



Brass accents soften this pure white kitchen's look. For the island, a sheet of solid brass was folded and welded to the shape of a door and given an acid wash to create a warm patina. Roundhouse Classic, Urbo and Metro matt lacquer bespoke kitchen in RA19016. Roundhouse bespoke kitchens start at £35,000.

The copper content of high-end brass also makes it more sanitary, thanks to its powerful antimicrobial properties – plus it can be recycled in its pure form, making it better for the planet, too. Solid brass has become distinctly popular in recent years, thanks to its ability to develop character over time. Polished finishes and on-trend antique designs are so-called living finishes that naturally patinate with use and as they react to their environment.

While it's tempting to recreate the look with cheaper brass-plated pieces (often made from zinc or steel with a thin coating of brass), they will inevitably carry a shorter lifespan. It's important to work out whether your product is solid brass or plated when it comes to cleaning too, as you can scratch the latter off by polishing – warm water and soap is best, according to Barrie Cutchie, design director at BC Designs. The simple way to test whether it's solid or not is with a magnet. If it doesn't stick, it's brass – if it does, it's plated.

"Living finishes shouldn't be cleaned with anything abrasive, as this will take it back to the natural brass base layer – a fine wax coating can protect it, but warm, soapy water is best for every day," says Wayne Dymond, marketing director at Turnstyle Designs. If you prefer the shiny look of polished brass, you can maintain its sheen with a good-quality cleaner. "The key is to regularly clean your brass, as it's much harder once soap residue or limescale sets in," adds Cutchie. "For a deeper clean, make a solution of vinegar and water with a ratio of 1:1 and spray this over your fixture and the surrounding area. Let it sit for a couple of minutes before giving it a quick scrub with a soft cloth and rinse off with water." >



Brushed brass not only offers a cool look, it's also durable and low maintenance, attracting fewer fingerprints – perfect for kitchen taps. Pro Flex 3 in 1 brushed brass boiling-water tap, from £799, Wodar.

Brass ripple pendant sconce, £595, Jonathan Adler.



Brass doesn't rust, so is ideal for wet spaces. Matki's Classica shower enclosure features pure brass frames in aged brass, price on application. The solid brass fittings are from Swadling Brassware.

MATERIAL OF THE MONTH

We investigate the possibilities and practicalities of brass, giving you the lowdown before you buy

Words: Charlotte Luxford

As modern maximalism has come to the fore, so has brass. Used during the Arts & Crafts movement, the Mid-century era and the disco heydays of the 1970s (all of which are influencing the latest design trends), brass accents are back.

The material exudes the sought-after laid-back luxe look, with chrome being phased out in favour of honey-coloured patinated finishes in Shaker kitchens and Victorian-style bathrooms to create a nostalgic feel. Brushed brass is often a go-to for contemporary spaces; trims add a touch of glamour to handleless kitchens, while brass-backed islands and splashbacks create jewel-like statement pieces. It is also being paired with

modern black fixtures and fittings in bathrooms, to create an eclectic, industrial look.

Brass is versatile, lending itself to numerous manufacturing techniques, subsequently generating a vast range of textures and finishes. From hammered surfaces to electroplated finishes including vintage nickel and satin brass, the possibilities are seemingly endless. "Brass is an alloy metal: a combination of copper and zinc," explains Martyn Whieldon, managing director at Samuel Heath. "Look for products with a high copper content and watch out for the addition of poor-quality iron or tin; a pure composition of brass has a high thermal conductivity, durability and corrosion resistance, producing fixtures that will last and perform well."

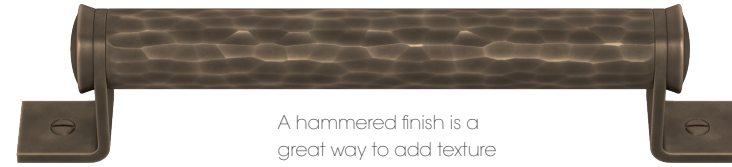


Satin brass trims and pull handles add warmth and a touch of luxury to this large family kitchen. Urban kitchen in grey wild oak veneer with Armac Martin Longbridge handles in unlacquered satin brass. Created by Brandt Design, the scheme cost £66,000.

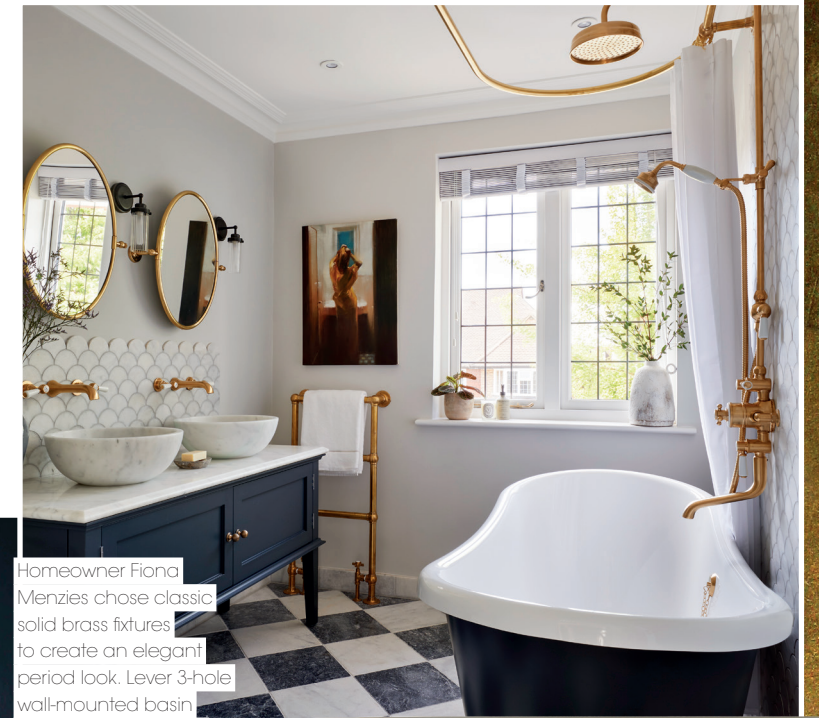


far left Waterworks' latest range pairs brass with enamel for a distinct look. Bond Union series volume control with enamel guilloche lines lever handle in brass and Sienna enamel, £528.

Reminiscent of a time when we would bathe by a fire, Catchpole & Rye's handmade brass Bateau collection denotes luxury and glamour. This freestanding tub makes a real statement, shown in Catchpole & Rye's weathered brass finish which is ideal for recreating the heritage look. Each bath is formed from brass sheeting, moulded into shape, then hand finished in the Kent workshop. Brass baths start from £7200.



A hammered finish is a great way to add texture and interest, while offering a softer look. A living finish, will provide a more understated luxury look. Barrell bracket solid hammered cabinet pull in burnished brass, from £164, Turnstyle Designs.



Homeowner Fiona Menzies chose classic solid brass fixtures to create an elegant period look. Lever 3-hole wall-mounted basin filler in brushed brass, £444, from BC Designs.



Light switches are handled possibly more than any other element in the house, so it's worth investing in a quality design. Pooky's dimmer switches start from £34 for a one-gang switch.



The brass interior of this design adds an extra warm glow. Bert Frank Shear pendant light in white, from £336, Nest.



Tom Dixon Beat tall and wide pendants, £355 each, Sofa.com. Shown here with Florence double bed in grey marl Highland tweed, £1000, KBB.