

# Kitchen Maker

Issue 9

Online

**WORKTOPS THAT  
REALLY WORK**  
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# WORKTOPS THAT REALLY WORK

KITCHEN WORKTOPS

WHEN it comes to picking a kitchen worktop, you should always choose a material you like and can afford and weigh up its advantages and disadvantages. Ideally, it should be scratch-proof, stain-proof and easy to clean and, of course, look good.

Choices abound: granite, quartz, ceramic, glass, Corian, wood, laminate, stainless steel and even concrete.

Buying the best kitchen worktop for your home can be a daunting task. With so many to choose from, it's easy to settle for something that turns out not to be the right fit for your kitchen, or life-style.

The kitchen is the heart of the home, bringing your family together, so you need to find a worktop that perfectly matches your kitchen's style.

So how do you recognise the ideal kitchen worktop for you? Well, first of all, you need to ask yourself some questions.

### 1. What is your budget?

Kitchen worktops can fit most budgets, but you don't really want to be scrimping on such a focal point, so make sure you can afford exactly what you want.

### 2. Do I have enough time for the installation?

We all lead busy lives, so make sure you have the time for your old worktops to be ripped out and replaced.

**3. Will I hire a professional to install it, or do it myself?** Depending on your own skill levels and the type of worktop you choose, it may be possible for you to fit your own. However, make sure you know exactly what you're doing before you start cutting anything up!

**4. Is there a need for a heat resistant worktop in your kitchen?** We've all put a hot pan down only to find out that it's left a mark on our work surface. If you want something that is resistant to heat, make sure you choose the right worktop.

### 5. Am I good with cleaning and wiping up any spills immediately?

Some worktops can be easily damaged through spills, whereas others take a spill in their stride. Choose wisely, or it could end up costing you later on!

### 6. How much area have I dedicated for the worktop?

Most worktops have a maximum length. If you want your worktop to be in one piece, without any visible joins, make sure you've correctly measured your space.

### 7. What colour and texture do I want?

There are almost unlimited choices when it comes to colour and texture, so finding the right one can be a little daunting. Find your style and find something that matches perfectly.





Once you have answers to these questions, you'll be able to understand the different worktop materials and make the right decision.

Let's have a look at the different types of worktops that you can choose from.

### GRANITE

Granite is a highly popular stone choice for worktops. It's stylish, luxurious and adds a quality feel to the kitchen.

It's also durable and functional — two of the most important qualities you want in a worktop.

Since granite is a natural stone, you can choose from many shades and patterns to match your kitchen's colour scheme.

Whether your kitchen is modern, or traditional, you will be able to find something in granite that looks both unique and appealing.

#### Advantages of granite worktops:

- They save you money, because they're long-lasting and don't depreciate in value.
- They're strong enough to take the heat of anything hot.
- They're not only hygienic, but also super-easy to clean.

#### Disadvantages of granite worktops:

- They can't be repaired, if they are damaged.
- They're heavy and require full support from the cabinets after fitting.
- They're porous and need to be sealed at least once every two years.

### QUARTZ

Although a man-made stone, quartz has the durability of natural stone. One of the best things about quartz is that it's scratch-

proof and can easily withstand chipping, which makes it low-maintenance.

Quartz has a consistent stone quality, which gives your worktop a more finished look and feel. Buying a quartz worktop is also an environmentally friendly option, as it contains waste materials.

#### Advantages of quartz worktops:

- They can be customised according to your preference, due to the wide range of colours and textures available.
- They're non-porous and, therefore, don't require sealing, which makes them highly stain resistant.
- They are strong and resilient to normal levels of wear and tear.

#### Disadvantages of quartz worktops:

- They can't handle too much heat.
- They're expensive compared to their other options. Besides the upfront costs, you'll have to pay more for a professional installation.
- They don't have a very natural look, but a more contemporary one.

### CERAMIC

People love ceramic worktops, because they're versatile and hygienic. They're also easy to match to a particular kitchen theme, due to the variety of colours and textures available.

What makes ceramic different from quartz and granite is the fact that even though it's harder than both, it can create a work surface with a thickness of as little as 10mm. This helps you get that clean, modern and refined look for your worktop and kitchen.

#### Advantages of ceramic worktops:

- They already have a beautiful, elegant appearance, but can also be given a unique look with the addition of decorative tile pieces.
- They're cheaper than their counterparts in terms of cost and do

not require replacement for a number of years.

- They're highly durable and heat/moisture-resistant.

