

Ask the EXPERTS

Meet our team of professionals, on hand to answer your kitchen queries, from appliances to layouts and worktops

THE PANEL



RICHARD BROADBENT
Managing director, Sinks-taps.com



YSANNE BROOKS
Editor, Beautiful Kitchens



ALISON BURFORD
Multichannel marketing manager, Comet



CAZ MYERS
Interior designer and director, Caz Myers Design



ANNE STENNETT
Head of white goods, Dixons Retail



JON WALTERS
Service delivery manager, The Furniture Ombudsman

Q BARBECUING INDOORS
We love cooking outside, but the British weather means we can't do it as often as we'd like. A friend mentioned you can buy small built-in hobs that mimic barbecue-style cooking indoors. Can you tell me more about these?
MYA LIU, north London

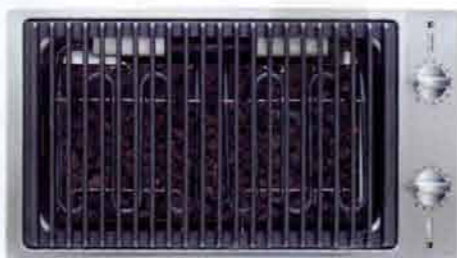
The type of hob your friend is referring to is called a domino, which fits into a space approximately 27 x 50cm. They usually have two cooking zones and come in both gas and electric, from solid-plate models up to induction, which deliver the speed and flexibility of gas, but is electrically powered.

If you want to recreate that alfresco experience, you should look at an electric barbecue grill, which produces fantastic tasting meat and fish, cooked on lava rocks for an authentic smoky flavour.

Alternatively, you might like to combine a barbecue grill with other domino hobs, such as a wok burner and teppanyaki. A wok burner is great for high-speed cooking and there are some really stylish models available, including cast-iron pan supports on black ceramic glass trimmed with stainless steel.

Teppanyaki hobs have become increasingly popular, as cooking with them is a healthy, wok-style way of preparing fresh vegetables, meat and fish, without losing any of their texture or nutrients.

ALISON BURFORD



Miele's CS1312BG electric domino grill, around £1,100



Emerald Marmoleum costs £28sq m and is a highly durable option for a colourful surface underfoot

Q I WANT BRIGHT FLOORING
Over the last few months I've bought quite a few issues of your brilliant magazine, as I'm installing a new kitchen. However, I'm still struggling with my flooring decision. I want something plain in a bright, bold colour – possibly an azure blue or even green or yellow. The thing is, I'm desperate to avoid hard tiles that feel cold and aren't child-friendly, while I think vinyl may well get marked by my high heels. Finally, we only have a tight budget to work with. Please help!
LIZZ MARTIN, via email

Your choice of kitchen flooring is often as important as the cabinetry you select, and definitely deserves as much time going through the various options as you would spend on picking your furniture.

One of the first floorcoverings that springs to mind is Marmoleum, a type of linoleum made from flaxseed and linseed oil, wood flour, natural pigment and combined with a coarse jelly. It comes in a range of bright, plain colours – five of which are blue, and two are green. Marmoleum is also durable and more eco-friendly than rubber flooring, as it's non-toxic, biodegradable and recyclable. It is also soft to walk on, so is a great surface for little ones who are likely to topple over. Most floorcoverings do mark eventually, so as concrete is out as an option, you may have to invest in some cosy slippers for you and the family.

Lastly, remember that it is much harder to replace the flooring than your cabinetry, so ensure you think carefully about what you really want, to avoid changing your mind in six months' time.

YSANNE BROOKS



Q HOW CAN I ACCESSORISE WITH GREY?
It's been five years since I had my kitchen installed and I'd like to update it with some grey accessories, which seem very much in fashion at the moment. What can you suggest?
GRACE TEMPLE, via email

Grey works brilliantly in a kitchen as either an accent or as the main palette, while different tones of charcoal and slate chime effortlessly together.

Light and dark greys also provide a great backdrop to other colours, such as purple and orange, so a striking grey splashback may be a good place to start.

When it comes to contemporary accessories in various shades of grey,

you'll be spoilt for choice. As well as sleek, modern appliances, there's a whole host of touches to complete your look, ranging from placemats and tea towels to stylish wall clocks.

