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July 2019

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Welcome to our first edition of our Self Build and Renovation magazine

There's something thrilling about designing and building your own home, or overseeing a big renovation to an existing property. It's a journey that can be emotional and exhausting - but also hugely fulfilling. It's no surprise, then, that some of the most popular programmes on TV for the past decade - from Grand Designs to Dermot Bannon's Room to Improve - have explored the challenges inherent in self-build. And most of us love seeing how it all turns out!

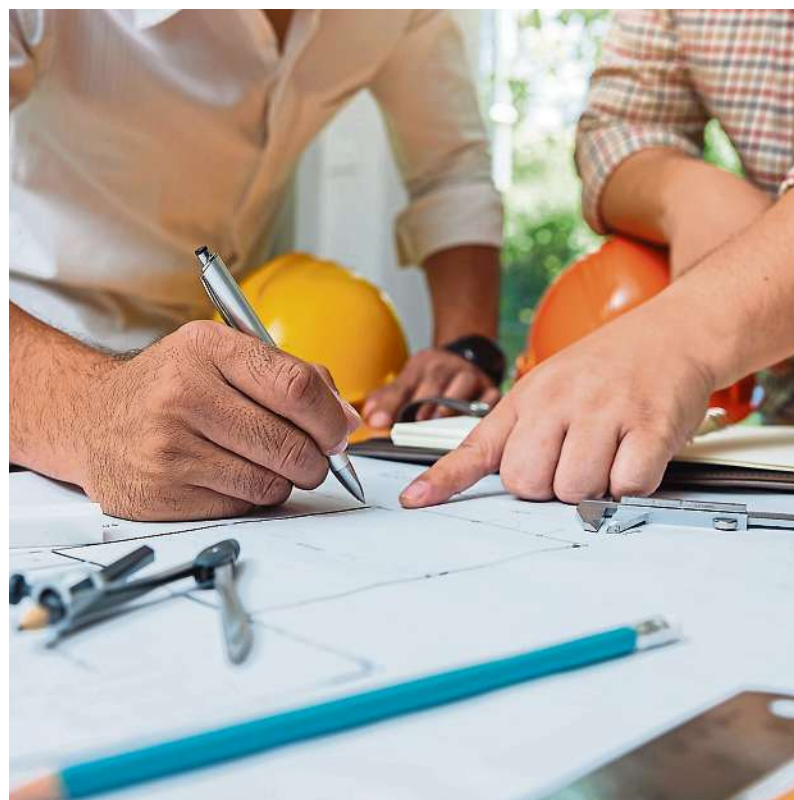
This special publication from the Iconic stable of local newspapers provides you with some of the practical information you'll need when embarking on a project of your own. Whether you're setting out on a major initiative to build your dream home from scratch or just giving your house a bit of a touch up, we'd like to think you'll find something of interest here.

Everyone has their own idea of what makes for a dream home - whether it's a city-centre period restoration, a new dormer bungalow in the countryside or an eco-lodge in the woods, every project brings its own challenges and its own satisfaction.

Before you get going, though, there's a lot to consider - and we hope that the information in this publication provides some helpful pointers. Getting professionals on board early can save you time and potential heartache!

Finally, we're grateful to the advertisers who have supported the supplement - Irish businesses who can help you at different stages of the journey in making that dream home a reality!

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Can I get a grant?



Make you you take advantage of the financial assistance on offer when going for a self-build

There's a variety of grants and allowances available for those considering a self-build or renovation project, particularly for the energy-conscious.

Alas, the Government's Home Renovation Incentive, a tax relief for carrying out any kind of upgrade in your home, has been discontinued, as of December 31, 2018.

However, there are other ways to reduce the cost of your build, while ensuring you have a home built for the future.

The Help to Buy Scheme

This scheme helps first-time-buyers put down a deposit to build their new home or to buy one. You should ask your solicitor to complete your paperwork when opting for a self-build. You'll find more information on the Revenue website (www.revenue.ie).

Energy Efficient Homes

There are grants for insulation, solar thermal panels, boiler upgrades and controls, for homes built before 2006. A contribution towards your Building Energy Rating in context of the work is also available. The SEAI website (www.seai.ie) provides full information on this.

The SEAI also offers grants for homes built and occupied before 2011: a heat pump grant and a grant for PV panels (solar panels that generate electricity) including battery storage.

The Warmer Homes Scheme

This consists of free energy upgrades for low income families receiving fuel allowance. Again, the SEAI website has full information.

Offers from utility companies

Whether it's subsidies towards heat pumps, or help with insulation measures, or even free thermostats, the various utility companies in the market can provide a helping hand. There's also a grant for home charging e-points available from the SEAI - which may become all the more popular following the recent Government plan on reducing carbon emissions. And that's not all ...

There are various other grants available, such as a thatching grant (maximum €3,810) for thatched roofs, the Traditional Farm Buildings Grant (maximum €25,000), and grants for heritage buildings requiring repair. More details on these can be found on the very informative SelfBuild website (www.selfbuild.ie).



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Benefits of a quantity surveyor



It's all about making sure you get the best possible value out of your investment

Almost all types of construction projects, ranging from large building projects to residential extensions, can benefit from the services of a qualified quantity surveyor.

Also known as construction economists, project managers and cost engineers, quantity surveyors are a key part of large-scale commercial projects, but they can also make a valuable contribution to self-build projects.

Whether the project is massive or modest, the objective is the same: ensuring that the property owner gets the best value out of his or her investment.

The main task of a quantity surveyor is to cost the building project. But apart from this critical function, a quantity surveyor also performs other tasks that can effectively reduce the risks associated with any type of construction project.

These tasks include:

- Cost planning
- Setting timetables
- Value engineering
- Conducting feasibility studies
- Valuation of works and work packages.

Apart from ensuring that a project remains within budget, quantity surveyors can perform multiple roles, including quality control.

Some think that hiring a building surveyor will only add to the overall project cost. Others argue otherwise. According to Derek Gough Associates, a leading quantity surveying firm: "It may sound counterintuitive, but hiring a quantity surveyor before the project starts can actually help you save more money over the long run."

Ideally, you should appoint an independent quantity surveyor at around the same

time that you hire an architect for your self build or home extension. This will ensure that you can actually afford the project cost before the submission of building plans. It is critical to underscore the importance of hiring a surveyor independent from the construction firm and the architect.

An independent surveyor will act as your representative and can prove to be an invaluable ally in situations where conflicts arise between the builder and the property owner.

Your quantity surveyor can ensure that you are not over-charged and provide you with comfort and advice during the mediation process.



