



Fitzpatrick & Partners Architects' Seed House



Rob Mills Architecture & Interiors' Armadale Residence.
Photography by Mark Roberts

Aussie designers DOING US PROUD

Australian kitchen designers have proved they're global competitors on the world stage in this year's Sub-Zero Wolf Kitchen Design Competition

WORDS ANGELA YOUNG

an impressive seven Australian entrants were among the 30 finalists of the bi-annual Sub-Zero Wolf Kitchen Design Contest (for 2017–2018). The global competition, which recognises kitchen designers, architects, interior designers, builders and re-modellers for advancing outstanding kitchen design, received more than 1800 entries from 18 countries.

Finalists, selected by an international panel of architects, kitchen designers and interior designers, were evaluated in three categories: Contemporary, Transitional and Traditional. The seven Aussies joined 22 other international finalists and one student winner at the Winners' Summit & Gala in Charleston, South Carolina, where the winners were announced.

Home-grown finalists included David Selden Design's South Coast Residence, a heritage house providing a tranquil and natural environment for the owner who lives in the inner-city during the week. The challenge was to work in the context of the small spaces defined by the original heritage structure.

"The kitchen design required careful study of the ergonomics, relationship of various elements, circulation and dimensions to ensure our client's specific functional requirements would be accommodated within the small space," David says, adding that planning was important to locate the kitchen as the "heart of the home", connected to all areas of the house.

From any position in the kitchen, all living spaces are connected and views can be enjoyed

— through the original house and living room towards the ocean, through the new dining room towards the national park to the north and through the original windows towards the western deck, garden and escarpment.

Fitzpatrick + Partners Architects' Seed House was another finalist, with an interesting client brief: "I want a contemporary and functional version of the kitchen from *The Hobbit*. Durable and functional, warm and inviting, and somewhere I don't have to worry about the scratches, the spills or the mess. I want it to continue to develop its character from how we use it, and how it responds."

James Fitzpatrick's response is a wooded wonderland. As one of the clients was originally from Tasmania and wanted to incorporate

the timbers of their childhood, celery top pine, figured blackwood and radiata pine were brought in — with some difficulty and much craftsmanship required.

Evidence of excellent workmanship can also be seen in the hand-worked stainless-steel benchtops, the steel ironmongery above-bench shelving, the kitchen tap (from a Brooklyn NY foundry) and the glass support bracketry.

Armadale Residence, Rob Mills Architecture & Interiors' entry, was actually the architect's own family home. A former industrial building completely transformed, nowhere is the attention to detail more evident than in the showpiece of the main living area.

A centrepiece brass kitchen creates drama and excitement, anchoring the warm brass details used as linings for door frames, and the water feature that begins outside flows through the length of the living area.

Winner of the small space kitchen award was Studio Lancini. According to Erika Lancini, at the heart of the Copelen Street project was creating an innovative yet flexible work environment.

"The goal was to provide a touch of sophistication combined with a serenity and sense of comfort that allows a home to breathe," Erika says. "Despite the complexity of the details, the goal was to attain a sense of visual simplicity."

Managing to avoid design fragmentation and ensuring continuity, the finished kitchen is serene yet sophisticated. Erika points out that the kitchen elements were chosen "for their reflexivity, which we translate in our joinery as a formal design language".



ABOVE David Selden Design's South Coast Residence. Photography by Justin Alexander



BELOW Copelen Street, from Studio Lancini. Photography by Peter Clarke





Armadale House, by Chris Connell Design.
Photography by Earl Carter

Australian talent swept the floor in the Contemporary segment of the competition. Nabbing third place was Chris Connell Design's Armadale House kitchen, which needed to incorporate facilities and functionality to meet the (highly detailed) demands of the professional chef client, while still retaining the domestic qualities of a family kitchen.

Despite the size of the owner's preferred appliances, including a very large, centrally placed refrigerator, an emphasis on natural light in the kitchen was a key design driver for Chris, achieved through a combination of full-height and pivoting windows and a continuous skylight running the entire length of the kitchen/dining/living space.

While very much a family kitchen first, the layout can also be used to record cooking television programs. The full-height windows to the garden can be opened to allow for crews to film in wide angle, an external concrete apron allows for a camera dolly to pan left and right, and a double island bench allows for preparation at the rear, keeping the front island clear for cooking demonstrations.





Maker & May's Canadian Bay.
Photography by Daniel Fuge

In second place for Contemporary design was Maker + May's Canadian Bay, a striking yet understated kitchen. According to interior designer Kirstyn Lloyd, the client had a very specific vision to build a home that was, in their words, both magical and powerful, a space that wouldn't be commonly seen elsewhere. With three small children living in the home, family-friendly functionality was also a top priority.

After a challenging project (including a tight time frame and a client with little tolerance for mistakes or delay), the resulting kitchen is elegant but practical.

"The exactness of the cabinetry lines and strong nature of the surrounding finishes were all designed to support the style and reputation of the appliances both integrated and on display, in a powerful yet understated manner," Kirstyn explains.



First-place global winner of the Contemporary segment was Mim Design's elegant NNH Residence. Mim Design principal Miriam Fanning explains that the clients — a young family with boys — love to entertain, so it was important the kitchen catered for their needs, including housing their wine collection.

"Integration and visual appeal were essential in creating a kitchen that exuded luxury as well as encompassing a well-detailed interior with equipment," she says. "It was important the materials and proportion of the kitchen melded with the scale of the space itself. Our goal was to create an interior that our clients took great pride in. It was important that a sense of quality and purpose was instilled when designing this space — selection of materials and finishes with equipment was holistic throughout. Authentic equipment and materials were essential in creating this design."

Ensuring a refined, clean kitchen that was hugely practical from an operational point of view was the challenge, fulfilled with aplomb.

"We wanted to create a great space all the family could use, an entertainers' kitchen, as well as a space that worked beautifully with the dining room and the rest of the house. The design of this project doesn't deliver a themed look. It delivers a unique custom approach to kitchen design incorporating a timeless look.

"This kitchen is not only practical, it's also elegant, timeless and luxurious. Most of all, our clients are extremely happy." 🏡



The winning NNH Residence, from Mim Design.
Photography by Peter Clarke