

CABINETS With wide recycled oak boards already in place, interior designer Fiona Austin needed cabinetry dark enough to provide a contrast. "This New Age Veneers 'Arcadian Oak' was perfect," she says. "And the white marble and 2-pac cabinetry in Dulux Natural White bring a sense of light." Some simple tube ceiling lights (try Karboxx 'Tube' medium ceiling lights from Lighting 55) are a quiet complement to the scheme.

L
LARGE
L

LARGER THAN LIFE

AN EXPANSIVE KITCHEN WINS ACCOLADES FOR PRACTICALITY AND STAND-OUT STYLE

WORDS JACKIE BRYGEL STYLING WENDY BANNISTER
PHOTOGRAPHY SHANIA SHEGEDYN

Big truly is beautiful in this elegant Melbourne kitchen. Every surface in the light and airy space has been thoughtfully treated as a canvas for style, impact and functionality. Tactile finishes, including Calacatta marble and dark timber cabinetry, combine with clever design features to produce a dream result.

Austin Design Associates director Fiona Austin was brought in to create a new open-plan cooking zone from the ground up. "The owner works long hours and wanted a relaxing but also a contemporary, minimalist kitchen – a no-fuss space," explains Fiona. The designer delivered, with a wall of joinery stretching to the ceiling in dark timber veneer, while an adjoining bank of white cabinets and a central island bench encased in marble provide a lesson in the power of contrast. "It's a look that's both fresh and light, as well as full of interest," says Fiona. "The marble also adds that element of luxury."

The front of the island boasts a striking timber display shelf, but all other storage options can be found behind closed doors, in keeping with the clean, uncluttered look. "We also went for drawers and cupboards without handles, which works perfectly for a more 'grown-up' house such as this," says Fiona. "It's really a very modern kitchen that is also luxurious yet fuss-free. The whole house is designed for entertaining, as is the kitchen, but it's also a real sanctuary." >

EXPERT TIP

In a large kitchen, bring in warmth and texture through the finishes, advises Fiona. A big zone also needs to work as hard as a smaller one. "You can never have too much storage," explains Fiona. "Design is also crucial in a large kitchen to ensure you don't have to walk too far between the island and the cupboards."

"WE LOVE USING REAL STONE AS IT'S ALMOST LIKE A PIECE OF ART, ESPECIALLY ON A VERTICAL SURFACE" ~ FIONA, DESIGNER

FINISHES Stainless steel tops the rear bank of units in the kitchen. "It's such a practical choice, as you can put hot dishes straight on it," says Fiona. Fine Calacatta marble clads the island, which has a dishwasher and double under-mounted sink with a Gessi 'Oxygene' mixer.

APPLIANCES Cabinets hold a neat row of cookers: electric, microwave combi and combi steam ovens, all from Miele. The Miele fridge and freezer, and the Qasair 'Executive' rangehood, are virtually invisible, as is the flush-mounted Abey Barazza gas cooker.



DISPLAY The timber shelf at the front of the island is the perfect spot for cookbooks and pretty pieces, adding a shot of personality. "As you see this kitchen from the living area, it also makes the island more interesting and more like a piece of furniture," explains Fiona. >

SEATING An island corner offers a haven for casual dining with 'Dita' stools from Grazia & Co. "It's always easier to chat to someone when you can face them, rather than when the stools are all in the same row," says Fiona.



STORAGE With tidiness crucial in the open-plan zone, a roomy appliance cupboard ensures everything from the toaster to the knife block remains handy but out of sight. “As it’s a Victorian house, there was no spot for a separate butler’s pantry,” says Fiona. “Instead, all the smaller appliances can be stored behind this door, with a pull-out cupboard underneath for condiments such as oils, soy sauce, and herbs and spices.” A double pantry cupboard holds everyday essentials, while banks of drawers in the rear units ensure that every storage area is utilised but neatly hidden.



LAYOUT

INTERIOR DESIGNER: *Austin Design*,
(03) 9592 6411, austindesign.com.au.
BUILDER: *Precision Cabinets*, (03) 9702 4138,
precision-cabinets.com.au. *Stockists*, page 190

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Appliances	\$58,083
Cabinetry	\$39,000
Marble	\$12,000
Stainless steel	\$5500
Tapware and sinks	\$2790

TOTAL \$117,373*

* INCLUDES INSTALLATION COSTS BUT EXCLUDES DESIGN FEES