

press clip



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# slice

CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS



by Neale Whitaker

## stellarliving

**KITCHEN PARTY** (below, from left) Black is big in kitchen cabinetry this year, as seen in this one from Melanie Turner Interiors; brass finishes offset by a pale pink feature wall make for a great focal point; (below, inset) open-plan shelving and timber work surfaces are the calling cards of a modern kitchen.



### NEALE'S OBJECTS OF DESIRE

#### Bon appétit

1. **SUSSEX TAPS** tap set, \$556, [sussextaps.com.au](http://sussextaps.com.au)
2. **FREEDOM** stool, \$169, [freedom.com.au](http://freedom.com.au)
3. **NORMANN COPENHAGEN** cognac glasses, \$75 (for two), [funkis.com](http://funkis.com)



# THE ENGINE ROOM

Keeping up with the Joneses is now about kitchens – not cars

If you compare *The Block* with the Super Bowl (stick with me), then Kitchen Week is the half-time show. So, the big question is: will tonight's kitchen reveals on *The Block* be Madonna, Beyoncé or Bruno Mars? Kitchen Week is the big drum roll of each apartment, its mirror ball, its ooh and ahh. I've often described the kitchen as the apartment's heart – yes, in the medical sense. Once it starts beating, everything else comes alive. A good kitchen (*The Block* kitchens are once again supplied by Freedom Kitchens, [freedomkitchens.com.au](http://freedomkitchens.com.au)) can elevate a mediocre apartment; a bad one can bring a promising apartment crashing down. The show's contestants know this.

## “We used to eye off the size of people's sound systems – remember those?”

Far be it from me, however, to divulge any details about tonight's reveals, except to say that one couple wins and four others are grumpy. And as it is on reality TV, so it is in reality. Kitchens have become a national sport. There was a time when we eyed off

the size of each other's TV screens and sound systems – remember those? Keeping up with the Joneses was all about the cars we drove or the suburbs we lived in. Now it's about kitchens. To be specific, size of island bench (Tassie = good, Lord Howe = bad) and number and brand of appliances, preferably integrated. For quite a while, the coolest kitchens have kept us guessing as to what's behind each surface, but it seems that might be about to change.

EuroCucina, a kitchen design expo held every second year in Italy's style capital, Milan, is an important barometer of future kitchen trends. At this year's expo, these included open-plan shelving where everything from pots and pans to fresh produce are on display; two-tone cabinetry (Melburnians in particular may be pleased to note black is the new white) and cabinetry with metallic finishes; timber benchtops and work surfaces combining a contrast of materials such as timber, concrete and marble; thinner-profile benchtops and engineered surfaces that mimic the look and feel of



fabrics like linen and suede. While kitchens have long been the engine house of most homes, the growing popularity of open-plan living demands it becomes more a place in which to live, and not just work. And

a word to the wise: if you have school-age kids I guarantee it will not be long before they are asking when you're getting downdraft induction. The Joneses already have it. ★ Neale Whitaker is co-host of *Foxtel's Love It Or List It Australia on Lifestyle*, and a judge on *Nine Network's The Block*.

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