Episode 53: Kitchen Design Essentials

Appliances - Part 1

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Frances Cosway: Hi, everyone, and welcome to Your Forever Home, the podcast.

I'm very excited this week to have Rob Sinclair from E&S Trading with me today to talk all things appliances. Now, Rob has been in the business since '91 after, he's just told me, he did a year of biology and felt that was a waste of time, so now he's Managing Director at E&S Trading, and he's really passionate about all things appliances.

So I'm very excited to have him here today to answer lots and lots of questions about all sorts of kitchen appliances that we need for our kitchen. So welcome so much, Rob.

Rob Sinclair: Ah, just an absolute pleasure to be here. You're quite quite correct in the fact that I do love what I do. It's been my been my whole life and as a kid growing up in a family business I was very fortunate enough not to be pushed into it, and I fell into it and fell in love with it. So here I am 30 years later.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. It's so good when you hear the story of someone following the family business because they so want to, rather than, I see it so many times, it, you push, you feel compelled, and it's so obvious with you the passion is so there. You can tell you certainly are loving it rather than being pushed into it, so fantastic.

Rob Sinclair: Thank you.

Frances Cosway: I'm gonna kick off today, Rob, just with look, there's so many different appliances that people need for their kitchen, and they are generally the most expensive appliances that you're gonna go buy for your home. And so I really wanted to do a rundown today of the key ones.

Obviously fridges, dishwashers your ovens, your steam ovens, stove tops, and range hoods. And then I probably wanna touch on just a little bit at the end about some of the other things that are

coming into the market now and what you're seeing. I know that you're on the floor a lot. You're not just sitting in the offices.

You're always on the floor listening to consumers. Just what coming, that's going to be coming out in the next couple of years. But if we just, a- as an overall, what do you think some of and I'll go through this by category, but what do you think some of the key buying criteria are when you're looking at kitchen appliances?

Rob Sinclair: So for me, performance is everything. If it doesn't do something for you then you're wasting your time buying it. So a criteria that we set inside our business, whether it's a tap, whether it's a fridge, whether it's a washing machine, whether it's a dishwasher, whether it's a range hood, a cooktop, an oven, doesn't matter, understand it is, understand your requirements at home first, and then find the product that's gonna deliver you the performance to the best of your budget.

And so if I'm buying a range hood- example, I buy a range hood 'cause I want it to deliver me high performance suction as, and remove as much steam and smoke as possible. I want it to be nice and quiet, and I want good lighting. So find the one that suits your budget and does all those three things and you should be in business.

So performance is crucial. Then where possible, you need to find brands where you've got a pedigree of performance and you're dealing with global r- renowned brands or specialty brands that, work in a particular field, like Quasar only make range hoods in Australia. Y- you know they're a specialist in the category.

So find pedigree, find reliability through that pedigree, and know that you can get your product serviced and fixed after the sale. The most important thing is all of the domestic appliances we use at home, we use them, and obviously more now than ever, we're using dishwashers, washing machines, fridges, ovens, cooktops, and it's really exciting.

But you want something that's gonna be not only reliable, do something, but then when it goes and has a little fault, you can get it fixed easily and you can get parts to keep it going. So crucial for me You know, not every brand delivers that, Frances. There's I think for us, as an organisation, we want brands that have great service, great spare parts, an attitude towards fixing it for the customer.

And that's regardless of the price point. A Westinghouse upright cooker that starts at $700, or a Westinghouse oven at $700 is the best oven you can buy at that price point because they're good quality, built in Adelaide, and you can get the thing fixed and get spare parts for it.

Frances Cosway: And I think that is I'm hearing that more and more from my clients indeed, is around I wanna know that there is going to be some after-sale service. 'Cause I think we s- hearing a lot of horror stories across all products in the market, not just for kitchens and appliances, that the after-sale service now is becoming more of a big deal because people don't want the headache of, having to chase things constantly.

So that's great that there's that's something that you really focus on as well. And I think that's music to my ears around the whole just to hear it from you, too, that it's the need. You've gotta work out what you need, rather ... I always say to my clients- Yeah ... avoid the whole keeping up with the Joneses thing.

Work out what you need. Work out the functionality that you need, which is actually how we go and do our kitchen design based on what they need. Yeah. Rather than all focusing, "Oh, I want the latest black thing," and, "I want the latest this," it's if it doesn't work for you, it's a complete waste of money.

Rob Sinclair: Correct. Yeah. And even on that design thing as well, Frances I'm always gonna err towards a product that delivers me more performance and more reliability than a fashion design statement. And when I'm looking at, brands of tapware and the like, I want something that I can trust and know, and I want something that's gonna deliver me long-term reliability.

