

# EUROCUCINA 2008

During May 2008 a group representing The Laminex Group attended the International Furniture Show in Milan, Italy. The leading furniture show in Europe/UK encompasses all areas of furniture and cabinet design in large multi storey halls and includes Eurocucina (kitchens), Salone Office, Salone Bath & Salone Furniture.

Attendance at the show allows our team to evaluate international design direction and to review our design decisions for upcoming range changes and new product launches.

Below is a snapshot of emerging design and colour directions seen at the show.

## Colour & Design

### **Solid Colour Trends:**

White on white continues to be a strong, adamant trend and whilst the story itself is not a new direction, the amount of application of white certainly pointed to this being a continuing & growing major colour group.

Special mention should be made of "Merangue" as a specific white of importance. This soft crème-based white was also of textural significance with reference to the more dry, honed and cratered surface finish. At times this group pushed a little more into the soft latte colour palette to give "Driftwood" tonings that paired beautifully with soft shale blues and sage tones.



Variations of grey tones and shades in monochromatic groupings created an easy to live with decorative scheme. Sophisticated and understated this could be missed in the hustle bustle of colour and glitz, but when taking a closer look you notice many gently differing hues nestling comfortably together and colours otherwise dull became a dynamic accent. An important theme across many colour groups was that of an elegant softening, an effect that gave a subtle feel

through a gentle weathering process. This could be best described as "Washed By Time." A group of faded colours which included aubergine, blue, grey, biscuit and green, were used together as an assortment which created a relaxed new country feel.

Orange and lime or apple green remain popular colours and are seen in many kitchen and office schemes as the main vibrant colour teamed with white or light to medium woodgrains.



Black on black was seen as a significant direction, particularly featured in super gloss finishes for 'head turning' attention seeking. Like the whites, it was common place for these black applications to be shown with juxtaposed varying surface finish, most observed was gloss against matte.

### **Metallic Colour Trends:**

Metals, in true metal, applied leaf or brushed finishes made a robust impact. The key metallic group on display was a sublime mix of silver & gold to give softened burnished shades with a glamorous antique feel. These could be best described as "Champagne Silver" or "Antique Silver Gold". Teamed with warm whites (particularly with the crème or new meringue colour tones) they provided an understated regal splendour.

The continuing love of silver and stainless steel saw it being used as the main "colour" often splashed over entire kitchen or bathroom cabinet surfaces. Soft, bright, brushed, rubbed and highly glossed even to a mirror finish or teamed with gold metallic in a perfect partnership.

Gold, which has been making a soft impact in recent times flooded back this year, at times presenting a luxurious ritzy feel and often matched with white or black in a monochromatic scheme.

# THE LATEST TRENDS IN colour & design

## **Woodgrain Trends:**

Dark brown or charred tones still evident along with velvety brown mocha tones being a continuing theme, the grain structure generally soft and flowing, with elegant streaks of darker grains or cathedrals. Lighter to medium tones in all woodgrains is a response to the trend of much darker chocolates and blacks of recent times.

## **Materials in Kitchen Manufacture:**

Blocks of white were prominent, using acrylic solid surface and colour core laminate in particular. This allowed thick block like elements from 50mm up to 150mm in depth for benchtops, shelves and lower plinths.

At the other extreme, white was also shown in thin materials such as acrylic composites and thin compact laminates. High gloss cabinet doors & drawer fronts continue to grow in popularity, particularly in darker colours including a high number of black high gloss examples.

The use of timber veneers was extremely evident, particularly for use as long tables, shelves & plinths that adjoined the kitchen benchtop or preparation area. While not used in the functional benchtop areas, timber veneers dominated many horizontal applications. Largely seen in a dry or sandblasted finish, showing the grain to its best advantage.

LPM textured finishes as woodgrains for cabinet doors & drawer fronts were mostly seen in a linear or striated textured finish.



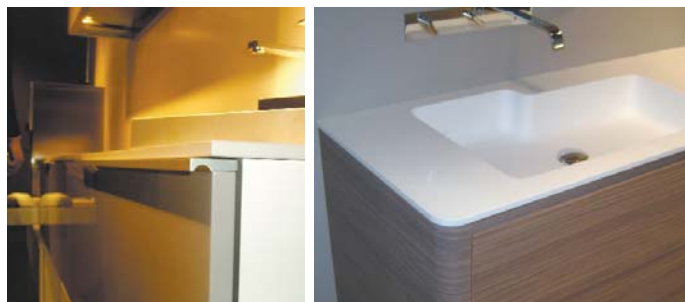
## **Trends in Kitchen Form:**

A distinct increase in the use of thick shelves, usually in multiples from three to six shelves stacked vertically. The trend of multiple benchtop & worktop heights within the kitchen area is strong. Typically these were thick slab-like structures, in laminate, acrylic, stone and timber veneer mixtures or juxtaposed against fine slices of material as in glass or 20mm

stone or laminate (compact laminate being used by many). A play of geometries, volumes and a balance between different blocks featuring different functions.

An emergence of rounded corners in cabinet shapes shown in both kitchens & bathrooms still showing square edges tops, which shows a slight trend away from the straight square lines we embrace presently.

Integrated handles within drawers & cabinet doors is a continually growing trend due to the desire to minimise the visual effect of handles. Whether cut into the vertical face as a functional feature, or a shadowline used for effect and as a finger pull type handle.



The kitchen is more than ever a place to live in, comprising of freely configured habitats with work islands, benches with tables that pull out from underneath, and cabinetry with sliding doors to conceal appliances.

Naturally following on from this, wardrobe interiors were not ignored with laminate designs decorating this "new" fashion area - feature panels to mimic fabric designs, woodgrain structures layered and sumptuous looking. Wardrobes designed as an extension of the luxury bedroom – and never again to be 'tucked away'.

## **Standout Direction**

The standout direction at the fair was the reliance on the layering of elements - colour, texture, scale and height continually being layered in a movement which results in a sophisticated feeling of stylish comfort and welcome. Layering of texture used as a way to soften or include interesting colour schemes.

As many as three or four differing surface finishes are blended, together with layering of colour, scale and heights of horizontal surfaces to create balanced and interesting workspaces and furniture for living. Surprisingly relaxed interior landscapes are the outcome.