

How to add style and value to a kitchen

Defined spaces and muted tones are on trend, and don't be afraid to mix and match materials

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Our prime minister, Theresa May, loves to rustle up a meal for friends, prefers Jamie Oliver's casual style to Delia Smith's rule-bound precision and has more than 100 cookbooks to store. So

The interior designer Simone Suss, of Studio Suss, says one of the biggest emerging trends is the mixing of materials. "People are spending more time in their kitchens and are definitely become braver in their kitchen choices, opting for wooden flooring, concrete for worktops and distressed wood for cupboard doors," she says.

What could be more Brexit-appropriate than ultra-hip Plain English, for example, whose Southwold kitchen "harks back to an era of beach huts, metal buckets and spades, and sandy jam sandwiches"? With a price tag of £50,000 to £60,000, however, May might want to consider Plain English's offshoot, British Standard, which has off-the-shelf cupboards in Shaker style made in its Suffolk workshops and painted in of-the-moment shades — muted greens and browns, dark greys and deep blues.

It seems we Brits will continue to pour money into updating what is considered the selling point of the home. Research by Sainsbury's Bank, which offers big loans to customers wanting to give their kitchen a face-lift, found that a third of UK adults have invested an average of just under £4,000 in their kitchens in the past three years. Favourite purchases include double-door fridge-freezers, range cookers, ice makers, wine fridges, warming drawers, indoor barbecues and, inspired by too many episodes of *MasterChef*, sous-vide machines. Of those who have taken out a