



Photo above left, The Acropolis in aluminium and white star metallic glass lacquer. **Photo right (top), The Acropolis** in aluminium and stainless steel. **Photo right (bottom), The Porsche Poggenpohl P'7340.**

(like refrigerators), small appliances, pots, pans, and utensils were all predetermined in the design. Now, eighty-five years later we have Italian car designers (who know all about the importance of both form and function) designing modern day system kitchens.

Sheer Kitchen

The brand new Sheer Kitchen by Gatto Cucine offers every solution imaginable. Arriving in two complementary pieces, it can be placed anywhere – as long as you supply the electricity and water. The first, a 148 cm diameter orb contains a cooker hood, a hob, a double sink, 2 trolleys and a retractable table. The second piece is a free-standing wall which cleverly conceals a refrigerator, stove, storage space, and four folding chairs. When not in use, the orb closes to look like a giant lamp emitting a soft glowing light, while a blind closes the freestanding wall unit (of course all of this is done by remote control). When the orb is open, the kitchen is open. The upper half of the orb attaches to the ceiling and becomes the fan and the light for the kitchen. The lower half contains a circular worktop, a double sink, three burners, one natural lava stone burner, three bottle coolers, a steel and aluminium retractable table, and trolleys. Not only is the shape of the kitchen revolutionary, but it is also the only kitchen on the market made from carbon fibre, a material that is lighter and more resistant than stainless steel.

Acropolis

Snaidero, another Italian kitchen company, only focus on cutting-edge kitchen concepts, and often partners with today's best designers. In 2002 they introduced the Acropolis kitchen with well-known Ferrari designer Farini Pininfarina. Just as the Acropolis was the heart of the city, Pininfarina states that the kitchen is the heart of the house. The original design was a closed full circle made from stainless steel and recycled aircraft aluminium. Recent modification of the design creates an opening in the circle. But the circle still remains the main design concept of the Acropolis, imitating a drum set, where everything is in arm's reach of the chef. The kitchen features recessed LEDs in the upper shelf, a Foster sink, a four-burner electric Foster cook top, bottle holders, knife holders, storage space, and cooking space. There is a control panel for the audio and visual components.

P'7340

German kitchen manufacturer Poggenpohl and German sports car manufacturer Porsche have collaborated this year on the P'7340 kitchen in an effort to captivate a male audience. The sleek aluminium frame with all the bells and whistles, has both men and women clamouring for a Porsche (kitchen that is). Within the aluminium frame design

there are two wooden surfaces to choose from; driftwood or dark oak. All cabinetry has been masterfully mechanised so the doors open with a light touch of the finger. Worktops are available in either a satinised glass or black granite. A plug and play audio visual system is conveniently tucked behind a glass surface. The lighting has been strategically imbedded in the aluminium frames to illuminate the worktop surfaces. Poggenpohl selected Miele as the sole appliance suppliers, a move to reduce tiresome decision making for the intended 'upwardly mobile' clientele. The appliances are in the same finish as the aluminium frames and are operated by sensor keys and dialogue displays. A kitchen table has even been designed for this nut to bolts offering – brilliant!

La Cucina Alessi

And who better to design a kitchen in order to showcase all their beautiful designs but Alessi. Alberto Alessi has pulled together a kitchen dream team of Alessi's Alessandro Mendini and Gabrielle Centazzo, Valcucine (furniture), Foster (appliances), and Oras (faucets). Designed around the concept of a single well curved line, the Alessi kitchen series is modern, inviting, intimate and a totally different look from the square-edged modern kitchens that we are seeing right now.

The Future: Concept Kitchens

If you want to know what the future holds for kitchen design, you need look no further than the work that DuPont™ Corian® is doing with Ernestomeda. They currently have two concept kitchens designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects, Zaha Hadid and Jean Nouvel. The 'Z' Island by Hadid is reminiscent of her morphologically sculptural figures. The "futuristic, sensory-responsive" design is composed of two islands. At the fire island there is a cook top and LCD display, and on the water island you will find the sink, dishwasher, and prep area. Jean Nouvel's kitchen design incorporates Corian's new illumination series to showcase how the material can create slightly transparent backlight kitchen cabinetry. Ernestomeda is planning to do a special production of both of these conceptual designs.

When some of Italy and Germany's best kitchen designers collaborate with the best appliance companies to bring you a packaged modern kitchen, you'll get what you pay for. But the investment in a functional piece of modern design that resides at the heart of the house may just be worth it.

More information about the kitchens mentioned in this article can be found at the following web sites:

www.snaidero.it
www.sheerkitchen.it
www.poggenpohl.de
www.alessi.com
www.ernestomeda.es



Photo above: Corian® Nouvel Lumieres by Jean Nouvel and Ernestomeda **Photo bottom:** The 'Z' Island - a conceptual kitchen by Zaha Hadid and Corian®