

Kitchen appliance trends for 2011

The soul of any kitchen lies in the appliances that it houses – kitchen appliances need to be functional, aesthetically pleasing, technologically advanced and energy efficient. Brennan Menday from premium appliance manufacturer, Miele SA, offers an overview on what elements are currently driving the design and innovation of kitchen appliances going forward.

<caption: Induction cooking - Pic courtesy of Miele> **Quality and performance**

“One transition that has been made in luxury kitchen appliances has been the incorporation of professional-grade qualities in home spaces. This trend capitalises on the desires for the utmost in quality and the ability to comfortably entertain in your home. Like the quest for any luxury item, a simple appliance for the casual home will not satisfy the discerning requirements of any upmarket residence. Instead, state-of-the-art appliances from upmarket brands such as Miele for example, that please the tastes and desires of its owners, are a sought after status symbol,” says Menday.

New technology, too, continues to drive appliance trends. For instance, the rise in the induction hob has transformed how people cook, says Menday: “No one who has ever tried it wants to go without it again: induction cooking provides for precision power control and heating times that are shorter than gas hobs. Boasting sleek ceramic surfaces, that provide quick and easy cleaning because hardly anything burns on this glistening surface. Some Miele models boast an extra special feature called the TwinBooster – if, for example, you want to heat up two litres of water, the booster function provides additional power, which again, considerably reduces the already short heating times provided by induction. The newly developed TwinBooster can be switched on in stages, whereby the full power of 3.7kW is available in the second stage. The Booster function saves you even more energy in the overall cooking time due to the incredibly rapid heat transfer.”

<caption: Generation 5000 dishwasher - Pic courtesy of Miele SA> **An integrated approach**

A top design trend in the world of kitchen appliances today, is the drive to create a seamless and fully integrated look. While top-quality performance is critical in this market, aesthetic appeal continues to play a key role in the design of specialty appliances, particularly those that are featured in open-plan kitchens.

Says Menday: “The integration of appliances into the cabinetry is increasingly in demand, because customers want to create a clean, streamlined appearance in their kitchen space. The design of Miele’s Generation 5000 built-in appliances for example, has already been at the receiving end of numerous international design awards. One reason for these accolades is the way products, from widely differing product groups, harmonise perfectly with respect to form and function, appearing to come from the same mould. As a result, vertical or horizontal multi installations are routine for Miele appliances.”

<caption: Gen 5000 oven - Pic courtesy of Miele SA> **Convenience and technology**

Families come in various shapes and sizes, but the one constant in most homes is that everyone in the family is busy, explains Menday: “Work, school, extra murals and anything else you can think of, takes up a good chunk of most homeowner’s waking hours. In the kitchen, it's often about making the most out of what little time you have to cook and prepare meals. Luckily appliances are getting

faster and smarter to help you maximise your time.”

Many of today’s state-of-the-art kitchen appliances boast a plethora of innovative technological features to make your life easier and to save you time. “Technologically speaking, the new appliances in Miele’s Generation 5000 series for example, open up huge potential in terms of food processing freedom and offers unparalleled convenience. All products in this range feature touch controls. The built-in coffee maker prepares latte macchiato at the touch of a button. Wall ovens feature Miele’s unique Moisture Plus function, as well as pyrolytic cleaning; a feature that removes the elbow work in cleaning ovens by incinerating residues to ash at high temperatures.

<caption: CVA 3000 coffee machine - Pic courtesy of Miele SA> **Customisation and personalisation**

Customisation and personalisation are sought after concepts by consumers the world over, and in line with this trend, people want to invest in kitchen appliances that offer high-end function and convenience, but that also offer the ability to do things to suit their particular individual preferences. “Specialty appliances enable homeowners to customise and enjoy their home to the fullest, especially as more homeowners choose to stay in and recreate a gourmet dining experience from home. Consumers and designers want to place their own unique touch on their kitchen projects – the special area where their individualism shows. As more homeowners are staying put, they are renovating to make their spaces work for their specific needs, while simultaneously enhancing resale value of their property,” explains Menday.

