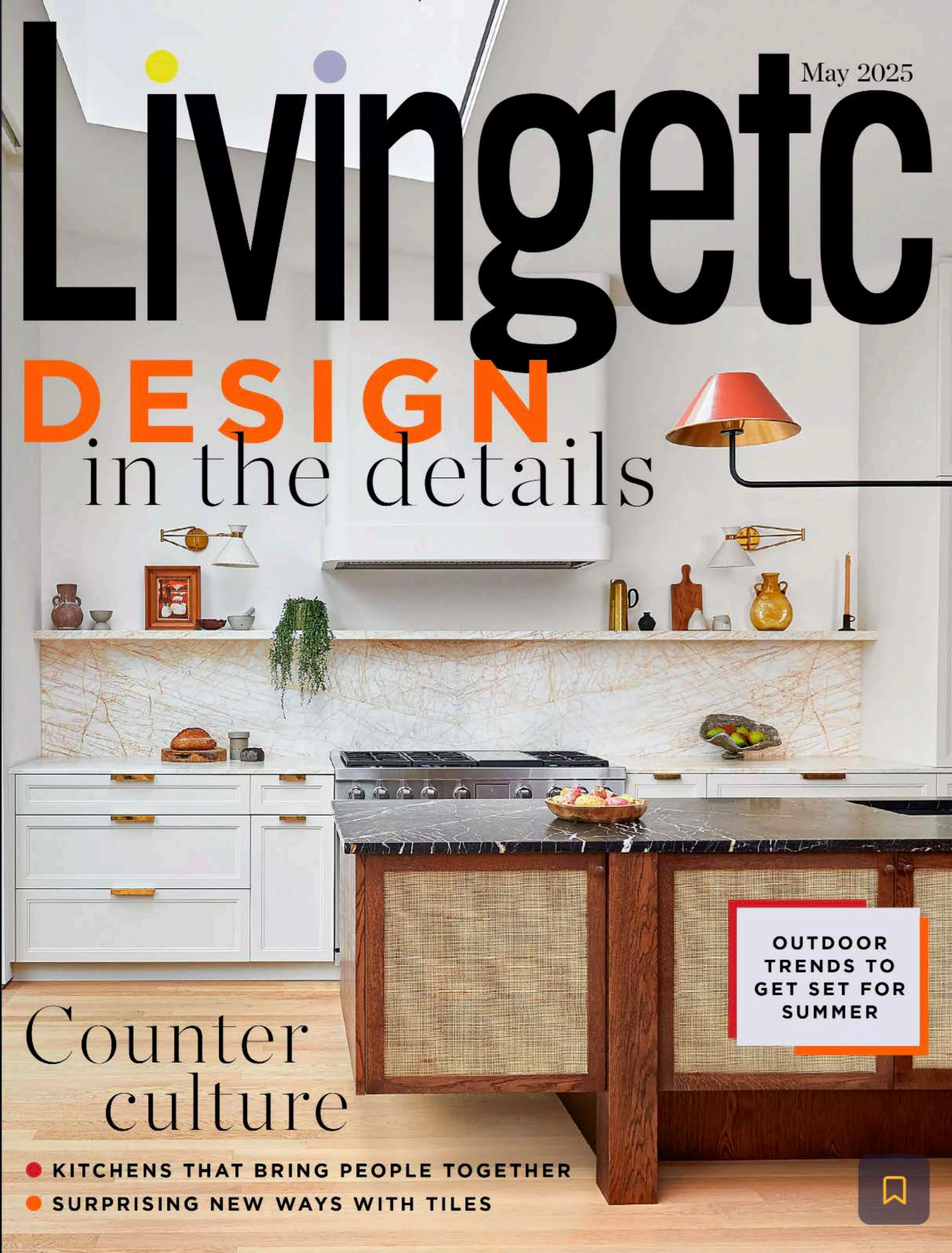


May 2025

# Livingetc

## DESIGN

in the details



**OUTDOOR  
TRENDS TO  
GET SET FOR  
SUMMER**

## Counter culture

- KITCHENS THAT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER
- SURPRISING NEW WAYS WITH TILES







Hand-painted  
202 Design bespoke  
kitchen with deVOL's  
Classic knobs and  
pull handles in  
Heirloom Brass.  
Room designed by  
Studio Duggan





## DESIGN NOTES

# Kitchen hardware

THE EXPERTS ON WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE INVESTING IN THIS KEY ELEMENT

FEATURE Amy Moorea Wong

## BIG DECISION

Considering making a last-minute or off-the-cuff decision about your hardware? Think again! While it may seem small compared to the many items that go into a kitchen, hardware holds a surprising amount of clout and visual impact, and should be given the consideration it deserves. 'Handles are like the jewellery of the kitchen – they hold the potential to completely transform the aesthetic of the space,' says Charlie Smallbone, chairman and design director at luxury kitchens brand Ledbury Studio. 'Their careful selection and placement can elevate the space, making the entire kitchen feel more cohesive, stylish and thoughtfully designed. The right handle can be the finishing touch that brings everything together, which is why it's so important to pay attention to this detail.'

