

By Kate Jones
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If it doesn't have a butler's pantry, is it even a luxury kitchen?



Jeeves, pass the cumin seeds.

A luxury kitchen with sophisticated culinary offerings – even if you’re not a gourmet cook – is now a must-have at new residential developments. These are no longer simply places where meals are made, but aesthetic spaces of supreme functionality where owners can host everything from a formal celebration to Friday night take-away.

Today's designers have foodies in mind when they conceive professional-grade kitchens. At Carmine House, a development of two and three-bedroom apartments in Richmond, they have strived to meet buyers’ high standards.

“Buyers today expect more than just a functional kitchen; they want a beautifully designed space with top-quality materials, integrated appliances and a layout that makes life easier,” explains Cloudia Ingall, head of design and strategy at developer Fortis. “If a kitchen doesn’t tick all those boxes, it can be a real dealbreaker.”



Kitchen in the front, party at the back at Carmine House.

Luxury is important, but so is simplicity. Buyers are drawn to the pleasure of using appliances in a kitchen quickly with minimal fuss and mess.

High-grade features such as Zip taps that spout both boiling and chilled water, warming drawers in the oven, and wine fridges are part and parcel of contemporary kitchen design. However, if these don’t hit the mark, there’s always the option to customise.

“Customisation is huge – everyone has their own way of using a kitchen, so we offer the flexibility to tweak layouts, especially in pantries,” Ingall says.

“I can’t tell you how many long conversations I’ve had about spice cupboards! It’s all about making sure every detail works for the people who’ll actually be using the space.”



A tucked away bar and wine fridge at Maleea Rise.

At Nera, located in Surfer’s Paradise, kitchen design soars to the next level with the expertise of a Michelin-starred chef. Former *MasterChef UK* judge Shaun Rankin collaborated with interior designer Issa Shnoudi of Paradigm Design Studio to deliver spaces where everything is catered for.

This includes AI-enabled Gaggenau appliances such as ovens that light up and announce the remaining cooking time whenever someone walks past. These appliances are also integrated into smart-home systems, which means they can be turned on while you’re sitting in traffic.

“Shaun and I approached it from a culinary point of view,” Shnoudi explained.

“What’s the expectation? What needs to be next to what? So, it’s a curated experience for the person using it, whether it’s where the appliances are, what size oven versus hood, how much counter space they need.”

Integration is necessary for premium kitchens. This applies not only to appliances, but also to bins and shelving so that cabinetry is seamless and kitchen equipment is concealed.

The dream of a tidy kitchen also drives the trend towards fully operational butler’s pantries that sit alongside main kitchens.



Smooth lines and simplicity at Maleela Rise.

“We are seeing a real shift towards a show kitchen and then fully working butler’s pantries,” says Studio Tate’s Liz Ride. “No longer is it about a walk-in food store. Butler’s pantries are more like second kitchens with ample bench space and storage, additional sinks, a dishwasher, and sometimes even additional fridges or ovens.

“These are an entertainer’s delight, as guests are prone to hovering around the island bench; the butler’s pantries can then be used for cooking and washing in a space removed from public eye.”

Island benches are still very much on trend because they provide social opportunities as well as plenty of working bench space, whether it’s meal prep or assembling cheeseboards.

“We also often try to integrate casual dining as people shift towards more casual meals at the bench, be it breakfast or a quick meal for two,” Ride says.

“Of course, this also allows the aforementioned guests to perch and chat, too.”