



Kitchen & Dining

By Emma Hooton
Founder, Emma Hooton

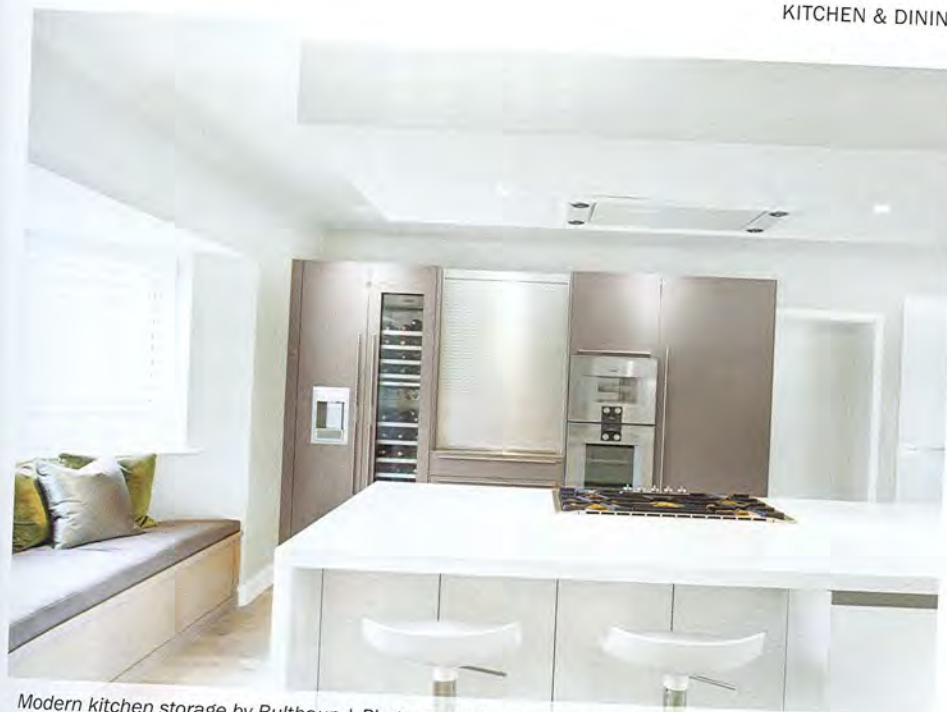
After graduating from the prestigious KLC School of Design, Emma Hooton worked for Hugh Leslie at his renowned practice in London before setting up her own studio. Seamlessly balancing practicality with cool country style, Emma's portfolio comprises prestigious London residences, historic homes and rural country estates. Influences range from boutique country hotels to cutting-edge architecture, modern classic furniture and cool antique pieces. Part of the practice's ethos is to establish relationships with the best in British designer-makers, from countryside artisans to London-based craftsmen and suppliers, which results in the ability to create unique designs whilst offering excellent value for clients. Passionate about discovering new trends and innovations, Emma lives and breathes interiors in every aspect of her life. Here, Emma considers the landscape of kitchen and home dining designs.

Kitchens are still very much the heart of the home and are expanding into ever larger, light, open-plan living spaces where the whole family can enjoy being together. Contemporary, minimalist design is still the most popular with our clients, although some still prefer the classic designs they know and love.

These spaces (kitchen and dining) are considered in the very first conversation with you the client, in terms of priorities, and form a central focus for the feel of your house and flow of the rooms. Due to the separate consideration as the main, multi-function living spaces, these rooms often have a lighter, more relaxed feel than other reception areas, which can



Tobias Grau Pendant | Photography by martingardner.com



Modern kitchen storage by Bulthaup | Photography by martingardner.com

reflect in a different creative approach to the rest of the property. Form and function can be beautifully combined when considered properly, particularly in these two rooms, whether as one or as separate entities. The key for us as designers is to constantly keep updated with the latest in appliances and technology, to present the best options to you and help you to choose elements that are going to work for your lifestyle. This is often a balance between improving lifestyle and technology, which is straightforward to use; technology for technologies sake is no good to us the designer or you the client. Some clients like to include all the latest tech gadgetry, with

everything from wine fridges to coffee makers and steam ovens in their new kitchens, along with flexible dining spaces and a sofa/TV area. One of the challenges can be incorporating everything, often resulting in borrowing space from adjacent areas to achieve this. It is up to us as designers to have this conversation with you early on so that you can help us gauge which rooms are of highest importance in your home. With open-plan dining spaces replacing formal dining rooms, these now need to work for daytime family use as well as formal dinner parties. This means considerations in flexible furniture and/or soft furnishings that can be adapted. Another challenge is to consider the ability to create atmosphere and

compartmentalisation with clever lighting. We love using super practical yet luxurious feeling velvets for upholstery and beautiful, durable work surfaces such as quartz or high tech composites. Some of the most popular materials and finishes that we are seeing at the moment in kitchen design include marbles, which are still huge, with clients going for dramatic veining and sweeping quantities wrapping islands from worktop to floor as well as creating stunning splashbacks. In the more classic kitchens, brushed brass is popular on taps and handles, giving a smart industrial feel. Colours are darker greys and midnight blues. For the more contemporary styles, greys and whites are as popular as ever,

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with colour and funky patterns coming into the soft furnishings in the surrounding dining and living spaces.

When considering clients' expectations and the work we do in the UK and international market, we find that trends and styles adapt and shift in different climates and cultures. Ultimately, new technology and the latest in materials will always be desirable, particularly in a kitchen setting, so think about this when you are telling your designer what you like. Is it important to have the most up to date tech, or is longevity and timelessness key for you.

We love working in the beautiful English countryside with refurbishments of period properties where contemporary

new kitchen/dining spaces are transformative and instantly bring the interiors right up to date.

As a studio we recognise that we are being asked to design kitchen and dining spaces in different ways. We are often asked to design kitchens as bespoke cabinetry items, for example where the whole worktop run can be screened off to create the feel of cupboards within a room rather than a utilitarian space. Hidden breakfast units are also popular, where diners can help themselves to coffee and simpler meals without disturbing the cook. Larder cupboards with beautiful finishes work as much as freestanding furniture items as functional storage spaces. This seems to be a reflection of

changing lifestyles and a demand for bolder, more original, innovative designs.

Kitchens are becoming darker and more atmospheric in feel and the industrial is heading in a more luxe direction towards natural finishes and beautiful detailing in metals such as rose gold. Clever wine display features in dining areas such as 'cellar walls' are becoming popular, copying the quiriness of boutique hotel bars and creating features, which use lighting really effectively. Dining areas are becoming more flexible with upholstered bench seats taking over the classic dining chair together with oversized chandeliers for big impact.

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Bespoke banquette and shelving in dining area | Photography by martingardner.com