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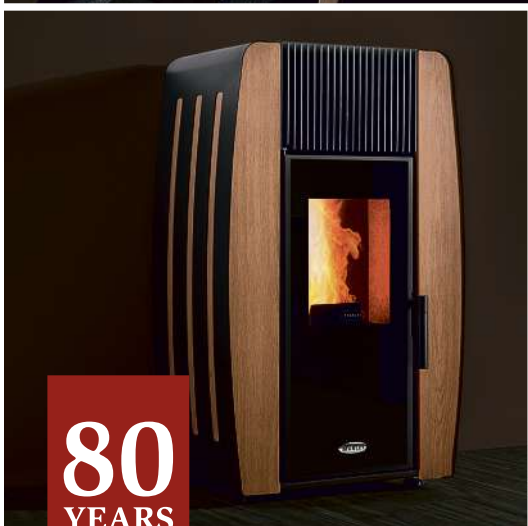
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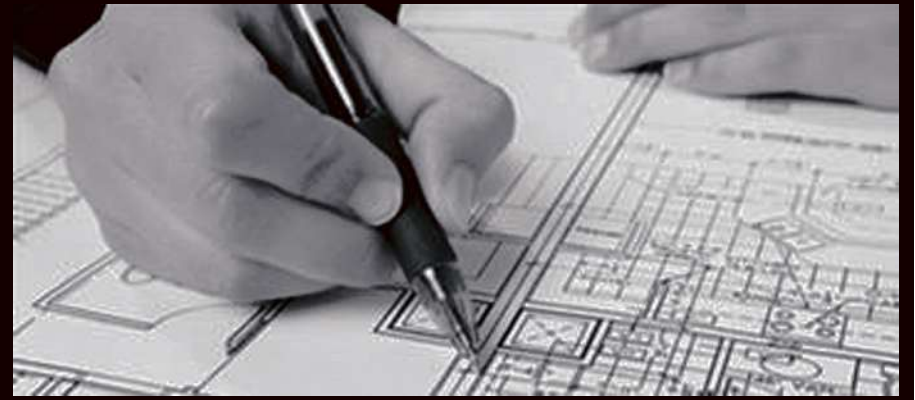
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Choosing an architect

Five tips to make sure you choose a winner for your build

Very few things are more exciting than building your own home.

Sure, there's a lot of work and energy involved, but think about it. You get to create the home that you've been dreaming about for ages. And nothing tops the excitement of actually watching your build get bigger and stronger by the day. Lucky you!

However, it's not quite so easy taking the image in your head and translating it into an actual house.

Most of us will have to hire in an architect to draw it up and flesh it out.

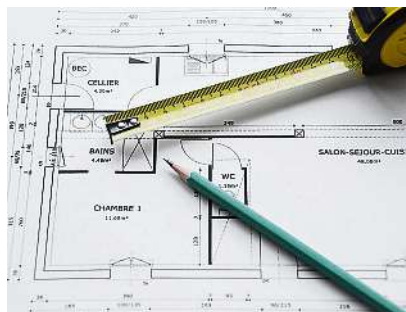
It's their job to help you draw out plans for the home you want and the function of the build, as well as overseeing the financial costs to make sure that your budget is being spent in the best possible way.

Choosing the right architect is vital to the success of your build, but how do you pick the right one?

Here are five tips to make sure that you pick a winner for your build.

1. Ask around

Most people find architects or various trades simply by just asking their friends and neighbours who've already built their own homes.



Don't be afraid to knock on some doors of local houses that you like. You might get a couple of odd looks, but all it takes is one person to answer and give you the name of the architect you've been hoping for.

2. Look online in the right places

Google isn't always the most reliable source when it comes to finding the right architect.

A good starting point is the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI), which has a very useful search facility and a register of over 2,600 architects on its website.

An RIAI architect is professionally qualified, legally registered to practice and bound by a code of ethics established by The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, so you know that you're getting the good stuff.

3. Ask for a portfolio

Ask all architects that you deal with to bring a portfolio of their work with photos of projects that they've completed.

Look out for the quality of the finished projects and if the designs overall are in-line with your taste.

You might see a portfolio full of extravagant and complexly

designed homes, but if you're just looking for a simple 4-bedroom and enough space to throw the odd shindig, maybe reach out for other options.

4. Look up architects who have experience in your local area

It's wise to consider an architect who is experienced in dealing with planners in the area in which you plan to build. This will help the planning permission process go as smoothly as possible as they will understand what is and isn't acceptable to the local planning authority.

Remember, don't start construction on your build until you have full permission from your local authority.

5. Make sure they'll listen

Hire an architect who listens and is willing and able to interpret your ideas into the designs you want.

After all, you'll be the one who will actually be living in the house. So you need to make sure that they're helping you realise your ideal home and preferences, not theirs.

If you feel that the connection isn't strong to begin with, you may end up less than friends at the end of the tunnel.

It's also important that you as a client stick to the design once you and your architect decide on it.

Any deviation from the original design during the build can have a dramatic knock-on effect on your budget – and no one wants that!

Article originally published by EBS, see www.ebs.ie

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Before you break ground ...



Five things to understand before you start getting on with your self-build

Building a new home can be such an exciting experience that a desire to crack on with it as soon as possible is perfectly understandable - but you need to give careful consideration to a number of key factors before breaking ground.

Understanding these things will make the home-building process easier. It will also help you make sure your home is what you truly want.

Know Your Plot

The land that you own could be easy to build on or it could be hard. Depending on the land you have, your builder will need to look at different ways of actually building the home.

Plan a Budget

Building companies work with a lot of people on different kinds of budgets. Some people don't know where to start with the budget for their homes. This is a huge problem because they might run out of money before the project is complete.

While you might be approved for a certain amount to build your home with, this doesn't necessarily mean you should use that whole amount. If you have a budget in mind, you'll be able to make the home building process easier on yourself and more affordable.

Understand What You Like

Even though you might have hundreds of pictures saved from different magazines or websites, you might not know what your favourite style is called or what you like in a home. Think about what you like and prepare to show your builder all the ideas you have for your home. If you are prepared with these options, you'll be able to get the home that you really want.

Think of Extra Features

While there are some home building essentials you'll need to think about with your home, also consider any additional features you want your home to have. Adding these features is much easier to do during the home building process instead of after you've already built your home.

Consider How Long You'll Be There

You want your home to fit your lifestyle. If your family is going to grow in the future or if you plan on making any major changes, think about that before building the home. Chances are, you don't want to have to add on to your home five years down the road. On the other hand, if you're building at a time when your children are growing up fast, are you sure you're going to need as much space? Since there are so many specifics that go into building a home, think about what you really want. Consider the specifics and always get a good builder to do the work for you. Think of these things before breaking ground.



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Septic tank systems: essential facts

Installing a system at your self-build home means complying with legal requirements

Maintaining your septic tank system helps to protect your health and your local environment.

Around 500,000 households in Ireland have a septic tank system and 137,000 of these also have a private well for drinking water.

