

# BE DARING

*Adding a splash of pizzazz to your kitchen and bathroom is all about finding the right design element that spells wow*

Words Carrol Baker



Empire House by Austin Maynard Architects. Photography by Derek Swalwell



Cut Paw Paw House by Austin Maynard Architects. Photography by Peter Bennetts

platform is a hidden spot where you can hang out while someone is preparing dinner," he says. What a perfect mix of style and fun!

Another way to create a stylish design statement is through the application of building materials. Innovative design is all about creating bold new ideas and pushing the boundaries of convention. Ray notes that incorporating materials traditionally used in one way in unexpected places offers a huge payoff, not only from a design perspective, but also to add flair. "We've used beautiful blackbutt timber on joinery and continued it to the ceiling and the walls. That quality and sense of craftsmanship is carried through," he shares.

Opting for beautiful statement lighting in a kitchen or bathroom is another way to add a definitive sense of style. Frances says that choosing the right lighting to complement a space is important — it's a decision that shouldn't be rushed. "I'm passionate about lighting and in high-end homes in particular, it really can make or break a space."

What is it that takes a beautiful stylish kitchen or bathroom to the next level? Quality materials and fittings play a part, as do tactile touches, inspiring colour palettes and elements such as shape, scale and proportion. All of these things form a cohesive whole that defines the look and feel of a space. Kitchens and bathrooms that really stand out from the rest take it one step further. They have a design or statement feature that is bespoke, beautiful and sometimes unashamedly unique.

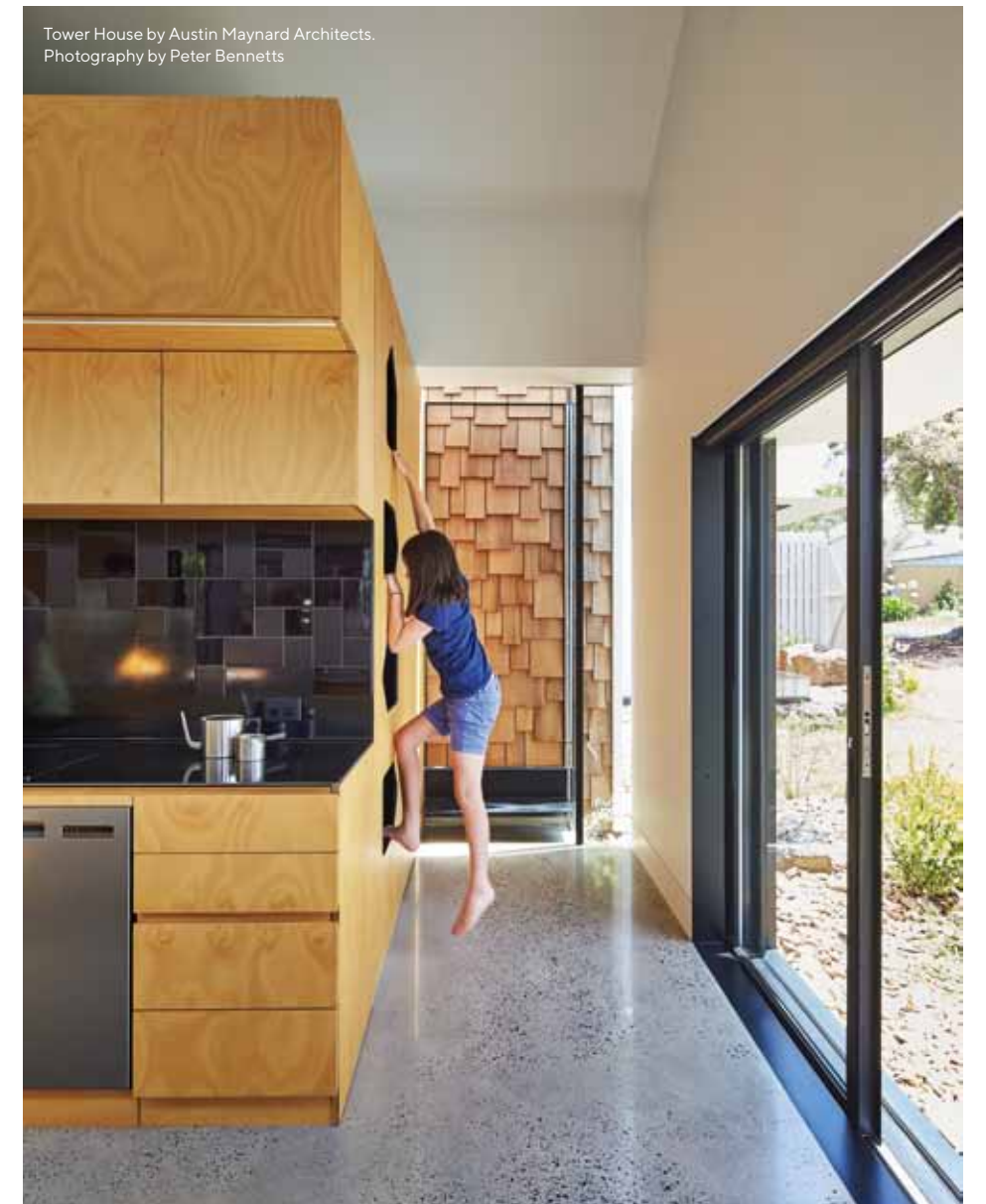
It could be a striking mural on a wall, a stunning tile feature, a ceiling rose that adds luxury, or a spectacular light fitting that infuses glamour. It could also be a surprise feature, something that's a little out of the box; it might evoke a sense of playfulness or quirkiness, so it becomes a talking point.