## THE RIGHT PLACE

Not sure what type of hardware to put where? While there are no hard and fast rules, certain designs work better in specific areas. 'I find a pull or physical handle works well on drawer units and integrated tall cabinetry, and knobs or T-bars work well on smaller cupboards or fine framed doors,' says New Zealand kitchen designer Annika Rowson. 'A pull handle enables a good grip and integrated fridges/freezers do seal very well, so a pull allows for easy use. Knobs and T-bars look more furniture-like, so are a good fit for something like a framed door with a glass insert, which doesn't require a bulky handle to open.'

## MAKE A STATEMENT

Kitchen hardware isn't just about buying off the shelf – there's a whole world of customised and bespoke options out ➤

## OF THE ESSENCE

The soul of a space has been known to be shaped by kitchen hardware. In a London Georgian home, London-based interior design firm Studio Duggan brought in hardware that complemented the history and tone of the house, giving the kitchen a sense of authenticity and heritage. 'We chose deVOL's Classic knobs and pull handles in the Heirloom Brass finish, which has a beautiful aged look and is subtle and understated,' studio founder Tiffany Duggan explains. 'We wanted them to feel like they could have been chosen for the house when it was originally built.'

PHOTOGRAPH DEAN HEARNE

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there. In a Victorian house in Somerset, Ledbury Studio used custom hardware to connect the kitchen to the rest of the home, which fuses traditional architecture with elements of the contemporary. 'The handles are crafted from aged and patinated brass, each piece hand-cast by a skilled metalworker specifically for the project,' says Charlie. 'The hardware seamlessly integrates into the overall kitchen, where other aged brass detailing is used. The hardware creates a cohesive look, tying everything together beautifully'.

### FINISH LINE

Options for finishes at the moment are huge, with a plethora of materials, colours and textures on offer. Where to start? 'As a general guide, traditional-style kitchens pair well with finishes with patina – brass, bronze and nickel, whereas contemporary spaces are typically seen with matt black, chrome and stainless steel,' says Louis Lin, principal of New York interior design firm Studio Louis Lin. But fear not – there is space to be adventurous, too, and choose something that combines beautiful aesthetics with practicalities. 'One of my favourite hardware finishes

is white bronze for its matt silvery hue. The bronze alloy allows it to weather over time and develop a beautiful patina, but its higher nickel gives it tarnish- and corrosion-resistant properties,' says Louis. 'I also love antique brass or bronze – it has a warm, neutral tone that works with most schemes. The colouration is akin to the colour spectrum in natural wood, so it harmonises with other natural materials.'

### MIX AND MATCH

There is no rule that says hardware needs to coordinate. Different cabinets have different personalities and different ways they'll be interacted with depending on their location and role within the space. In an apartment in New York (shown right), Studio Louis Lin modified end cabinet pulls from The Lift Series by Sun Valley Bronze for the wall cabinets, while lower doors feature the brand's pared-back Contemporary pull. 'The flared upper pull has a jewel-like quality that embellishes the white doors, while the rectangle design harmonises better with the wood lower cabinets,' Louis explains.

### TRY THEM OUT

Don't be shy – get physical with those handles, pulls and knobs before you make the big decision. After all, they're items your hands will come into contact with on a daily basis over the years. Each piece should be tactile and work well with fingers and palms, as well as the materials they're supporting. 'Try the hardware in-store before installing it,' says Louis. 'Base your judgement on your user experience, not just the style and look. Kitchen hardware is probably the one household item we touch the most – it's what activates kitchen cabinets and appliances. It may be a small item but it deserves your careful attention when selecting.'

### OUT OF SIGHT

For kitchen cabinet handles that both make a strong design statement and disappear into the background, consider choosing a hardware finish that aligns with its backdrop, such as a dark metal combined with units in a rich, dramatic colour. In an architectural new build in Plymouth, New Zealand, designer Annika Rowson paired navy cabinetry with dark smoked bronze closet bars, pull bars and T-bars by Buster + Punch, the shadowy metal almost camouflaged against the deep colour. 'Smoked bronze blends well into darker cabinetry as opposed to being a feature,' she explains. 'It's subtle and gentle but still offers an additional layer of texture.' Drama and intrigue comes from the mix of different designs, and the handles' bold, chunky forms.'

PHOTOGRAPHS (STUDIO LOUIS LIN) RICHARD POWERS, PHOTOGRAPH THOMAS SEAR-BUDD





A bespoke kitchen by Ledbury Studio featuring painted ash cabinets with aged brass handles



Room by Studio Louis Lin. The Lift Series cabinet pulls (upper units) and Contemporary cabinet pulls (lower units) are from Sun Valley Bronze



Room designed by Annika Rowson. Black aluminium smoked bronze T-Bar cabinet pulls by Buster + Punch