One quarter of septic tank systems inspected failed the inspection due to lack of proper operation and maintenance – this can affect your drinking water. Many people assume that their well water is safe to drink and don't treat it or get it tested.

Here are some frequently asked questions on septic tank systems.

What is the difference between a septic tank system and a packaged treatment system?

Both treat domestic wastewater. A septic tank system depends more on the soil in the percolation area to provide most of the treatment and so works well where the ground conditions are suitable. A packaged treatment system has more mechanical parts that treat the wastewater within the system itself and less on the soil, these systems require more maintenance. Sludge has to be removed from both types of systems.

What are my responsibilities as a homeowner?

You have a legal obligation and a duty of care to make sure your system is

installed, operated and maintained so it doesn't pose a risk to human health and the environment.

What is the sludge in the system?

All of the wastewaters from your dwelling house discharge to your system. The sludge is an accumulation of all of the solids.

Why do I need to remove the sludge from my septic tank system?

The sludge must not build up too much or your system will stop working properly. The sludge, if not removed, can block the pipes in your percolation area. If this happens it is very difficult to clean and may require replacement – an expensive option! It could also cause a risk to human health and the environment.

How often should you remove the sludge from your system?

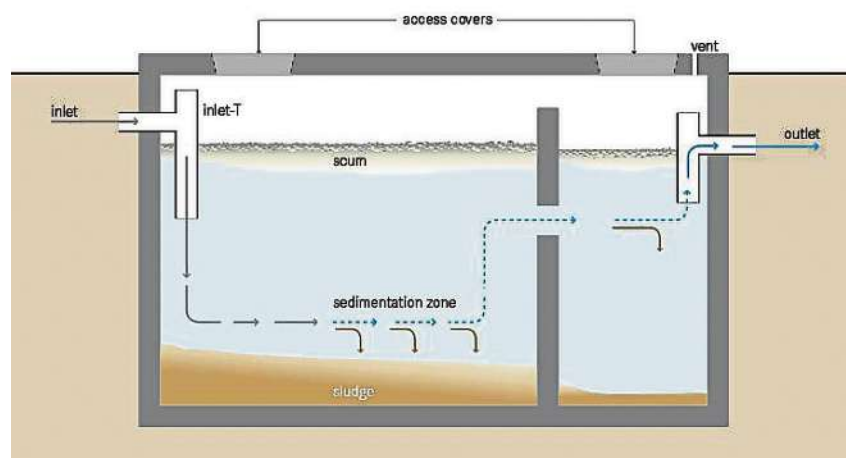
It is recommended to remove the sludge regularly, how often depends on the system's capacity and use. You must remove the sludge from the tank if the sludge comes up to about 400 mm from the bottom of the tank. A minimum of 75 mm of sludge should remain in the tank as it contains billions of the good microbes necessary to help breakdown the new solids. Use a permitted contractor and keep your receipt.

Who can remove the sludge from your system?

If you are a farmer with your own land you can spread the sludge but only in accordance with the Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) regulations. If you do not have your own land you must get the sludge removed by a permitted contractor. Details on permitted contractors operating in your county are available from your local authority.

Where does the sludge go?

Permitted contractors bring the sludge to authorised wastewater treatment plants for treatment. Details on permitted contractors operating in your county are available from your local authority.





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Guide to BER ratings

Investing the money in making your self-build energy efficient will pay for itself over time

In 2019, the idea of making your self-build as eco-friendly as possible is not just accepted - it's almost expected.

Getting your house a top BER rating may cost a bit more in the short term but it's an investment that pays for itself over time.

For example, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) estimates that the annual fuel costs of a detached house with an A rating is €800 as opposed to €7,900 for a detached house with a G rating.

Here's a basic guide to BER ratings. You'll find much more detail on the SEAI website (www.seai.ie).

What is a BER Rating?

A Building Energy Rating (BER) certificate indicates your building's energy performance. It is similar to the energy label for household appliances. The BER certificate grades your home from A to G in energy efficiency, with A being the best and G the worst. BER ratings are now compulsory for all homes.



How does it work?

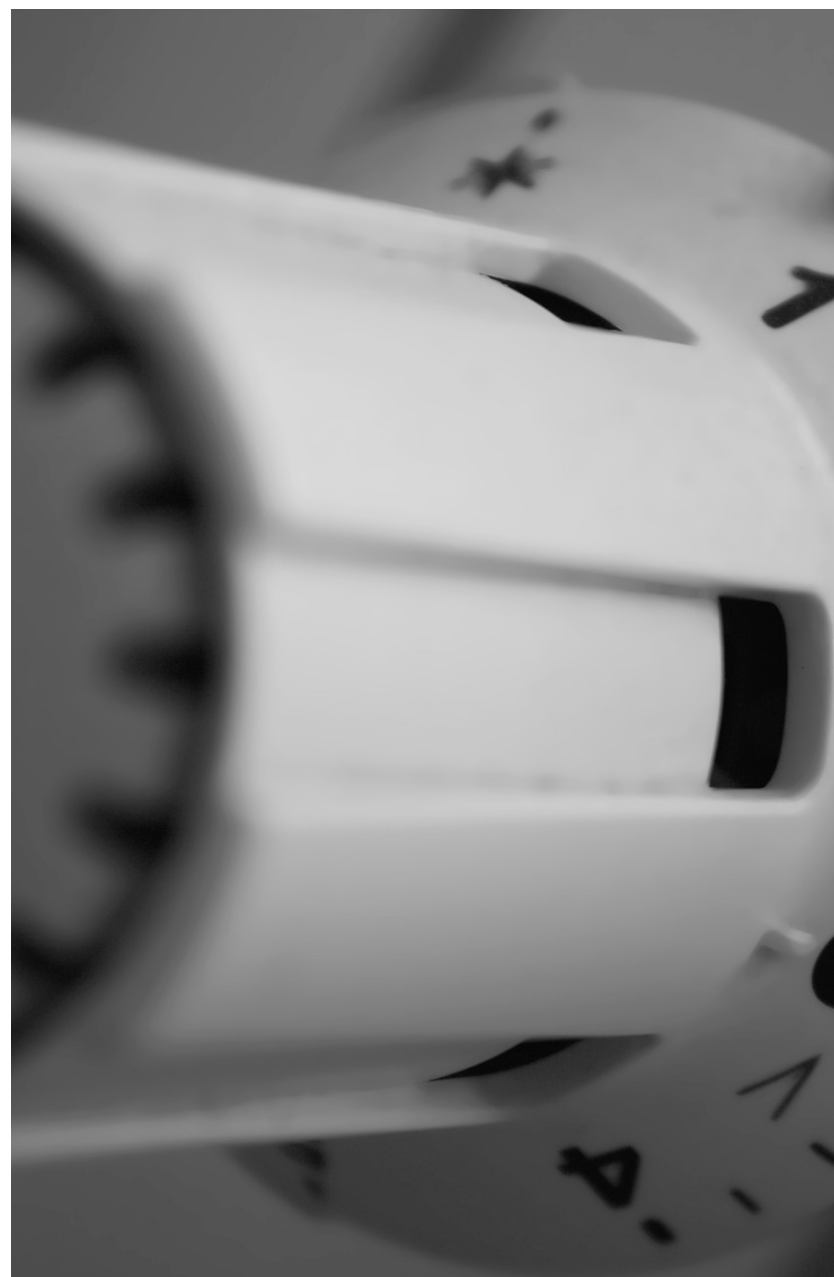
BER ratings measure the level of CO2 emissions from your home by calculating your energy use for hot water, heating, ventilation, lighting, as well as the number of occupants, and size, of your home. All properties on the market must have a BER certificate.

