

make a splashback

Wondering what to do with that bare wall behind your sink or stove? Introduce elegance to your kitchen with a simple splashback – a winning way to add style **WORDS PIPPA DUFFY**



The colour of the splashback, such as the cool blue in this kitchen, informs each individual space. Colour-backed glass in Dulux Brewster (below right) with letters in frosted silver bring soul to a functional family kitchen.

The kitchen is the hub of any home; a space that should be comfortable, beautiful and accessible – and the right choice of splashback can take a kitchen from boring to beyond compare. The current menu of splashbacks for sale reads like a smorgasbord of style, ready to serve up wow factor in any kitchen. With choices ranging from glass and stainless steel to tiles and stone, a splashback is a great opportunity to add colour to an otherwise simple, streamlined kitchen.

But before you go all out, you need to consider a couple of matters. Firstly, size. How many walls will you cover? Are there power points to work around? If so, how many? “You need to look at the angles of your walls and the overall cut outs that will be needed,” says Michael Kitchener from Kitcheners Kitchens. “Once these are determined, it will lead to you choosing the right finish.”

Regardless of the surface you choose, it’s important to have a well thought out design. Shaun Carter, from architectural practice CarterWilliamson, explains. “Don’t spend good money on a splashback if the kitchen is shot. Make sure you have a solid substrate to begin with so the wall isn’t falling apart.” So, with checklist in hand, consider the options ...

heart of glass

Glass is the current favourite in splashback trends. “Glass offers a modern look, conveying flat lines and smooth surfaces,” says Michael. The key benefit is it is easier to keep clean than the alternatives, with no grout or joins to worry about. Another advantage is the available range; plain, frosted and clear glass all have subtly different looks, and when used in conjunction with wallpaper, etching or stencilling (pictured, left) can really personalise the splashback. Generally, most paint colours can be incorporated to match your wall colour.

Worthy of note is Starphire Glass, which gives a true finish without the usual green tinge of other glasses. Starphire is a good way to keep your colour scheme pure. For the more adventurous, “metallic colours are popular,” says interior designer Ronite Hammond from Design4Space, and they complement minimalistic colour schemes. >



Before you buy If you want a single piece of glass, ensure you talk to your installer about the number of cut outs needed and how they’ll place the glass to accommodate them. Depending on your space, you may need to consider having more than one glass panel.
Budget Glass will give you glamour, but it isn’t always the cheapest choice – although many are happy to spend up on this star feature. Expect to pay upwards of \$1500 for an area covering 3sqm.

steel yourself

Commercially, stainless steel has been a popular choice for years, and the industrial appeal of this finish has ensured it's made its way into chic domestic kitchens – and stayed. An excellent tool for breaking up a solid bank of colour or wood in the kitchen, it serves to keep the mood light and complements most colours, as well as keeping your preparation space looking clean. The reflective finish of stainless steel can really lift a kitchen and if you have matching appliances, it's definitely something to consider when renovating. Just make sure you avoid going over the top. "Too much stainless steel can look too reflective," advises Ronite. Limit your stainless-steel extras where possible, using one simple piece, such as a fridge, to complement your splashback. >



In this kitchen, designed by Taste World Kitchens, sleek stainless steel works alongside high-gloss laquered finishes and timbers for a timeless look.



“ENSURE YOUR MATERIAL IS DURABLE, PRACTICAL AND, OF COURSE, BEAUTIFUL” ~ SHAUN CARTER

Before you buy Your flawless stainless-steel finish may be compromised if you don't take particular care of it. "Stainless steel has a brushed finish and at home you may be inclined to only clean the areas that are dirty, therefore changing the direction of the finish," warns Michael. **Budget** Mid-range. Stainless steel is priced from \$900 to \$1500 installed for an area covering 3sqm. As it is usually a commercial application, prices may vary between kitchen renovators.