Not a product I've never heard of before that can't be fixed.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. I completely agree, and that's what we hone in with our clients all the time. If it doesn't work, forget it. The looks will all change over time anyway. If it doesn't work for you, it's bad design, and it's just gonna create nightmares in the end.

So fantastic. That's all reaffirmed, guys. For those of you that follow me a lot, that's all I ever harp on about, so you know, we're hearing it as well again, which is fantastic. All right, Rob, let's start with with fridges. So I'm gonna talk about lots of different things with about fridges anyway in this particular podcast.

But what are some of the key buying criteria for a fridge? Because there's so many different types. You've got integrated. We've got and we'll talk about, some of the price differences. But ju- just go through some of your buying criteria in terms of fridges, 'cause my, oh, my, there's some new things coming out with fridges.

Oh, there's- Off the scale.

Rob Sinclair: So let's keep it simple first. So if I'm just replacing a fridge I think it's important, again, seek out the quality brands. Look for Westinghouse. Look for Fisher & Paykel. Those two brands have been synonymous with our marketplace for such a long period of time.

Sadly, they're not both made in Australia, but they've got their own factories and they manufacture their own products. They're not relabeling stuff under their own name. So great brands to work with. Mitsubishi is a specialty brand of refrigeration is also freestanding repla- and fridge.

So those brands will offer you, I think first of all, reliability, great refrigeration performance where you're getting, you know, good quality temperature control, nice temperature settings. When you

set four, it stays at four. The freezer's at -18 where it should be. And then you start to look for do I want a product where maybe I want a little bit more freezer?

'Cause that's I like to keep stuff in the freezer more, or am I a person that's biased more towards fresh food? And obviously I think even recently, the current events would see many people change in, in, in how they've been, storing food and looking at things. And particularly I think capacity in fridge and freezer is a really dynamic ti- important dynamic to understand.

So when I look at the brands like Fisher & Paykel and W- Westinghouse Electrolux brands, those products are really well-built. They've got strong shelves, they've got spill-proof shelves, so if I have a little thing that, leaks or spills over, it's not flowing through the whole fridge.

So the glass shelf is nice. The crispers are on runners, so they slide in and slide out nicely. And the plastics are more durable than some other brands, so they tend not to break as easily. And then when I look at Mitsubishi, I was looking at one of their three-door models the other day Frances.

It's like it's a French door. Yeah. So that means, again, for, it's got a nice wide opening to get platters in and store things easily. But then it's got a separate compartment to store my fruit and veggie, which I really liked. And it even had a little shelf at the back that sort of sits halfway down in this fresh food compartment, where things that are easily bruised can be protected on this little almost like a hammock sitting in the, Oh, wow in the fresh food compartment.

So again, for people who want more fresh food storage, that particular Mitsubishi fridge with a separate fresh food storage area for fruit and vegetables, really wonderful. Still plenty of room in the fridge to store more fresh food. And I think that particular, dynamic was really strong towards someone who, regularly goes to the market and shops for fresh foods- and less in the freezer space. And of course then if I'm renovating a place Frances, and I'm then beginning to consider things like having an integrated fridge, 'cause I might be putting a whole new set of joinery into my kitchen- ... then I think that dynamic is also important. And I think if the opportunity exists where you're, making a renovation of your kitchen or you're building a new home, I would 100% go with an integrated refrigerator, which makes it so much more in keeping with the kitchen.

Frances Cosway: It does. But that's the- But I think one of the, the biggest things that I get pushback on from clients is the cost. So what sort of cost difference are we looking at for a freestanding? And look, the, not all fridges are the same, but just roughly as a percentage How much are we gonna spend for integrated?

Rob Sinclair: So if I buy a Fisher & Paykel bottom mount 500 litre fridge freezer, I can buy that product for s- depending on the finish, $1,600 to $2,000.

Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: If I buy that as a fully integrated version, Frances, it'll become 4.5 thousand to 5 thousand. So- So it's about double, a bit more than double.

It's about double. And so to your point, obviously budget permitting, if... go to integrated ... fantastic. And then, brands like Liebherr Miele, for example, in the integrated space, then also do the the BioFresh compartments where you're getting controlled humidity and controlled environments to really keep fruit and veg stored and get sometimes two times, sometimes three times as much length out of the storage of your fresh food.

Again, not only am I getting integrated as a benefit, but I'm also getting food storage benefits which particularly the Liebherr brand through their BioFresh system does a great job of high humidity for some fruit and veg, lower humidity for others.

Frances Cosway: And look, the Liebherr is just, it's German and I'm very pro-German having lived in Nieuw-Holland for a long time.

It's just, they just construct things so brilliantly. They're engineers and then some. But the Liebherr for me would be the high end of your integrated fridges. Absolutely. And then I think Fisher & Paykel have got some as well. So what sort of price variation are we looking at with going high end to the lower end on integrated?