What are the benefits?

Having a BER certificate will give any buyer an indication of what their energy costs will likely be in future. Having a high rating will be an added incentive any potential purchaser of your property. Example: A 75 square metre with an A Rating will cost €280 per annum whereas a G Rating will cost €3,000.

How do I get a BER Certificate?

To obtain a certificate, you will need to book an assessment which you can do via the SEAI website. The assessor will calculate your grade, and also make recommendations on what actions you can take to ensure your home has the highest level of energy efficiency.



Why should I aim for a higher BER Rating?

As well as potentially increasing the value of your home, having a more energy efficient property will save you significant amounts of money on your utility bills. The added bonus is that there are a number of grants you can apply for to make the necessary upgrades to your home.





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Investing in solar panels

The amount of electricity a solar panel will generate depends on a range of factors

The term 'solar panel' is often used interchangeably to describe the panels that generate electricity and those that generate hot water.

- Solar panels that produce hot water are known as solar thermal collectors or solar hot water collectors.

Solar panels that produce electricity are known as solar photovoltaic (PV) modules. These panels generate DC electricity when exposed to light.

A big share of your annual electricity needs

Conventional solar PV panels will help meet some of the electricity demands of a building.

- 1 sq. m of silicon solar panels will generate ~150W of power on a clear sunny day. That's enough to power a laptop computer.
- A home solar PV system sized at 20 sq. m (~3kW) and well located would generate around 2,600kWh of electricity a year. That is over 40% of the average annual electricity demand of an Irish home.

- Solar PV systems will still function on overcast days in Ireland although not at their maximum rated capacity.

The amount of electricity a solar panel will generate depends on a range of factors. These include the hardware chosen, the size of the system, the geographical location and the direction in which the panels are installed.

Things to consider

There are some important things to consider before investing in a solar PV system for your community, home, or business.

Firstly, it almost goes without saying that finding a competent installer is important. There are currently no formal qualifications that installers must have. However do note the following:

Connection of the solar system must be carried out by a Registered Electrical Contractor.

The Renewable Installers Register identifies installers who have received accredited training.

The best advice would be to get a range of quotes from installers, including contractors listed on the Renewable Installers Register.

Choose the right equipment
Speak to your installer about the products they offer.

Solar PV systems will usually include:

- Solar modules
- An inverter, which converts electricity from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC)
- A mounting system for the roof or ground
- Some installers also offer battery systems or 'diverter switches' for storing excess energy

Check the Triple E Register for solar PV products that meet a minimum performance criteria, including energy efficiency.

Check planning permission

Solar PV systems installed in a domestic setting that are under 12 sq. m (and represent less than 50% of the total roof area) are exempt from planning. The same exemption applies to solar PV systems in a business or industrial setting that are under 50 sq. m.



Larger solar PV systems in homes and businesses will typically require planning permission. Speak with your local planning authority to understand the requirements.



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Planning your dream kitchen



A new kitchen is an exciting prospect, but getting it right will require much careful consideration

If there's one room you want to get just right in your self-build or renovation, it's the kitchen. But achieving that result requires a great deal of consideration and thought.

How often have you heard about friends installing a new kitchen, only to have regrets a short time later.

"The island is too big!"
"The island isn't in the right place!"
"I wish we'd created the space for a bigger dining table ..."

No doubt about it, planning your dream kitchen is exciting, with seemingly no limits on what is possible (apart from your budget!) That said, it can be a bit overwhelming. Here are some key considerations to ensure you get the kitchen of your dreams.



Make sure you get your layout just right

The modern kitchen layout consists of work areas for appliances, prep and clean-up. More than one person is usually in the kitchen at the same time, either working or socialising. During the design phase, account for adequate traffic flow around your work areas and seating to ensure the most efficient and comfortable use of your kitchen.

There are different approaches to preparing a meal, and your approach will dictate your final layout. Considerable counter space and closely located appliances are ideal for those who make an assembly line from the fridge to the cooker.

Others need plenty of cabinets nearby to allow for easy access to every possible utensil and pan. Still others prefer a clean as they go approach; they need a balance of usable counter space, appliance storage and easily accessible waste containers.

Efficient clean-up is possible! The dishwasher and sink are naturally located together. Many choose to locate their waste receptacle near the sink in a dedicated pull-out cabinet. Others prefer a free-standing bin, close by the sink. Also, consider a compost receptacle for food waste.

Blend aesthetics and practicality

The function of your new kitchen is just as important as its aesthetic quality.

Countertops allow you to put your personal style on display. They also serve as landing spaces for hot dishes, groceries and corded appliances, the last a detail that is at times overlooked in design.

The countertop edge also matters. Flat edges, typically standard on slab surfaces, clean easily. Consider a rounded edge for comfortable counter seating. Prior to fabrication, consider rounding corners or adding 45-degree corner cuts to avoid any safety hazards or poor traffic flow.

To gain counter space, consider enlarging or adding an island. Islands can include additional cabinets, a breakfast bar or shelving. Other options that offer extra space are a mobile island, a foldaway cart or counter bump out.

There are four key types of lighting to think of during design. Task lighting helps illuminate a specific work area. Ambient light softens the room by eliminating



sharp lines and shadows. Accent lighting highlights a specific item or detail. Decorative lighting is the focal lighting attraction, such as a chandelier.

Focus on function, but be mindful of safety

Today's cabinets can be ordered to exact specifications, maximizing drawer and shelf space. Your cabinet designer can tell you about all the bells and whistles available to improve the function of your space.

Keep in mind the door swings of cabinets and appliances, as to not block access to something critical to a specific task. Some forethought about where you'll store what is the detail

that will allow you to operate in your new space with ease. An adequate number of electrical outlets must be considered when remodeling your kitchen. Additional outlets eliminate dangerous situations where cords are stretched across the sink, cooktop or walkways.

