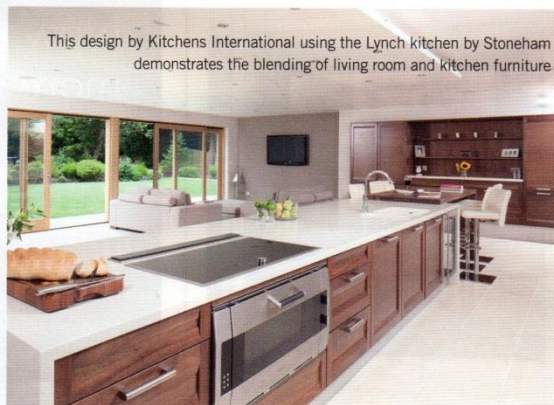


# 2014 MARKET & DESIGN TRENDS SPECIAL

To kick off the New Year, kbbreview asked the industry for their market and trends predictions for 2014. Francesca Seden reports...



## View from the Shop

Retailers and designers give their outlook on the KBB market and the significant design trends for the coming year...

**O**ptimism is the key word to describe the KBB market as we move into 2014, according to retailers and designers from across the industry – who generally report a “significant upturn” in business in the past three or four months.

Growth in the market has been driven largely by the Government’s Help to Buy scheme, which has led to a surge in construction in the private house building sector. This combined with a renewed confidence in the market as a whole has resulted in an upturn across the industry.

Rugby Fitted Kitchens managing director Trevor Scott claims that though consumers had disposable income, they were less inclined to part with it, and that the government initiatives had “kick-started the market. People who weren’t thinking about moving are now moving quickly.”

It was an opinion shared by Tracy Mackey, manager of TruKitchen in Wilmslow, Cheshire, who says that although business has been steady throughout the year, she feels “incredibly positive about the future”.

She adds: “The upturn in the housing market is certainly increasing interest in our kitchen products. Clients that are moving home have been notably scarce over the past few years due to the declining housing market. Now this is picking up, it should make a big difference in our business in 2014. As consumer confidence grows, we’re anticipating more and more customers once again looking at big ticket items.”

Interior designer and president of the Society of British and International Design (SBID) Theresa

to the market with risk protection, but in a different format. I think the developer can now factor in the cost of borrowing to activate project proposals and get them off the ground again.”

From Glasgow retailer Derek Miller of Scope Bathrooms, the message is also positive. He explains that although footfall has remained similar over the past few months, consumers are spending more, as people are more willing to invest in their homes. This is also something noticed by director of Ripples in Canterbury, Joy Chesterton, who agrees that consumers are likely to spend on luxury items like “lush, elegant lighting, together with saunas and steam rooms” in 2014.

### Trends

Although the future is looking brighter for the market, it seems that trends are still tending towards comfort and a touch of luxury at home.

It’s what SBID’s Brady refers to as the ‘shepherd’s pie moment’ and it points to a mix of textures that add warmth to kitchen design, and warmer matt finishes, taking the place of colder glossy tones, with greys and browns replacing stark white. Also, open plan will continue to play a significant part in kitchen design, with living room furniture complementing kitchen cabinetry.

In its trend report for 2014, Scotland-based retailer Kitchens International (KI) states: “Kitchen furniture has evolved so that it is more akin to living room furniture, where often, the kitchen cabinetry is used as multimedia cupboards or living-room furniture to complement the living room.”



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Interior designer and president of the Society of British and International Design (SBID) Vanessa Brady adds that her order books are full and that she has secured work for most of 2014. She says that in the contract market too, alternative funding has helped developers "kick-start mothballed projects".

Brady continues: "Alternative lending has provided the facility for those with money to return

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Although the trend for open plan is nothing new, it's the blending of the two different styles of kitchen and living-room furniture that give the findings significance. KI senior sales designer Keiron Bell adds that extractor design will also increasingly conform to this trend, with down-

draft, ceiling and recessed being among the unobtrusive options.

Hayley Tarrington-Robson, a partner at retailer Day True in London's Maida Vale, has also noticed that consumers are looking for more natural finishes that are warm and tactile. She also identifies a trend for a more eclectic mix of fixtures and fittings, "mixing modern lacquered kitchens with industrial lighting and stools".

TruKitchen's Mackey also mentions a subtle mix of textures and colours. She agrees that neutrals are still strong and that bolder tones are returning to favour. "Clients don't want to follow trends, for trends' sake," she adds, "they want value for money and a luxurious and stylish finish that won't be out of date in a few years."

When it comes to the bathroom, Chesterton at Ripples adds that this desire for luxury and spa-like products will lead to softer edges and more rounded shapes, but also that consumers will want larger-format tiles and cladding materials that emphasise the feeling of space in ever-shrinking bathrooms.

Miller at Scope Bathrooms agrees about the softening of edges in the bathroom and thinks the market broadly falls into two categories - "neutrals and naturals on one hand and grey, anthracite and dark in the other".

Director of merchandising for CP Hart, Rachel Martin, can't resist calling a trend it identified as '50 shades' (and textures) of grey'. As well as greys and muted colours, were accents, including petrol blues and darker greens, as well as vibrant orange, light aubergine shades and mustard yellow.

Storage will continue to play a highly important role in the bathroom, with consumers wanting to declutter and relax. The clever use of space will continue to have a significant effect on bathroom design, while British bathroom design will be heavily influenced by continental Europe. **kbbn**