Rob Sinclair: I think the advantage of the Fisher & Paykel integrated- models is that I think they really suit customers who want a bit bigger fridge compared to those European sizes. Yeah. Which is why, Frances, you end up buying two Liebherrs at sort of $3,000 each, and you start to spend 6 to $7,000 for a pair.

Yeah. Which gives you a 1.2 meter wide fridge freezer, BioFresh compartment or many other alternatives. There's a bit of a mix and match thing you can do with Liebherr. And then of course the 500 litre version of a Fisher & Paykel is that four and a half thousand, not six and a half, 7,000.

So Fisher & Paykel I think really do cater for a very cost-effective, bigger cabinet that can be used in integrated refrigerators. And they've also beneficially, I think for smaller homes Frances, introduced an 800 wide cabinet, which is really quite handy for some tighter apartments but you still want a bigger fridge in those areas.

But, as you pointed out, integrated can be more expensive based upon the fact that it's a more unique style of fridge, and they come from specialty manufacturers like Liebherr, like Miele. And more recently Fisher & Paykel have really got into that space.

Frances Cosway: But I think because, w- this is all about forever homes, and if you are going to be building your forever home that you're gonna be in, as I define it, 10 plus years, I think it's money worth spending because then you have got this amazing aesthetic as well. And it does actually align and make it a lot more streamlined, your kitchen, particularly if it is in a smaller space.

Now the one thing that I get asked a lot about and that people worry about is what happens if something goes wrong with the integrated fridge? I know we're focusing on those for, at the

moment, but it's where I get the most questions. What happens if something goes wrong? Can they be easily repaired?

And secondly, c- or fi- and can they be easily replaced?

Rob Sinclair: So absolutely. If you look at any of the Liebherr refrigerators that we've been selling 15 years ago, the actual size of the cabinet hasn't changed Frances, so you've got the ability to literally slide that unit out. Yeah, it does require a slightly more talented installer slash remover to just decommission the old one and recommission a new one.

But certainly that can be done. And because the measurements of Liebherr have remained consistent over, say, a 15-year period, yeah, they're respecting the fact that these are integrated products that need to have something that can be replacing it again down the track. So certainly I think really it's something that that yeah, they are replaceable.

If you look at Fisher & Paykel, the models they've released in the last three years are s- it's a significant range of integrated fridges now from them and they will all be consistent models like the rest of their refrigeration range. It's hardly changed a bit in the 20 years or 30 years I've been selling them.

Manufacturers do tend to understand that consistent sizing is important, and it's no different to dishwashers as well, Frances. You know- ... the semi-integrated Bosch dishwashers I was selling 20 years ago are exactly the same measurement- Yeah ... that they are today. Having disconnected an old Bosch where I am here now out in, you know, out in the country, I've got that machine was replaced with a Siemens dishwasher.

And Siemens and Bosch are the same company. Yeah. Exactly the same ma- disconnect, reconnect. Apart from being slightly more skilled in adjusting the joinery the old panel came off, the new dishwasher went in, the old panel went back on, and it looks like nothing has ever changed.

Frances Cosway: Yeah it's fairly straightforward, and I think that's the thing that people get a little bit worried about.

Then, we've, I suppose we've talked about then the built-in and the freestanding and why it's so much nicer to have integrated. What are some of the things that you're seeing come through? I've just been looking at some of the things from Samsung. Now, that's not a brand that you mentioned.

Is that a reliable fridge? I know that they're trying to get into that space, and there's a lot of gadgets and gizmos, and sometimes people think, oh, the more it's got, the more fancy things that, it's just more things that can break down. So what's your view on all the stuff that's coming out at the moment?

Rob Sinclair: Look they're a brand, and I you know me, Frances, I'm pretty frank with my, my my talk. Samsung's a brand we choose not to range. And it's a brand we choose not to range because when something goes wrong, you can't get it fixed. And- Okay. Really good advice for listeners there.

Rob Sinclair: So the, the reality is, and you just only have to ho- online, look at the forums, the spare parts and availability of spare parts from Samsung prevent you from how to get your product fixed once it breaks down. Yeah. So you can have a fridge not working and be waiting three, six, nine months for the gadget or the widget to fix it, and you cannot get them.

And so in our business where we choose, where a product can't be fixed and it should be still working, where we choose to give the customer a full refund in that situation if a Westinghouse fridge was three years old and I couldn't get it fixed in a week, I'd give the customer a full refund.

Samsung unfortunately were causing me to refund every fridge I sold. And therefore we chose to stop selling them. I'm, but in fact- Oh, fair enough, because that fr- creates a headache not only for the customer a fridge is not something you wanna break, have to break down and then you can't fix it quickly, but also a massive headache for you, so that makes complete sense that you're not a fan.