The convenience and safety of having power nearby will outweigh the cost of a few extra outlets and ensure that your home stays compliant with current building codes.

Time spent prioritizing how you work and live in your kitchen during preconstruction will pay big dividends once your remodel is complete.



The function of your new kitchen is just as important as its aesthetic quality.



Decluttering tips

Here are five tips from Sliderobes to help maintain a clutter-free home:

- Re-evaluate your storage at home. Have you maximised all available space?
- If you buy something new, throw or give away something old.
- A quick tidy at the end of each day will set you up with a clear head for the next day.
- A weekly clean will keep your home sparkling fresh and free from clutter as before you clean, any clutter will be put in its place or removed.
- Enjoy inviting people round more. Entertaining guests will automatically make you want to keep your house cleaning routine in order.

At Sliderobes Limerick, we will help you add style and invaluable storage to your home with a unique Sliderobes wardrobe solution. Visit our showroom to see and feel the quality of our storage systems.

During summertime, our homes become a little more cluttered than usual as we organise our wardrobes for holidays, entertain children who are off school and spend more time at home.

Clutter can take over if we don't keep on top of it, and nobody likes the idea of a friend or relative calling round when the home

doesn't feel perfect. Avoid the embarrassment by knowing you have a place for everything by maximising your space and room for storage.

Make your bedroom a haven

Don't let clutter build up in the bedroom. Fitted wardrobes will create more purposeful storage for your clothes and free up more floor space. Made-to-measure sliding doors are a fantastic space saving bedroom solution as they don't open out into the room. Hanging rails, drawers, pull-out shoe racks and other wardrobe accessories all add to the luxury and practicality of a Sliderobes wardrobe, making it easy for you to declutter and organise your clothes each season.

Awkward angles, sloping ceilings and chimney breasts are space challenges for many rooms. Sliderobes made-to-measure furniture makes sure no area like this is wasted. Our Limerick designers will design a wardrobe that is floor-to-ceiling and wall-to-wall. This will maximise every inch of



space, so no other furniture is needed, apart from your bed and bed-sides. This minimalist approach helps create a tranquil, relaxing bedroom environment.

Starting a new chapter

This year, we have seen a lot of families invest more in their home than opt to move. Homes are full of memories and milestones, whether it's a little one getting ready to start primary school or your eldest preparing to move out for university. A son or daughter flying the nest allows you to get back into their bedroom to declutter and make home improvements.

Create a guest bedroom or multifunctional space that is still somewhere for them to come home to, yet more functional for you. A Sliderobes bedroom wardrobe and home office could be designed to give you more space for storage and also provide a productive area to work when they bring university work home.

Maximise the space you have

Space is crucial, especially when there are more people at home at the same time. Tidy, organised areas won't

make everyone feel like they are living on top of each other. In living spaces, odd bits of furniture won't hide away all the games, magazines and remotes left on sofas and coffee tables. A fitted Sliderobes TV and media storage unit with shelving and drawers can be designed to suit your interior style and provide your family with ample storage.

The rise of digital media has made us more efficient with technology and should allow us to be more efficient with our space. Declutter old CDs, DVDs and books to make room for other items. Just keep your favourites! Decorative accessories are important in making your home feel less cluttered. Store less on shelves, for example, one or two picture frames make your space feel homely and trigger good memories.

To find out more, order our new inspirational brochure online. Visit the Sliderobes Limerick showroom at Unit 3 Riverside Business Park, Dock Road, V94 FYY6 or book your free home design appointment by calling 061 210606. Visit Sliderobes.com for more inspiration.



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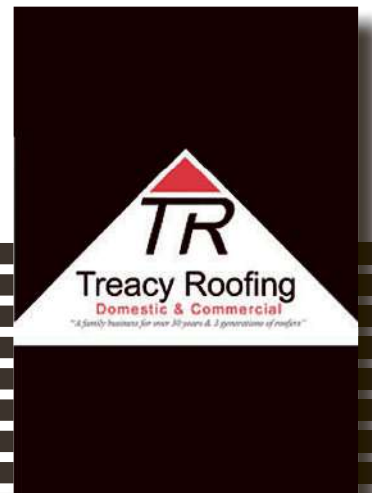
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A product's reliability and overall performance are key drivers in the purchase decision, but as the focus on more sustainable forms of home heating continues to grow, important consideration must also be given to compliance with environmental standards outlined in building regulations.

Helping to ease this process, leading heating technology manufacturer Grant is offering self-builders the opportunity to have their property's entire heating requirements outlined as part of its home heating design service. With three straightforward steps, Grant's Multiple Package Solutions offering includes the design, quote and supply of all required heating technologies under the one roof and can help maximise efficiencies and overall savings for the homeowner.

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With Part L compliance a key factor for self-builders, Grant's **Aeronas** inverter driven air source heat pump range is an increasingly popular choice for new build properties.

Using a renewable heat source, models within the **Aeronas** range champion exceptional performance and can deliver over four times the amount of heat energy for every 1kW of electricity used, depending on external temperatures and demand on the heating system at the time.

Understanding the need for more sustainable home heating solutions, Grant recently introduced its greenest heat pumps yet, the A+++ **Aeronas** R32 range, which features the more environmentally friendly R32 refrigerant. These heat pumps meet upcoming legislative targets outlined in the 2014 EU Fluorinated Greenhouse Gas Regulations and mark an exciting development for the industry.

The 13kW and 17kW models within the **Aeronas** R32 air source heat pump range also recently received recognition from Quiet Mark, the international award programme which validates and awards low-noise, high-performance

technologies. The models underwent acoustic testing and assessment associated with this accolade and were subsequently recognised for their quiet operation, an important feature for many homeowners.

Providing self-builders with the complete home heating solution, Grant's design service pairs an **Aeronas** air source heat pump with suitable hot water cylinders and heat emitters from its extensive offering which includes Solo fan convector radiators, Grant Afinia aluminium radiators and underfloor heating, all of which complement the low temperature operation of an **Aeronas** heat pump.

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A colour scheme that's right for you



Colour is the easiest way of instantly creating a mood for every room in your home

Getting a satisfying colour scheme for your new build or renovation is part personal taste and part preparation and research.

Using a mood board will give you a direction for your creativity, somewhere to crystallise your thoughts and a way to share your ideas with others.

Begin by choosing your main base colour from the colour wheel. This might be a colour you particularly like. Most people are always drawn to a certain colour. Look around you, what colour do you wear the most? Is there a colour that you'd love to wear but doesn't suit you that you'd love on your walls instead?

It is rare we get a total free rein or start with a totally blank slate. The base colour might be dictated by something you're stuck with such as a grey carpet or an avocado bathroom suite. However, this doesn't have to hold you back.

Use the colour wheel to look at what colours go with this colour and decide whether to go for a tonal, harmonious, or complementary scheme.

