

## STYLE STAPLE: { CABINETS }

Create a kitchen to sustain with quality cabinets, flavoured according to your taste with a mix of colour and texture



### laminates

**PROS:** For the ultimate in cheap-meets-chic, laminate surfaces are the way forward. The new generation will stand up to high-pressure situations, while the latest finishes are on trend. "Finally, laminates are losing the stigma of being old fashioned," says Michael Kitchener of Kitcheners Kitchens (1800 826 144, [www.kitcheners.com.au](http://www.kitcheners.com.au)). "The new finishes are exciting, with high-gloss surfaces that mirror polyurethane, and highly textured 3D laminates that take on a timber grain."

**CON:** Because it comes in sheets, panelled doors are a tricky option. Luckily, the trend for streamlined, easy-to-clean cabinets isn't showing any signs of slowing.

**EXPECT TO PAY:** \$10,000–\$12,000 installed, for a basic family kitchen (12 cupboards, excluding benchtops, splashbacks and appliances) finished in laminate, or try Laminex's Contour doors, from \$60/standard door; I32 I36, [www.laminex.com.au](http://www.laminex.com.au).

**CONTACT:** A cabinetmaker, interior designer or kitchen firm. >



## 2. polyurethane

**PROS:** Basically oil-based paint mixed with polyurethane resin, this strapping surface is available in just about any paint colour you fancy. Match it with your walls in high gloss, textured or satin instead of matt, or go for an artful colour contrast for serious spice. This surface is usually sprayed in two coats (2-pac), which ensures a high-quality finish and no joints at the edges, or across country-style feature panels.

**CON:** Polyurethane has been banned in Europe for the toxins it emits. Locally, this is a major concern but right now the industry is experiencing a surge in water-based, low-VOC polyurethane, such as Envirothane 8450, from A & I Coatings, 1800 819 585. Budget about 20 per cent extra.

**EXPECT TO PAY:** \$12,000 to \$15,000 installed, for a basic family kitchen; or try Laminex Colourtech doors, starting from \$85/standard door, 132 136, [www.laminex.com.au](http://www.laminex.com.au).

**CONTACT:** A cabinetmaker, interior designer or a showroom.

## 3. veneer

**PROS:** In open-plan spaces, timber veneer is the vital ingredient that connects the kitchen with the living room. Its warm hues and tactile grains instantly soften hard edges and elevate cabinetry to the realm of furniture. The big news is the advancement of man-made veneers that have brought the exotic grains of rare species, such as macassar and ebony, back onto the style agenda.

**CON:** The price! Veneer is much like a laminate, which needs to be laid onto a base. Unlike laminate, however, it then needs to be sprayed in polyurethane or another sealant. Laminex's Finished Designed timber veneers and New Age Veneer's Navlam ranges are pre-finished, which means they are more expensive straight up but will save you time and money down the line.

**EXPECT TO PAY:** \$15,000 to \$18,000, installed, for a basic family kitchen finished in veneer, or try Laminex's prefinished Timber Veneer doors, starting from \$140/standard door.

**CONTACT:** A cabinetmaker, interior designer or kitchen showroom which will be able to source veneers from Laminex or New Age Veneers ([www.newageveneers.com.au](http://www.newageveneers.com.au)).

### in season: the material mix

Mixing materials is the look of the moment. We're seeing delicate blends of high-gloss surfaces matched with a satin finish in the same colour and, for the more daring, textured timber paired with stainless steel and gloss. The trend is driven by open-plan kitchens sharing space with the living room. "When you use more than one surface, the kitchen becomes more like furniture. It's about creating a more relaxed environment to unwind in," says Poliform senior designer David Cross.



#### 4. european modular

**PROS:** Designed and engineered in Europe for ergonomics and sheer wow factor, then mixed, matched and rearranged to suit your lifestyle, a European kitchen by the likes of Poliform, Poggenpohl or Binova is unadulterated luxury. These kitchens are designed to the world's highest environmental standards, using formaldehyde-free boards, water-based finishes and eco-aware production, freighting and assembly methods.

**CON:** Some might say that because European imports are modular, the options are restricted, but with set sizes ranging from 150mm and up to 1200mm per piece, the sky is the limit.

**EXPECT TO PAY:** From \$30,000 to over \$100,000 for a standard family kitchen, depending on interior fittings and fixtures chosen.

**CONTACT:** Poliform for their range of Varenna kitchens, (02) 9690 0777, [www.poliform.com.au](http://www.poliform.com.au); A La Carte Design for Poggenpohl, (02) 9369 1766, [www.alacartedesign.com.au](http://www.alacartedesign.com.au); Taste World Kitchens for brands such as Binova, (03) 9428 4243, [www.tastekitchens.com](http://www.tastekitchens.com).

#### 5. bespoke

**PROS:** Custom-made cabinets are tailored for an exact fit. Do you cook alone or as a couple? Does your kitchen act as a home office or laundry as well? Will cabinets and benches need to be customised to your height? The buzz is also about segregating the kitchens into zones for cooking, snacking, preparation and cleaning, all with strategically placed storage to suit.

**CONS:** With every bespoke kitchen different to the next, quality can vary. Ensure that the tradespeople or kitchen specialists you use are licensed and ask to see examples of their work.

**EXPECT TO PAY:** From \$10,000 to \$25,000 for a standard family kitchen, depending on interior fittings and fixtures chosen.

**CONTACT:** A cabinetmaker, if you want to take on the role of designer. Otherwise, try an interior designer, or kitchen showrooms such as Harvey Norman Design & Renovations, (02) 8399 7311, [www.harveynormanrenovations.com.au](http://www.harveynormanrenovations.com.au) and Freedom Kitchens, 1300 885 435, [www.freedomkitchens.com.au](http://www.freedomkitchens.com.au).



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~ Poliform senior designer, David Cross.



#### 6. flat-packed

**PROS:** Better quality than the price suggests, flat-packed kitchens are not to be shunned. Ikea kitchens, for instance, come with a 25-year warranty and their hardware is engineered by Blum, with soft closing drawers available for just \$10 extra. Meanwhile, Bunnings offer a weighty 10-year guarantee. The parts are factory-made and then assembled at home and if you’re handy, you can save big by assembling the kitchen yourself.

**CON:** DIY first-timers might find themselves scratching their heads or threatening their partners with the pointy end of an Allen key. Thankfully, installation services are available in-store that allow you to pick and choose between the processes you want to do yourself and those with which you want help.

**FROM:** \$1000 to \$10,000 depending on the number of cabinets, internal mechanisms and the finishes you desire.

**CONTACT:** Ikea, [www.ikea.com.au](http://www.ikea.com.au) or Bunnings, (03) 8831 9777, [www.bunnings.com.au](http://www.bunnings.com.au). 