One way to add a little vavoom to a wall is with the splashback. Frances Cosway from White Pebble Interiors says it's a great way to infuse colour, texture and interest. "What's really popular are fish-scale-shaped tiles in beautiful colours that have a Moroccan edge," she says. "Even in bathrooms you can add Kit Kat-shaped (or finger-shaped) tiles for a distinctive look." Penny rounds are also a fabulous way to create a beautiful splashback, she adds.

But not everyone wants to incorporate colour into their kitchen; some prefer a monochromatic look. "This is where the benchtop material can also be used as the splashback as it's simple, sophisticated and streamlined," Frances explains.

Evoke a sense of playfulness in your home with a secret feature. Ray Dinh from Austin Maynard Architects says surprise nooks or alcoves offer something unique. "In one of our projects the kitchen shelves on the side have cut-outs designed in such a way that the kids can climb them like a ladder, and on top of a

Tower House by Austin Maynard Architects. Photography by Peter Bennetts







Styling by Covet House



Styling by Maison Valentina



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Designer lighting in a bathroom can emulate a luxury spa-like experience with pendants, uplighting and backlighting. While sufficient task lighting is important for putting on make-up and shaving in a bathroom, it can also be accompanied by pure decorative lighting to give the space a high-end feel. Architect and interior designer Brooke Aitken says a light in the bathroom doesn't have to be large to have a big impact. "In one project we placed a light on the wall that's like a decorative brooch on a lapel; it offers a subtle soft glow when the homeowners are entertaining."

In the kitchen, designer lighting can really steal the show. A plethora of materials such as pure metals, natural wood or bamboo, and shimmering glass take pendant lighting to the next level. According to Brooke, statement lighting should not only match your decor, but complement adjacent lighting, too. "You could have a kitchen pendant to tie in with the rest of the house, positioning it as the hero of the space. But it can't be so overbearing that it overwhelms everything else."

Even simple LED lights can create a beautiful statement feature — it's all about placement. Brooke adds that lining LED lights

**"Art can change a mood; in a neutral kitchen it can introduce a pop of colour and a painting can completely change the feel of a space" – Brooke Aitken**

under the top row of cupboards creates a beautiful soft glow. "This style illuminates the splashback and works really well, particularly if you have a splashback that has some sort of movement," she says.

Besides beautiful light fittings, ceilings aren't really something most would consider a design feature, but they can be. One way to add an elegant accent to a ceiling is with a decorative moulded feature like a ceiling rose. In the right bathroom, a ceiling rose will make a striking statement. "Decorative ceiling roses can look stunning over the top of a bathtub. In a heritage home, it adds delicacy and finesse," Brooke explains.

A feature wall is designed to inject personality into a space to draw the eye. It's often in a bolder colour or different texture to the adjoining neutral colour palette. A feature wall can be made of any number of materials and finishes including tile, stone, timber or wallpaper. Frances suggests running tiles all the way up one wall to create a designer look. Couple this with open shelving and you've got a winner. However, the golden rule of less is more should be applied in any home to ensure a classy look without overdoing it.

In the bathroom, Frances notes a feature wall can look particularly striking behind a bathtub. "This is where you add colour and texture, and then have everything else pared back so it draws your eye to the space," she says.

Brooke points out that a timber screen is another way to create a feature in a bathroom.



Shakin' Stevens Residence by Matt Gibson Architecture + Design. Photography by Shannon McGrath



The Terrace House by Shaun Lockyer Architects. Photography by Cathy Schusler



FEATURE

Greenhouse by Shaun Lockyer Architects. Photography by Scott Burrows



*Innovative design is all about creating bold new ideas and pushing the boundaries of convention*



Park by Bagnato Architects. Photography by Axiom Photography & Design

Victoria + Albert IOS bath in design by SHM Architects. Photography by Nathan Schroder



“When backlit it’s a beautiful way of dematerialising a wall, giving it depth and shadow.”