Colour schemes

For best results, choose one of the following schemes.

Tonal - use just one colour but varying tones of it throughout a room or use more than one colour but all with the same depth of tone.

Harmonious - pick colours next to each other or near each other on the wheel. These schemes generally give a look that's easy to live with and are tranquil and restful.

Complementary - or 'contrasting' colours lie opposite each

other on the colour wheel. Complementary colours generally inject some life into a scheme, are more daring and will make more of an impact but might not be so easy to live with.

Create a mood

Colour is the easiest and most effective way of instantly creating a mood for every room in your home.

Try using warm, advancing colours in areas where you want people to feel welcomed such as living rooms, dining rooms and halls.

You may want to make your bathroom a relaxing, stress free spa with watery colours reminiscent of the sea. Or you may want to nudge your family to get going in the morning and inject some energy with splashes of zesty acid pastels.

You may want your dining room to be smart and formal for lots of corporate entertaining with navy blue or you may want a relaxed, informal feel where all the family can chill. A chic, contemporary bedroom could be conjured from layering neutrals or create a dramatic boudoir with purples and reds.

Play around with lighting to create moods for different situations, for example, romantic, practical, formal, entertaining etc.

Linking rooms with colour

You may have loads of ideas for different colour schemes in each room of your house and be dying to give them all a try. But stop and think of the overall effect when all the doors are open and you

can see into each room. In a smaller house this can tend to look a bit of a mish-mash.

If you'd like to draw the whole scheme together, choose an overall colour for the entire house and then use it in different ways in each room. Larger houses are slightly more forgiving as long as you pay attention to the meeting points.

Choose harmonious colours. You could paint one room blue, the adjacent one a greeny blue, the next purple etc.

Alternatively stick to one colour but use a different tone of it for each room, for example, going from a pale shade of blue to a dark one. This works especially well if your rooms open into one another.

If one room is wallpapered, try picking out one shade from it to paint the next room or use the background colour of the wallpaper as your base colour.

To unify your whole house, keep all the woodwork the same colour - preferably white. If you are going for neutrals on your walls, get some paint mixed up for your woodwork that is a ratio of one part of your neutral colour with three parts white. You can use the same shade on your ceiling.

Don't forget the colour on the opening side of the door into the next room - it doesn't have to match but pick a shade that won't jar.

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You can DO IT when you B&Q it

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DIY...or leave it to the experts?



You can save money in your self-build by getting stuck in yourself ... but some jobs are more realistic than others!

Some self-builders and renovators often try to do work themselves as a way of keeping costs down on a building project. Sometimes this pays off brilliantly. But it can also lead to major problems!

Tradespeople are professionals who have learned on the job over a long period of time. So while taking on some tasks normally done by the experts in their field will save money, there are others which - done yourself - could cost you more to put right.

If you are keen to DIY, make sure you're well up to speed on health and safety matters, because serious accidents can happen on construction sites - especially when you're not on familiar ground.

Here's a guide to what parts of the build you might be able to do yourself - and parts to leave well alone!

Groundworks

Most of this is done by machinery these days, but on a few self builds digging out by hand is required due to budget constraints, lack of access and so on. This is something anyone can try. If you are keen to do this yourself, make sure you have marked out the site properly as you don't want to dig out and then find you aren't exactly in the right place.

If you are digging out an old over-site, you will definitely need to hire a pneumatic drill or heavy duty breaker, as this can't be done by hand. This is seriously hard work but can be done by most people, even without much experience.

Should you DIY? Give it a go!

Brick/Block Laying

This trade requires a lot of training and experience. Laying bricks isn't the hardest thing in the world, but setting out, getting your levels, toothing in and so on is far from easy.

The 'face work' (brickwork) is there for everyone to see, so it needs to be right.

Should you DIY? Leave it to the professionals.

Structural Work

Any structural work (such as installing steels, lintels and beams) definitely needs to be left to the professionals. Even after many years of building work, you always find something you haven't come across before. This is where experience is vital.

Should you DIY? Leave it to the professionals.

Electrics and Plumbing

These two trades should be left to qualified tradespeople. Even running a bit of pipework or cable should be left to the experts, as this could leak or cause electrical faults if installed incorrectly. Each electrician and plumber also has their own ways of setting out and installing so it's best to leave it to them. The worst-case scenario could be a gas leak, mains pressure water pouring out or an electrical shock.

Should you DIY? Leave it to the professionals.

Carpentry

This trade covers many areas of work, from pitching a roof to installing a kitchen, building stud walls and hanging doors. It is very varied and thus there are areas that DIYers can try their hand at.

Building a roof and installing a kitchen may be a step too far for someone who is inexperienced, but putting up a stud wall is something which can be tried. Should you DIY? Give it a go, but choose your tasks sensibly.