He notes: “Most top-end automatic coffee makers for example, allow coffee connoisseurs to select up to 12 different types of coffee to match their mood, including various types of decaffeinated varieties. All functions of Miele’s CVA 3000 coffee machine for example, are fully automated and allow for settings to be changed via a light touch on the sensor buttons. Here, it is possible to select the type of capsule, start beverage preparation or set your own programme, such as switch-on and switch-off times, select the level of water hardness specific to your area, or set your own personal user profile.”

Menday describes how these programmable features offer the convenience of allowing you to wake up or come home to freshly brewed coffee at a specified time every day, made especially to your individual liking. The CVA 3000 also allows you to set various coffee profiles – up to 10 connoisseur profiles can be programmed on the machine, and naturally, as an alternative, the standard setting for all cups can also be changed.

<caption: DGC 5080 XL Steam - pic courtesy of Miele SA> **Lifestyle trends**

To a large extent, the lifestyles and interests of consumers dictate the appliances they desire, Menday says: “It’s all about surrounding yourself with products tailored to your particular lifestyle. For example, if you collect wine and like to entertain, you may choose a wine cooler versus a coffee system. If you like to entertain, you might choose a warming drawer and coffee system. Healthy eaters or families, who want to make whole foods quickly, will choose steam combination ovens and induction hobs.”

Along those lines, a greater focus on health and well being is another lifestyle trend carrying over into appliance selection. Increasingly more people have become concerned about overall wellbeing

and being health conscious, and this has driven the demand for items such as combination steam ovens, such as Miele's DGC 5080 XL Steam for example. These units offer benefits that include faster cooking times, as well as optimum retention of vitamins, nutrients, flavour, colour and texture. With steam cooking, food absorbs only the moisture it requires – which means no over-cooking. Food cooked in a steam oven can also be a lot healthier as you don't need to add any oils or fats to keep food from drying out in the cooking process.

“We are finding that steam cooking is becoming an increasingly popular method of cooking due its ease of use, great results, health advantages and flexibility. Steam ovens can be used to cook everything from roasts to bread to desserts. However, it is important to remember that standard steam ovens can't brown or crisp, as the oven cooks with moisture rather than with hot elements. Now however, top-end Steamer combination models, such as Miele's DGC 5080 XL Steam for example, combine steam cooking and conventional cooking methods in one oven. This means you can steam-cook a chicken in 20 minutes and then change the setting to conventional cooking to brown the skin, so it looks as good as it tastes,” explains Menday.

He says that green living is another lifestyle trend having an impact on the kitchen appliance market: “Instead of creating luxurious pieces with little use and large carbon footprints, high-end kitchen appliances showcase their energy efficiency and compete for ever smaller carbon footprints. The height of design thinks through the entire lifecycle of the appliance. Appliances that are energy efficient or have green features are on the rise. Consumers are interested in energy efficiency so that they can save money and help the environment, without sacrificing performance or quality. In this vein, gas and induction hobs are must-haves for any modern kitchen.”

<caption: Miele's White Collection - Pic courtesy of Miele SA> **Form meets function**

When it comes to design, Menday says that there have been big changes in the look of kitchen appliances. Miele's new exclusive White Collection for example, is primed to set new standards in both living rooms and kitchens all over South Africa. “Although stainless steel has long reigned as the appliance colour of choice in modern kitchens, those opting for a dramatically chic design statement can now delight in the cool, crisp lines of Miele's new White Collection colour option as the minimalist look is taken to the extreme,” says Menday.

Another trend in luxury kitchen appliances is an emphasis on simple lines and clear-cut sleek looks. Within this modern chic and smooth form is a desire for greater ease of use and improved functionality, concludes Menday: “As a result, the smoothly beautiful appliances in your home practically beg to be touched. Yet they aren't simply pretty things. Gazing at each sleek line and polished curve, you will find that the designers have thought of every practical need. Nothing in the kitchen appliance world is truly just for show. Each decorative addition can put in a full performance for entertaining others or creating a quality meal you've prepared yourself.”