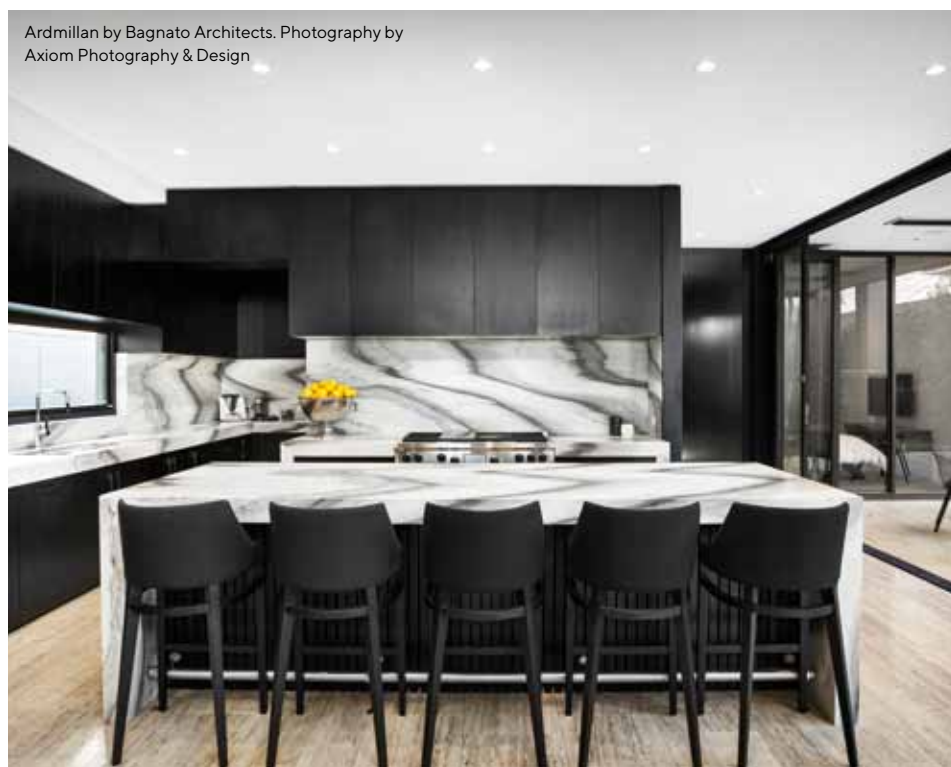
A current trend is to create a powder room with a completely different style to the rest of the home. “It’s a room guests will likely use and it becomes a talking point,” Frances explains. “We use a lot of vinyl wallpapers that are loud, like the Dutch Masters, or bold, like a palm tree print. You can create something really out there from a colour perspective — our clients love it.”

One way to add a stylish statement feature is to take the indoors out. Ray says you can add a sense of light and connection to the garden with a window splashback and a kitchen bench that extends to a window seat.

Sometimes a statement feature can evolve through problem solving. You take a potential challenge and it becomes an opportunity to create something uniquely beautiful. “In one project we took the owner’s brief for a bathtub and took it outside to place in the garden,” Ray explains. “They were tight for space in the house, but had a protected private rear yard.”

Art can inspire, evoke a feeling and add a splash of colour to a space. If you’ve never thought of adding art to your kitchen or bathroom, it might

Ardmillan by Bagnato Architects. Photography by Axiom Photography & Design



Otto Tiles Bejmat Rose Grey 01



Victoria + Albert IOS bath in design by Roselind Wilson Design. Photography by Richard Waite



be time to think again. “Art can change a mood; in a neutral kitchen it can introduce a pop of colour and a painting can completely change the feel of a space,” Brooke enthuses. “Open shelving is also a great way to display a piece of sculpted art. If it’s lit properly, you can get a fantastic play of shadow and light at night.”

When sourcing art as a decorative feature for your home, Frances says it can take time to find pieces you have a connection with. “I’d much rather people have a blank wall than rush to fill it with something cheap and cheerful. Wait to find the right piece or commission some artwork so you have an emotional connection to it.”

So what about art in bathrooms? “In my own home I purposely didn’t tile one wall because I wanted to add a piece of art that had personal meaning to me,” reveals Frances.

When choosing statement features for your home, there needs to be a point of balance. Too many statement features and you’ll reach a tipping point where it looks overdone. If you’re looking to enliven an existing space with a statement feature, Ray advocates consulting with design experts. “It’s useful to draw on their knowledge and experience,” he says. “Trying to choose a feature can be overwhelming as products and materials on offer change frequently. We work on multiple projects so we know trends and what will work in a space.”



Victoria + Albert Barcelona bath in design by Richard Best Architect. Photography by James Porschen



Buster Punch T-Bar Plate  
Smoked Bronze



J Adams & Co Spot  
Pendant Light 02