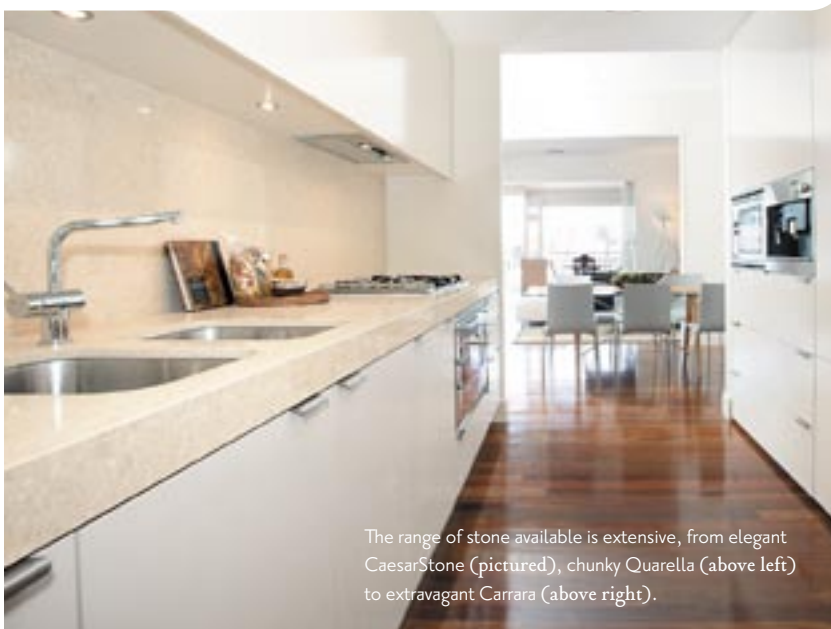
PHOTOGRAPHY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) GORTA YUUKI, DAVID MATHESON, GORTA YUUKI, STEVE BACK

stone roses

Stone is the new kid in town. Create a seamless look by repeating the stone used on your benchtop for the splashback. The thinking follows that if you're going to invest in a gorgeous stone, why not show it off on a vertical surface? Minimal joins and a smooth, fluid finish add to the appeal. The current trends in stone are neutral colours, with a touch of texture. "There are amazing marbles, such as Calcutta, with beautiful grains flowing through them," says Michael. "They make an artwork out of your wall." White quartz composite stones and blank granite are also at the top of the list for an original, contemporary result. >



Before you buy Timing may be an issue. "The cabinets need to be in before the stone can be measured, so this adds another week or so before the kitchen is completed," says Ronite. You also need to be sure of where the cut outs will go to avoid unwanted joins. **Budget** Pricey, but worth the extra cost. Ranges from \$400 to \$800/sqm, plus extra for installation (check with your kitchen renovator).



The range of stone available is extensive, from elegant CaesarStone (pictured), chunky Quarella (above left) to extravagant Carrara (above right).



PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT) ELSA DILLON (TOP RIGHT) DAVID MATHESON



A tiled splashback can be mixed and matched with a range of surfaces. Here, warm white tiles have been paired with earthy woods for a French kitchen feel.



Below right Light mosaic-style splashback (bottom right) have been matched with a stainless-steel surface.

on the tiles

Tiles won't cost the earth, and because there are literally thousands of colours, designs, shapes and textures to choose from, you can be as creative as you like.

"Traditionally, the majority of kitchens have had a tiled splashback, because tiles are very versatile," says Michael. For an up-to-the-minute look, opt for large stone tiles or smaller mosaics and be creative with the layout. Mosaic patterns make a real impact in your kitchen space – up close you'll see a collection of beautiful colours, while stepping back allows the pattern to emerge. Stick with smaller textured tiles and metallics for the very best results. "Stone tiles, textured mosaics and metallics are perfect for creating the focus in a kitchen," says Ronite.



"TRADITIONALLY,
THE MAJORITY OF KITCHENS
HAVE HAD A TILED SPLASHBACK"

~ MICHAEL KITCHENER

Before you buy Maintenance is the key consideration with tiles. It can be a big job keeping the grout clean on a tiled splashback, but if there are a number of cut outs and plumbing stacks to incorporate, they are your best option.
Budget From \$12 to \$400/sqm. Then add around \$385 for installation.



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