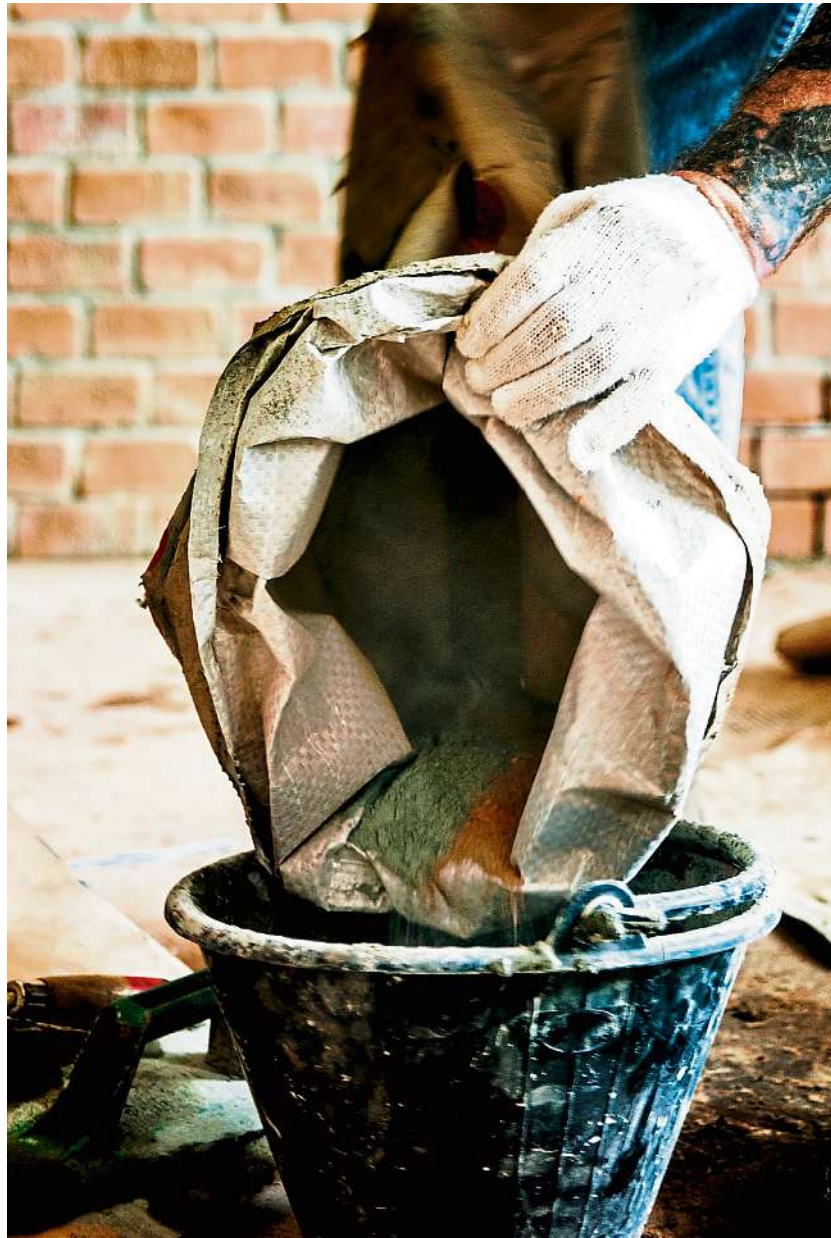
Plastering

If you don't mind getting covered in plaster, you can give it a go. Getting the plaster off the hawk without it going all over the floor is the starting point! Again, the worst case is that if you get it wrong, it needs to come off and be done again. But while you might aid in getting the walls ready for plaster, remember that achieving a good finish takes years to master.

Should you DIY? Give it a go, but call a professional if you want a perfect finish.

Painting and decorating

This is a trade that a lot of people like to try. However, it's not as easy as people think. Again, it's all down to the prep work — filling, rubbing down, caulking, masking off



and so on. That said, there isn't much to go wrong compared to other trades.

When you start, it doesn't take long to see how professional decorators can achieve such a high standard; their cutting in and rolling off takes years of practice. By all means, try your hand at it. Just remember, it's all in the prep.

Should you DIY? Give it a go, but, again, call a professional if you want a perfect finish.

Roofing

You can save money here by bumping the tiles/felt/batten and other materials up for the roofer. Depending on whether it is a flat or pitched roof, there are usually a fair number of materials to go up.

Large pitched roofs need a lot of tiles and it can take considerable manpower to get them up the scaffolding. Don't try and take too many, as this can affect your balance, but this is definitely an area you can help with. Ask the roofer where they want the tiles and how many in each pile.

Should you DIY? Help with the prep, but leave the task to the professionals.

Landscaping

This is another area you can help with, as there is a lot of hard work here, including digging out, and bringing patio slabs, bricks, sand, cement, timber and other materials round from the front of the house to the rear. This takes many hours so you can save money if you're not afraid of hard work.

Should you DIY? Only if you're physically able.

Tiling

This is a skill that many people feel they can do. Not much can go wrong usually, apart from taking a few misplaced tiles off the wall/floor. Whether you are tiling a new room or an old one will make a massive difference to how you tackle the task. New rooms should be level, square with little prep work required. Older rooms can take a lot of levelling and putting right.

A good place to start is a small area like a splashback in a bathroom or kitchen. Grout lines are key as these need to remain the same (use spacers for this task). You need to decide what size grout lines you want with the tiles you have chosen.

There are many different types of tile adhesive these days, depending on your tile and surface. The right tools always make a difference, too. Start somewhere small and see how you get on.

Should you DIY? Give it a go!

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Added Features

- Controllability - Our ARGON electric and gas stoves have remote control capability so you can control it at a touch of a button. Our Classic and SOLIS stove range have primary and secondary air controls to aid combustion and airwash to keep the glass clean.
- External Air capability - is available for many of our wood and multi fuel stoves. External Air is used in well-insulated houses for mechanical ventilation, and directs air from the outside into the stove to aid efficient combustion.
- Create your flame picture - You can adjust the colours of the flame picture on our ARGON



Electric Wall Hung and Built in models using the Red, Yellow & Blue Flame buttons. By pressing one of these buttons, the level of the chosen colour will reduce

- Certification: Before a product receives the Stanley seal of approval, our research and development team carry out exhaustive safety, quality and performance testing, measuring heat, economy, CO emissions and build durability. Every stove is then independently tested and approved to the relevant European Standard.

SOLIS WB500 Edge - A beautiful fusion of contemporary and traditional, the SOLIS WB500 Edge features eye catching design and functionality that's a joy to use. Ideal for homes that need true wood burning, high efficiency, outside air capability and approved by the SEAI.

Stanley ARGON Electric Built In Fire - If you want something a little bit sleeker, the ARGON

built in range of fires offer stylish warmth when they are installed. With the same visual flame and wood log features as the wall hung models, the ARGON Built In 100cm and 125cm electric fire is a beautiful thing to behold.

Stanley ARGON I500 Panoramic is a stunning three side gas insert stove which allows you to view the fire from all angles of a room. With realistic gas flames and eco flame model which allows you increase the flame without increased consumption, the I500 frameless Panoramic gas fire is statement piece in any room



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Let there be light!



Think about how each room will be used before deciding on what lighting to install in your new-build or renovation

Lighting is one of the most important elements in any new build or renovation. That's because it's instrumental in setting the mood of any room.

When deciding what lighting to use, think about how each room will be used. This will allow you to choose fixtures that fit your style, budget, enhance your architectural features and are energy efficient and functional. To ensure you create the right effect in every room, you should understand the four basic types of home lighting.

Ambient or general lighting

This illuminates the whole room. It is a good idea to install a dimmer with your track and recessed lights so that you have the flexibility to adjust the brightness. Examples of ambient lighting are recessed, cove lighting, soffit lighting, valance lighting, wall light, sconces, surface-mounted lights, pendant lights, track lights, chandeliers, under-cabinet lights and portable fixtures.

Task lighting

This is all about providing sufficient light to help you perform the task at hand, for example cooking, office/school work, reading, grooming, etc. Task lighting should be glare free and it should make things easy to see without tiring or straining your eyes. Examples of task lighting are valance lighting, recessed lighting, pendant lights, under-cabinet lights and portable fixtures.

Accent lighting

This is focused lighting that's used to illuminate an object in your home like a sculpture, piece of art, a wall of books or an architectural element. Accent lighting is about three times as bright as ambient lighting. Examples of accent lighting are wall washers, sconces, track lights and under-cabinet lights.



Natural lighting

This comes free! Natural lighting brightens a space through windows, doors, and skylights and depending on the time of day, season, or weather, it can vary in brightness and intensity.

Next, some general design trends to keep in mind to help you choose the right type of lighting for every room in your home.

