

# hot stuff

Kitchens and cooking have never been so sexy and exciting, thanks to new technology and design.

**T**he technology and quality of the kitchen and its latest cooking appliances is of such importance to us these days that it has been known to break or make a house sale – such is the powerful impact of a room which used to be totally enclosed and produced only meat and three vegetable dinners.

Thankfully we've come a long way from the humble coil ring and over-boiled cabbage. Today's cooking appliances are statements of contemporary design and style as well as the latest computerised technology, providing an extensive choice for your individual needs and preferences.

There's a trend toward more frequently cooking at home as we save on restaurant bills and try to imitate the contestants on MasterChef. But by providing for the family during the week, and entertaining in the weekend, we demand a lot from our cooking appliances. In response, today's appliances are becoming increasingly technologically sophisticated but easier to use.

We want appliances that offer versatility of use and are ecologically responsible, achieving the highest energy and water use standards. We want appliances that reflect who we are – whether through an

oven which automatically records our most frequently cooked meals like a 'favourites' section on an iPod, or through innovative design rich aesthetics.

Pyrolytic ovens are increasing in popularity as they don't need cleaning with harsh chemicals, leaving more time to do what you really enjoy – not cleaning ovens.

During the pyrolytic self-cleaning cycle, the oven is heated to about 480°C, reducing any fatty deposits to a thin layer of ash, which can be wiped away with a damp cloth.

In a similar vein, Eco-Clean liners are a world first from Bosch, offering a highly efficient



**Left** Bosch's steam oven responds to a growing emphasis on healthier cooking styles delivering deliciously tasty food.

**Below** Electrolux's concept design, the Rendez-vous' is a peek into the possible future of kitchen and appliance design.

 Resene Half Stack

 Resene Bliss

words Kathy Sumner



cleaning system. Grease and fat deposits are absorbed into the liners and dispersed around the microscopic ceramic spheres. During the cleaning cycle, oxygen is released, burning away deposits absorbed in the liners, to produce an excellent cleaning result.

If you want the speed of a microwave plus the versatility of an oven, another option is the Combination Microwave Oven. Despite their compact dimensions, the Bosch combination microwave ovens feature countless technical innovations. The 42-litre oven with integrated microwave features up to 13 cooking methods and a microwave with 900W performance combined with innovative technology for uniform heat distribution.

With a temperature spectrum ranging from 30°C to 300°C (depending on the model) these ovens can be used the same way as your main oven.

With the emphasis on healthier cooking styles delivering deliciously tasty food, steam ovens are becoming popular. Cooking with steam helps retain vitamins and minerals in fresh food and maintains original colour, shape and consistency.

Combination cooking combines the use of hot air and steam, and is particularly suitable for preparing roasts, chicken and baked foods such as bread. A fan in the back wall of the oven distributes heat evenly inside the cooking compartment.

A direct connection to a water pipe is not necessary as some of the Bosch steam ovens feature a removable water tank.

Other new technologies include the infrawave speed oven and the halogen cooker – both boasting cooking times up to 50 percent faster than conventional ovens.

Stephen Bruce, Fisher & Paykel's product marketing manager, says the kitchen is more than just a room – it's the heart and soul of the home. "People want kitchen appliances for mid week convenience, and at the weekend their requirements change because of the trend toward eating in, or they may want to treat

themselves by creating a masterpiece in the kitchen."

One of the latest conceptual developments from Electrolux in induction cooking is the Rendez-vous' table, which extends the idea of a multi-functional piece of furniture. This technology not only allows friends and family to congregate around a stylish and functional table, but also enables them to cook with pots placed anywhere on the table surface – thanks to the technology of induction cooking.

This is done by creating sensors that tell the inductors where the pot is and then heats it. Because induction generates heat directly to the cookware and minimises residual heat in the actual surface, someone could be sitting beside the cooking, reading a magazine on the same surface.

Induction cooktop technology is widely recognised as one of the quickest, safest and most efficient methods. Induction heating relies on creating a controlled electromagnetic field, which requires magnetic based cookware.

Glass, aluminium, copper or ceran pots are not suitable, but to check, hold a magnet to the base of the cookware. If it sticks, you can use the pot.

Research is continuing into the use of copper and aluminium, and while this is currently being tested in a very limited way in Japan, a successful commercial application is still some time away.

Troy Hinchco, Electrolux's category manager of food preparation, says: "Products like the Rendez-vous' give us an opportunity to climb into our customer's future, a future with consumer needs that don't exist yet. Possibly the most noticeable advances in technology will be in the user interface between the appliance and the user. Controlled units will evolve to being even more intuitive, easier to use and complement their frequent users' cooking habits more effectively."

Now we just need one of those clever MasterChef people to come and use the appliances for us. **H**