#### Disadvantages of ceramic worktops:

- They have an uneven surface and are prone to scratching.
- They can crack, if you drop something heavy on them. Once cracked, they cannot be fixed and will have to be replaced.

### GLASS

One of the reasons many people opt for a glass worktop is that it helps them make a modern design statement.

These worktops are sleek, glossy and look super-stylish. Whatismore, they come in a vast number of different colours and are

renowned for the wide variety of unique designs they offer.

Cracked glass worktops are a popular choice with homeowners. Glass worktops can also be heavily customised, according to your individual preference.

#### Advantages of glass worktops:

- They are very durable, as well as being both heat and water resistant.
- They can be cut to the exact size/shape needed to fit in the kitchen's design and also come in colours that don't fade.
- They don't allow the build-up of stain, or mould, making them hygienic.



### Disadvantages of glass worktops:

- Despite their strength, they can crack, if excessive weight is placed on the corners.
- The surface can be damaged if highly acidic food content (such as tomato), or harsh cleaners are left standing for too long.
- They can be fairly heavy and expensive when compared to granite and quartz.

### CORIAN

Corian is a popular brand in the solid surface worktop market. Solid surface material is produced by mixing plastic resin and bauxite pigments. Once created, it is bonded to a timber substrate to create a solid surface worktop.

When it comes to matching the worktop to the kitchen's theme, or design, Corian does a great job.

Since it's not a natural material, you can get it one large sheet to create a "one sheet" worktop that has no joints, or seams.

### Advantages of Corian worktops:

- They don't feature a chipboard core, which makes them highly design flexible.
- They're non-porous, making them hygienic and dirt/bacteria resistant. In addition, there are no joints to trap germs.
- Any small damage, such as minor scratches and marks can be easily removed with regular cleaning products.

### Disadvantages of Corian worktops:

- Even after regular care, they collect small abrasions and scratches with time, which lowers the original satin finish.
- Although they are flexible in terms of design, they're expensive compared to other solid surface worktops.
- Since they're made of a type of plastic and not stone, they're less heat resistant than granite and quartz.



**WOOD**

A solid wood worktop has the ability to fully transform your kitchen. Whether you have a traditional kitchen, or a modern one, these worktops can add natural beauty to the place.

In order to achieve a traditional look, maple, oak and beech work well. For a slightly more exotic feel, wenge, bamboo and iroko are excellent choices.

What makes wooden worktops unique is that they develop a character and an even greater aesthetic appeal over time.

**Advantages of wooden worktops:**

- They improve with age and, with proper maintenance, can easily be kept in a good condition for a long time.
- They are solid, which means that you can sand away any accidental damage.
- They're naturally resistant to germs and bacteria.

**Disadvantages of wooden worktops:**

- They are a cheaper alternative, but require regular maintenance to maintain them in good condition.
- They need to be oiled regularly to avoid any permanent water damage.
- They can't withstand heat from hot pans and dishes. Also, you can't cut anything directly on the surface.

**LAMINATE**

Laminate worktops are made of high density chipboard and then coated with plastic laminate.

Currently, they are the most popular choice for worktops in the UK. They come in various sizes, colours and designs to help you achieve your desired look.

There is a vast array of options available to choose from, such as matt, high gloss, honed, riven, standard and riverwash. There are also laminate worktops that mimic other effects, such as granite and wood.

**Advantages of laminate worktops:**

- They're affordable and can easily fit within your budget.
- Their water-proof surface makes them easy to clean in case of a spill.
- They can be easily installed without the help of a professional.

**Disadvantages of laminate worktops:**

- They can be damaged by sharp, or heavy objects.
- Hot pans can leave scorch marks on the surface.
- They don't always go well with Belfast sinks, or under-mounted sinks.

**STAINLESS STEEL**

Stainless steel worktops are used by many restaurants for a reason. They're highly heat resistant and durable, making them the ideal choice for kitchens with heavy cooking usage

Stainless steel worktops contain a high level of nickel and chromium, which gives them the heat and stain resistant quality. They're also easy to clean and maintain.

**Advantages of stainless steel worktops:**

- Unlike natural stone, they're non-porous, which means that they won't stain, or harbour germs.
- They're not only resistant to heat, but also water. No liquid can penetrate into the material whatsoever.
- They're custom-made to match the look of your kitchen and are also easy to install.

**Disadvantages of stainless steel worktops:**

- They are not scratch-free and, with time, will accumulate many scratches.
- Without proper care, they may acquire dents.
- They can be noisy.