- Since the average home has increased in size, particularly with design elements like high ceilings, open floor plans and expanded kitchen and bath areas be sure the fixtures you choose are large enough to handle the task at hand.
- You may need more lighting and larger fixtures, but you don't need to add to your electric bill —LEDs (light-emitting diodes) will save you money in the long run and you can also include dimmer switches and whole-house control systems.
- To accommodate the trend in high ceilings, manufactures are now designing floor lamps that are up to nine or ten feet high.
- A big trend to brighten up task areas is using recessed lighting, under-cabinet lights, mini pendants and island lighting.
- As more and more homeowners and self-builders look to enhance their outdoor living space, lighting is becoming a key element in enjoying their decks, patios, outdoor kitchens, pools and spas. The selection for outdoor lighting is as stylish and functional as indoor lighting.



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Maximising your outdoor living space

Seven top tips to ensure you get the best out of your outdoor space, especially when the sun shines!



The unpredictability of the Irish weather means that that we don't get to enjoy our outdoor living spaces and gardens quite as much as we'd like, but when the sun does shine it can be glorious out there!

Here are some tips to ensure your outdoor area is more comfortable and you can make the most of your outdoor living space.

1. Ask yourself what you want the purpose of your outdoor area to be.

Start by deciding how you want to use your outdoor space. Is it to be a quiet retreat or a place for entertaining family and friends? Does it need a pergola or roof for protection from the elements? Would a decorative screen provide more privacy?



Picture yourself using the space. Will you be retreating there quietly with a book on a comfortable lounge chair, hanging around with friends or cooking up a storm on the barbecue, when the weather is fine? What seating will you require and how much? What style of outdoor furniture would suit your garden the best: aluminium, teak or colourful contemporary designs?

2. Keep it cosy.

Keeping a collection of cosy throws near your outdoor space is a thoughtful idea for keeping your guests warm on chillier evenings. Outdoor heating such as a fire pit, bioethanol heater or outdoor gas heater can add to your comfort and enjoyment as well and create a wonderful ambient atmosphere.

3. Decorate with outdoor fabrics.

Colourful fabrics add vibrancy and warmth to any outdoor space. If your outdoor room is fully exposed to the elements, you will need to ensure your outdoor cushions and furniture is upholstered in top quality outdoor fabrics.

Outdoor fabrics are now available in a huge range of designs from bold stripes to elegant neutral designs. A great way to incorporate bright colours into your outdoor area is using small decorative throw cushions, this will allow you to switch up the colour scheme from season to season.

4. Store and protect cushions to ensure long life.

Outdoor cushions are designed to withstand a little bit of rain but when the sun comes out after a downpour, you don't want to be sitting on saturated cushions. A solution is to include a water safe cushion box that you can throw cushions into at the first hint of rain.

5. Use running water to mask unwanted noise.

If noise from neighbouring homes is a problem for you and prevents you from enjoying your outdoor space to the full, consider installing a small fountain or other running water features to gently mask the sounds and give your space a peaceful feel.

6. Install outdoor speakers.

Instead of running water, you could consider installing outdoor speakers and playing soft music to camouflage noise that impinges on peaceful enjoyment of your outdoor space. You can also find compact wireless speakers at quite an affordable price.

7. Think about your lighting.

Let your outdoor room come alive at night with atmospheric lighting. These days it's possible to create wonderful effects with candles, fairy lights and funky LED lighting. Outdoor feature lighting placed strategically in other areas of your garden can create magical and mysterious effects for a glowing night out.

The more thought and consideration you put into the choices for your outdoor furniture and accessories, the more you, your family and your friends will enjoy it.



All Alfresco: The Experts In Outdoor Living & Cooking

All Alfresco, Glashule, Dublin – Home of the Big Green EGG

Here at All Alfresco we cater for all your outdoor cooking needs. We have a large variety of cooking surfaces, Parasols, Outdoor Heaters and WOW-worthy Visual Theatre Cooking Appliances such as the OFYR. Our products ensure your outdoor cooking needs are met, your guests are entertained, and your outdoor area is transformed into a warm, welcoming hub for cooking and socialising.

We also stock a range of portable BBQs, which will take you from the comfort of your back garden to lazy picnics and adventurous camping. From serious pieces of cooking equipment to our incredibly popular Mini-Max EGG – we have a solution for every occasion.

We also have a new collection point in Howley's Quay Limerick where all your outdoor products can be delivered and picked up at your convenience.

To find out more about us, visit us in person at our showroom in Glashule, or call us today: 01-441 2009

Some of our brands include: **Big Green EGG, OFYR, GLATZ, Grandhall, Heatstrip, Fatboy.**

GLATZ Parasols

Glatz Parasols come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes and are suitable for use in all seasons. Our priority is to ensure that our Parasols have a genuine wind rating. Heaters and lights can be installed and there are also choices of fixed and movable bases. By Choosing a GLATZ Parasol you turn your outdoor area into an indoor area. The Sunshades robustness and functionality provide you and your guests with protection and security even in unsettled weather conditions. As a result, not only can you use your outdoor area earlier in the year but also carry on entertaining your guests long into the evening.

With the wide variety of shapes and colours you are guaranteed to find the sunshade that suits you.



OFYR - Outdoor Theatre

The OFYR is a functional artwork, designed to bring beauty, warmth, food and friendship to your outdoor space.

More practical and stylish than a typical barbecue, the OFYR cooking units, simple, classic lines work in harmony with any setting, from country lawn to chic city terrace. When designing your garden this elegant outdoor sculpture transforms into a warm, welcoming hub for cooking and socialising, when it's time to entertain alfresco.

Artfully made in the Netherlands with all-weather materials, this is a way of life you can enjoy all year round.

The OFYR is easy to use, Its three-part modular design makes it easy to move around, it is simple to clean and requires virtually no maintenance. All you need to do is wipe the cooking plate with a damp cloth and it's ready for the next occasion.



Big Green EGG.

The Big Green Egg is a ceramic charcoal barbecue cooker. The Egg is a versatile cooking device capable of acting as a Barbeque, Grill, Oven, or Smoker. The advanced ceramic material of the Big Green Egg is perfect for retaining moisture and heat. This is a big part of what makes the EGG so great! The ceramic helps keep the moisture in the food for succulent results. The external temperature does not affect the internal temperature of the EGG ensuring you can cook in all seasons.

The Mini Max EGG – is Stylish, portable and functional, it is the smartest piece of outdoor cooking kit you will ever need. Call into our showroom All Alfresco Glashule and see why it's popping up in Irish gardens, parks and beaches this summer.

The EGG is the only charcoal grill you will ever need ... or want! And has a lifetime guarantee Often copied, but never equalled, the Big Green Egg truly is the Ultimate Cooking Experience!



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