To ensure your kitchen looks bang on-trend, why not try introducing a combination of patterns and shades to create a super-sophisticated scheme?
CAZ MYERS



- 1 The Ascaso Dream Espresso coffee machine in Anthracite costs £541 at Wayfair
- 2 A wall clock will ensure you are always running on time. Try this 12.0 solid-foam design from Contemporary Lab, £32
- 3 Known for its practical utensils, Joseph Joseph offers this Grey Grip-top chopping board, £16
- 4 Glass splashbacks are a great way to add your chosen hue, but instead of a bright shade, consider this muted grey from Specialist Glasswork. From £400/m

Q WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?
I'm currently planning a kitchen renovation, but I'm worried about my legal rights should a serious problem arise with the installation. Do you have any advice?
CHRISTINE MASON, via email

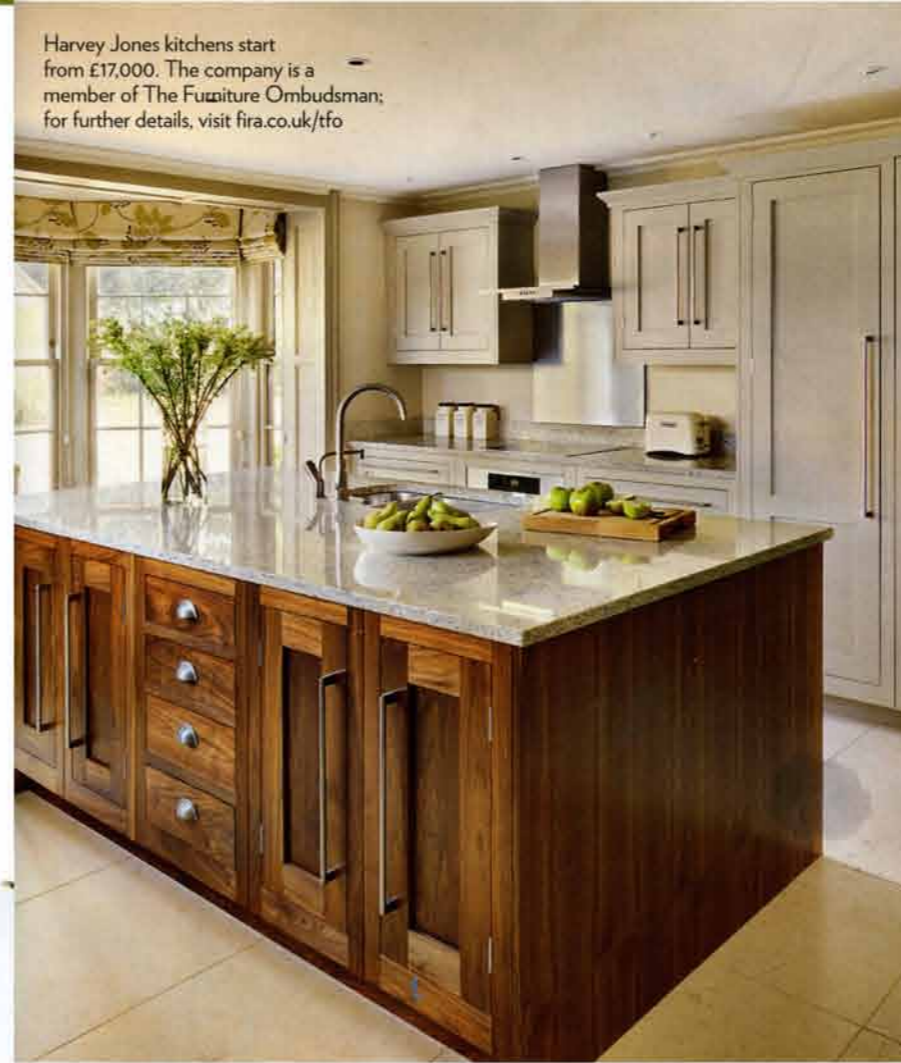
Issues do sometimes occur with kitchen installations, as it can be a complicated business. The law states that all services undertaken should be done with 'reasonable care and skill'. This is measured against the standard of a competent tradesperson. Further, any goods supplied must be fit for purpose and be of satisfactory quality.

Many companies subscribe to The Furniture Ombudsman's Code of Practice, which is underpinned by an independent dispute-resolution service and administered by qualified staff. The process offers peace of mind for customers and brings disagreements to a swift conclusion. The results can include remedial works, allowances to keep the kitchen in its current condition, and payment for any direct losses incurred.

It is always worth giving the retailer the opportunity to rectify things and if there are any further problems, you're in a stronger legal position by having acted reasonably. Remember to keep letters, emails and notes on calls made in case you need to refer to these at a later date. There is no provision for issues that come to light in relation to accidental damage or wear and tear.

If the kitchen is supplied by one business and fitted by another, and each paid for separately, it is important to approach the right one if things go wrong. If there is any guarantee of warranty, you may also claim under these. They are effectively a separate contract that offers additional protection for consumer's legal rights.

JON WALTERS



Harvey Jones kitchens start from £17,000. The company is a member of The Furniture Ombudsman; for further details, visit fira.co.uk/tfo