**CONCRETE**

Typically, concrete is more expensive than tile, synthetic solids or laminate, about the same price as engineered quartz, or granite countertops and less expensive than marble.

**Advantages of concrete worktops:**

- Concrete worktops are highly versatile.
- They can be made water and stain resistant by applying a surface sealer.

• Colour options are vitally endless with the use of integral colour, staining, or both.

• Concrete can be cast in any shape and practically any size.

• Contractors can create custom edge forms to replicate any design using moulding products, such as extruded styrene or liquid rubber, or plastic.

• Concrete countertops can be personalised with unique embedded items, such as pebbles, recycled glass and seashells.

• Concrete is not a static material. It will evolve and acquire character over time, developing a warm patina.

• Concrete is highly heat resistant (although you should always avoid placing hot saucepans on sealed surfaces, since the heat can damage, or discolour the sealer).

**Disadvantages of concrete worktops:**

• Concrete is porous and may stain quite easily.

• Large concrete worktops will have seams (although the appearance can be minimised with the use of a colour-matched filler).

You should always take your time when choosing the best kitchen worktop for your home, as it can be an investment that not only re-invigorates a tired kitchen, but it can also increase the value of your home.

As you can see, each type of worktop has its pros and cons, so make sure you know exactly what worktop fits your requirements and lifestyle before you make a purchase.

Once you're done choosing a kitchen worktop, try to hire a professional fitter if you can, because the last thing you want is your expensive worktop to look cheap and low quality. A professional fitter will ensure that the worktop is designed, cut and installed perfectly.



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## MARTIN



\* Supplied by Martin agent, Scott & Sargeant.

VIPOND Gillespie offers beautifully designed, hand-crafted kitchens and bespoke furniture. It is a company of fine cabinet makers, based in Sussex, working extensively across the South of England and throughout the UK and Europe.

At Vipond Gillespie, the company prides itself on listening to the individual requirements of its clients and it thrives on the challenges that this may bring.

Its expertise and years of experience designing furniture and bespoke kitchens, ensures that it can produce unique and practical solutions that are tailored to every client.

Attention to detail in every project is very important to the company. This is just one of the elements that give the company's highly crafted and engineered furniture the extra luxury and individuality that clients seek.

Vipond Gillespie's craftsmen are passionate about cabinet making. The love what they do and believe that the process of having kitchens and furniture hand-built should be a pleasurable experience.

This is why they strive to ensure that their clients achieve the dream furniture they desire, whilst enjoying a memorable experience from start to finish

Vipond Gillespie's craftsmen draw on a wealth of knowledge to deliver a personal, efficient and seamless service.

Using traditional joinery techniques and the finest of materials, Vipond Gillespie creates kitchens and furniture to last a life-time at its workshops based in the beautiful Sussex countryside.

However, none of that would be possible without the right machinery and, in this respect, the company has come to rely on the expertise of German woodworking machinery giant, Martin, from whom Vipond Gillespie recently purchased a T60C sliding table saw.\*

This is an ideal entry into the premium compact class. It strikes a perfect balance between price and performance, because all the key components of the circular saw T60C are designed exactly as you would expect from a Martin machine.

If a higher price does not directly reflect a higher performance, the T60C intentionally makes a "more compact" choice.

Focused engineering combined with an operating technology reduced to the basics make the T60C an excellent partner for anyone who is looking for a reasonably priced introduction to the top division of sawing. Every T60C saw promises a perfect balance between price and performance.

#### Scoring saw unit

The unit individually sets both the scoring position left and right on the basis of the stored saw blade data fully automatically.

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www.martin.info



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It is only then that the operator specifies the scoring height electronically and the setting is also provided automatically.

The adjustment ranges of the two axes are clearly displayed and easy to understand. Any requisite fine adjustment is therefore child's play.

It goes without saying that all settings are stored and not lost when switching off the unit.

A special feature of the scorer is the pneumatic lifting/lowering of the scoring saw blades. As a result, the unit is activated in seconds and also quickly taken out of service again. This reduces noise and increases safety.

#### **SafeLight**

If the scorer is running, the light integrated in the table insert draws the operator's attention to the operating situation. Martin thereby provides the user with a considerable increase in safety.

#### **ScribeMaster**

The "ScribeMaster" scoring saw system allows the scoring width to be set easily on the stationary scoring saw unit. Fiddling around with shims between the scoring saw blades is a thing of the past.

#### **Cross-cut table**

The sturdy cross-cut table is part of the basic equipment featured on the T60A saw. The cross-cut fence can be used in either the front, or rear position of the cross-cut table with just a simple movement.

