favoured brands of the Romandini business.

Injecting a splash of luxury never goes astray, and Romandini suggests incorporating marble for added style. "It doesn't get much better than marble if you want something that is timeless and exudes elegance. Marble is perfectly suited to hide light stains and provides a seamless finish, however it does require regular sealing."

SPACE SECRETS

Working realistically with the size of your kitchen will help you decide how to best use the area. For a larger area, Romandini recommends that you "section it off into work zones, group appliances and fixtures according to their purpose, [and] consider a walk-in pantry to store appliances and essentials and keep your kitchen clutter-free".

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When dealing with a smaller space, Romandini highlights the importance of storage and maximising every nook. "Pull-out cabinets make good use of narrow spaces," he says. Spice drawers and oil racks can be stored in between the preparation and cooking station, and baking trays can be stored upright in a narrow cabinet near the oven.

No matter what look you are going for, designing and installing good-quality cabinetry is a vital part of any great kitchen. Selecting materials, colours and products that you love and that complement your lifestyle will keep the heart of your home happy.

Images courtesy of Romandini Cabinets