

doors and cabinetry can introduce symmetry into an irregular space, creating a sense of order. And within one piece of interior architecture, such as a door or window, sticking to the same finish across hinges and handles creates cohesion. On the other hand, a considered blending of finishes can produce a relaxed feel. 'I have mixed metal finishes in my kitchen, creating a layered, lived-in look,' says designer Lucy Van der Gucht. 'An aged copper extractor hood brings gravitas, antique brass drawer pulls warm up the joinery's mushroom tones and bronze wall lights add depth to the neutral colour scheme.'

## ALL IN THE DETAIL

Ideally, hardware should be both practical and decorative – but first bear in mind its primary use. 'Consider the proportions of doors and drawers and the scale of your hardware on a vanity or kitchen,' advises Balineum's Sarah Watson. 'As a basic rule, a handle slightly smaller than a third of the width of a drawer or door will work well. If it's an extra-wide drawer, use two smaller handles, each roughly one-fifth of the width of the drawer. If the room is small, choose something more delicate, and if it is large, make sure your pieces are more substantial. For appliances like concealed fridges and dishwashers, hardware should be robust. A small pull can be difficult to grasp and might not be strong enough for the weight of the door.'

A key factor in choosing the right hardware is to carefully consider the style of the fittings they are planned for. 'A rustic Shaker kitchen pairs beautifully with smooth leathers or antiqued metals, while contemporary spaces often suit polished chrome or matt black finishes,' says Turnstyle Designs' Oscar Roberts. 'To achieve a cohesive look, take into account other metal accents in the space – such as sinks, taps and lighting – and ensure they work harmoniously.'

When it comes to joinery, bear in mind colour too. 'For a dark tone like navy, try a bolder hardware choice like bronze or satin brass,' advises Neptune's design director Fred Horlock. 'Meanwhile, black hardware works particularly well with lighter colour schemes like sage, adding contrast and interest to the space.'

While the architectural period of a home plays its part, there are times when the specific destination of the hardware is more important. 'A minimalist kitchen scheme, even in a period house with traditional sash window catches and door knobs, looks best with contemporary hardware,' advises Victoria Wormsley of French-Brooks Interiors. 'An Edwardian-inspired bathroom with a traditional cast-iron bath likewise suits traditional taps. It is possible to contrast the styles of the fittings – such as a contemporary marble bath with traditional tapware – but do co-ordinate another aspect, like a bronze tap finish to pick out brownish veins in marble, for example. That helps to bridge the style gap.' ►



DESIGN INSIGHT



ABOVE 'Updating hardware is one of the simplest ways to refresh without a full renovation,' says Laura Stephens, who introduced aged brass elements here for a smart look.

LEFT Brass taps and heated towel rails complement a classic copper bathtub from The Cast Iron Bath Company in this traditional scheme by Studio Duggan.