

RENOVATE PROFIT 2007 Kitchens

When it comes to securing a sale, a smart, considered kitchen always clinches the deal



1 Super store
With companies like Smallbone of Devon creating appliance garages to conceal everything from the toaster to the coffee machine, kitchen storage is working harder than ever. This clever cupboard incorporates space for provisions, utensils and food prep, while backlit shelves make it easy to find things. Toki Designs does bespoke shelving. Expect to pay about £3,400 for a unit like this.



2 Hot favourites
"Integrated appliances are expected in a modern kitchen," says Paul Heatfield, managing director of The Kitchen Clinic. For kitchen juddos, invest in an American-style fridge or range that Nigeria would be proud of: RT4840G Gas range top with char-grill/griddle, £3,480; Wolf, 650/S refrigerator with ice-maker, £7,020; stainless steel 430G/S wine cooler, £6,135; both Sub-Zero.



3 Best cellar
Kitchen storage doesn't come much cooler (around 10°C, to be precise) than this. Stash your favourite vintages in a purpose-built cellar that keeps wine in an optimum environment. For a larger property, cellars appear to be a sound investment, says Paul Jarman, director of residential agency group Savills. "Buyers should more than get their money back. From £7,000, Spiral Cellars.

A substantial 29 per cent of homeowners consider kitchens top of the list when it comes to adding value to a property.

An impressive kitchen can make or break a sale, so it's sensible to invest a good proportion of your renovation budget in getting yours up to scratch. "Right now, the kitchen is the space people are most interested in," says Kevin McEwan of KLC. "It's most definitely the heart of the home, so good ergonomic planning and clever storage are essential."

"A statement kitchen will be sure to catch a potential buyer's eye," continues Kevin, "but concentrate on getting the fundamentals, such as planning and lighting, right, so that even if it's not to their particular style, the basics will be there." If your budget won't stretch to a top-of-the-range kitchen, there are still plenty of clever ways to reduce the expenditure and still get the kind of look that will ensure your property stands out from the crowd. Focus on getting the fittings right and spend a little more on good-quality surfaces to give a high-end feel to less expensive units.

■ As a general rule, estate agents recommend investing around five per cent of the total value of your property when redesigning a kitchen. But, in a space where it's easy to splash out, be careful not to overspend as you may not recoup your investment.

■ Most kitchen companies offer a free, no-obligation design service. Alternatively, contact UK Kitchen Bathroom Bedroom Specialists Association for advice. >