The large angle scale integrated in the table allows precise mitre cuts between 0 deg and 50 deg to be executed by simply turning the cross-cut fence.

At Vipond Gillespie staff are passionate about beautiful kitchens. Now they have the help of Martin to achieve the best possible results.

Want to find out more?  
Visit [www.martin.info](http://www.martin.info)



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# GALWAY IRISH “CREATIVE WORKTOP SOLUTION COMPANY” ON TOP FORM



**LEADING** Irish kitchen manufacturer, TopForm based in Gort in County Galway has evolved from solely being a worktop manufacturer to become a “Creative Worktop Solution Company”.

From humble beginnings, TopForm has grown into one of Ireland’s premier suppliers of creative worktop solutions.

With 40 years of experience supplying to the construction industry, TopForm is at the cutting edge of innovation in laminating.

Topform was originally set up by a company called “Amhurst” in 1976 - a Canadian manufacturing company which established a factory in the Shannon Industrial Free Zone, manufacturing post-formed laminate worktops.

In 1977 TopForm relocated to its current site in Gort near Galway. Whilst the company faced tough market conditions in the early days and throughout the recession at the start of the 1980s – it survived and continued to grow from those early beginnings.

A management buyout by Paul Glynn in 1996, brought about many changes. Modern manufacturing techniques and new equipment were introduced and so too began the pursuit of offering some of the best worktops in the world.

Indeed, it can truly be said that the company is passionate about

worktops and has searched the world to bring innovative decors and products to market and produce some of Ireland’s best known kitchen worktops in the TopShape, TopPlus, TopContract and TopWood ranges.

The components side to our business runs hand in hand with the laminate bonding and worktops side of the business.

In addition, much of the Irish company’s office furniture and components have found their way into some of the biggest and best known offices and boardrooms across Europe, along with supplying into all of the leading suppliers of mobile homes in the UK’s leisure industry. Nowadays, TopForm supplies many of Ireland’s and the UK’s leading companies with desking & furniture components.

TopForm’s high quality worktop range is produced with many new worktop textures and designs and offers an unrivalled vibrancy.

TopForm’s worktops combine high quality materials and vibrant colours to create cutting edge designs.

This range combines an impressive array of designs aimed at satisfying the needs of quality-conscious customers.

TopForm has evolved from being solely a worktop company to become a Creative Worktop Solution Company. Nowadays,

the components side to the business runs hand in hand with the laminate bonding and worktops aspects

TopForm offers a wide variety of laminates and melamine-faced chipboards (MFC) to choose from and the company can also manufacture to specific colour and size specification for larger contracts.

TopForm has thrived through innovation and premium quality. Since 2008, through the company’s “Laminate Fights Back,” initiative, it has been pursuing new materials and designs that radically change the look and feel of laminate-based work surfaces.

TopForm is delighted to say that it has successfully “raised the bar” in terms of quality in laminate, with its range of colours, textures and flagship products TopShape and TopShape Custom.

2007 brought about the launch of TopShape. After many years of brainstorming, rigorous research & development and production programmes, it was finally time to launch TopShape, a pre-manufactured square edged, fully finished countertop to the market place. This became the fastest growing new product introduction in the history of Topform.

In 2008 an initiative was launched that saw “Laminate Fight Back” against other competing work surfaces, such as granite.

Laminate was sourced worldwide and new materials and designs were introduced that radically changed the look and feel of laminate based worktops, making them more attractive to customers.

In 2011 the TopShape Custom programme was developed in order to meet customers’ requests for individual bespoke customised worktops in the TopShape range. Aptly named TopShape Custom, it has grown from strength to strength.

In 2014 TopForm launched the company’s brand new, digitally optimised website. The new laminate kitchen worktop colour and range was also introduced.

TopForm won “Exporter of the Year” in the SFA National Small Business Awards 2015 and again in 2016. It was at this time that John Flannery joined the team as managing director, with Paul

Glynn becoming chairman.

TopForm has a small dedicated, well-trained team and prides itself on offering excellent customer service, as good customer service is the life-blood of any business.

Good customer service is all about bringing you the customer back and sending him away happy. If this results in positive feed-back being given to others, they may want to try our product and, in turn, could become loyal customers too. TopForm believes that the company is “judged by what we do, not what we say”.

Recently TopForm felt that it needed to adjust its customer service offering and changed from having sales representatives on the road to having dedicated in-house customer service representatives.

Each customer is now assigned an in-house contact and all correspondence goes through a dedicated in-house customer service representative.

TopForm’s promise is that all standard worktops ordered from its TopPlus, TopShape, TopContract & TopWood ranges, placed on a Monday before 3pm will be delivered by the following Friday, or Monday at the latest.

Worktops that are in our Express range can be ordered up until 2pm on a Wednesday for delivery by the same Friday/Monday.

TopForm also offers a custom bespoke programme in its TopShape range, whereby “You design... We make”. Once signed off, these bespoke worktops will be delivered within 2 weeks.

Specialist components and desking for the leisure and furniture industry are generally on a three- to four- week lead time.

A scheduled delivery date is provided once an order has been scheduled with production.

Want to find out more? Visit [www.topform.ie](http://www.topform.ie)



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# A LOOK AT ONE OF THE LARGEST WOODWORKING MACHINERY & TOOLING COMPANIES IN IRELAND

HIGH-Tech Machinery Ltd of Dublin, is one of the largest and more progressive woodworking machinery and tooling companies in Ireland.

High-Tech represents only those manufacturers who are leaders in their field, which offer specialist expertise and who provide guaranteed quality and total customer support – it's the main reason for High-Tech Machinery's success to date.

Companies for whom High-Tech Machinery acts as the main agent in Ireland include:

- . Weinig (for planers and moulders).
- . Holz-Her (for edge-banders).
- . Masterwood (for CNC machinery).
- . Martin (for top quality panel saws, spindle moulders, planers and thicknessers
- . Robland (for panel saws, classical machines and edge-banders).
- . EMC (for sanders).
- . Casadei (for classical machinery).

Customer care is the company's top priority. As far as High-Tech Machinery is concerned the customer is "King". At High-Tech Machinery every possible effort is made to ensure complete customer satisfaction.

The Irish company can offer a wide choice of machinery,

handling equipment and tooling for solid wood and panel processing, with prompt back-up from factory trained Dublin-based engineers.

One of the companies which High-Tech machinery is proud to represent is the renowned German manufacturer, Martin.

For the past 95 years Martin has become synonymous with the best quality, long service life and innovative strength of woodworking machines.

Martin invented the sliding table saw with a tiltable saw blade back in 1959 and the sliding table saw with a saw blade tiltable on both sides made its debut in 2006.

The unique composite frame, which is a feature of Martin machinery was launched in 1983.

Over the past few weeks High-Tech Machinery has been busy installing numerous first-class woodworking machines for professionals.

A recent installation undertaken by High-Tech Machinery was at EMP Furniture Manufacturers Ltd, based in Williamstown, County Galway. The company was first established in 1980 to specialise in the manufacture, supply and installation of bespoke furniture. At EMP there was a need for the company to up its production once again with the installation of two new saws supplied by High-Tech Machinery.



One of the two machines purchased recently by EMP Furniture was a Holz-Her Tectra 6120 beam saw for the speedy processing of large quantities of panels.



High-Tech Machinery was proud to be a part of the National Skills competition finals earlier this year by providing the machines for the cabinet making competition.



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EMP Furniture chose the Martin T65 with a 3.7m sliding table for processing the company's solid surface materials.



The Holz-Her Tectra 6120 purchased by EMP Furniture is the Power version equipped with a veneer overhang device and jump blade for post-forming.

One of the two machines purchased recently by EMP Furniture was a Holz-Her Tectra 6120 beam saw for the speedy processing of large quantities of panels. This machine is the Power version equipped with a veneer overhang device and jump blade for post-forming.

The other purchase was a Martin T65 sliding table saw featuring the extremely stable, thick walled composite structure, that is only found in Martin products.

With a weight of just under 1,800kg, giving a superior vibration free cut to the material, this was the main reason why EMP Furniture chose the Martin T65 with a 3.7m sliding table for

processing the company's solid surface materials.

EMP Furniture chose these machines because of the unrivalled German build quality and prompt after sales service for which High-Tech Machinery is renowned.

March 2019 saw the National Skills Finals held in the RDS – a unique showcase of over 20 varied skills in a competitive setting.

The winners in each event had the opportunity to represent Ireland at the World Skills Olympics in Russia.

High-Tech Machinery was proud to be a part of the competition by providing the machines for the cabinet making competition.



Want to find out more?  
Visit [www.high-tech.ie](http://www.high-tech.ie)

Students from the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology visited High-Tech Machinery's premises in Dublin after GMT student, Cian Mulligan won a top award at the IrelandSkills National competition.



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