Rob Sinclair: And I suppose, but it still comes back to understanding your needs. So for some people who love to have larger plate- platters then, sometimes the French door refrigerators which are both both cupboards to open up or both doors to open up like a French door, you've got the ability then to have a, an 800 wide interior for the largest of platters.

And, potentially having the freezer at the bottom if that was something that you didn't use as often. ... I think that's sensible 'cause I've got, the area that I go to, which is my normal refrigerator and fresh food now at chest height. I'm not having to bend to get to my milk, my orange juice or anything else that I store.

My crispers are at, at, at waist height, which is delightful. And, really I think always understanding the application and getting ergonomics correct- Allowing the product to have the right size of storage for the things that you keep, fresh food compartments, meat, deli compartments. Really analyse each, whether it's a Westinghouse r- fridge or an Electrolux fridge or a Fisher & Paykel fridge or a Mitsubishi fridge, just to name a couple of the major brands in the market of freestanding models, analyse those fridges to to your needs.

And, come in with a sort of a, how do I store stuff in my fridge type of mentality, and what are the things I store? So that when you go to an appliance store then you can really have... Y- you're not being swayed easily by gizmos and gadgets that y- you're not gonna use. And you'll hear the whole way through the whole conversation we have today, Frances, I am not looking to sway for gizmos and gadgets.

Where they satisfy a need then they're fantastic, and everyone's needs are different. Yeah. And it's most important to respect everyone's need is different. So-

Frances Cosway: Yeah, ab- absolutely. And look, I've always, as an entertainer, a French door fridge for me makes complete sense because I can't...

We've got the traditional freezer on the left and fridge on the right, before French doors were devised. And, we have to have a f- second fridge to fit our, an 800 fridge to fit our big, large platters in. Yeah. So I've never really understood the whole fridge on the, freezer on the left even though we've got it, 'cause it's so pokey.

It's just a pain.

Rob Sinclair: Yeah.

Frances Cosway: But i- does that suit? I can't even work out how that would suit someone when the French door is just so easy. As you've said, everything is there at eye level. But I suppose it's a personal preference.

Rob Sinclair: Look, it is, and even though I'd recommend French door all day long, I have a side-by-side fridge 'cause I don't need all that width, but I, but what I love is all the adjust- adjustability, Frances. And I've got this, in my side-by-side fridge, I've got this shelf where I allow for full, tall bottles, so I can have my milk, my, my sparkling water, I can have all these sort of things lined up in the fridge, b- bit like a milk bar.

So I it sort of deals with my storage requirements pretty well. And the crispers are massive in mine, so all my fresh food storage is managed.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. I-

Rob Sinclair: it's important to have your mindset when you go into the appliance store a- and really, think about yourself personally, not listen too much to the salesperson telling you about things that aren't relevant to your home.

If he's not listening then you need to go somewhere else.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, a- agree. And when we get onto ovens I'll touch on that too. And I actually have my fridge upside down. So I have all my condiments and everything in the crispers, because I store everything in Tupperware containers, so I have all that stacked at eye level, and I have all my condiments and sauces and everything in the crispers.

So I'm completely upside down. So for me, it's about those shelves being able to be adjustable so I can stack my Tupperware, 'cause all my fresh produce is in Tupperware.

Rob Sinclair: And I think, that stackability of your shelving, Frances, is the most important thing, and some brands deliver you more shelf positions than other- Yeah, they do

and Fisher & Paykel have always had more, rack positions inside their fresh food compartments, and I think, whether it's trying to get the right height to perfectly maximise the number of Tupperware containers on a shelf which I fully get or whether it's just wanting to s- you know, have your condiment jars at the right position or whether it's me who wants to have my bottles, not lying down- Yeah

I want them standing up. Everyone's application should be suitable, or suited. The more flexibility you can get, the more movability of the positions you can get, I think the better

Frances Cosway: Yeah, and I think that, that will probably then lead us on to dishwashers and the application, because I know with a dishwasher, for example, I think that was such an awesome summary on fridges.

And just before I go to dishwashers, is there anything else you wanted to add about fridges?

Rob Sinclair: No, but I just wanna reiterate, keep it simple. Yeah. Have your shopping list of what you do in your fridge, and then go and look for quality brands where there is a, a real fundamental of being able to fix the products if they ever break down.

And fridges do have, lots of moving parts. So stick to Westinghouse, Fisher & Paykel, Mitsubishi, Liebherr, Miele. These are all good brands where you can get a good quality repair technician who's trained, who can bring the service and the parts to the home.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, I think that's awesome advice, and I'm glad we touched on some of the others that may not be so good on the service.

So dishwashers, and we're talking about application and the fact that some people have different requirements. And I know the one that comes up so much, you probably know it too, is whether you have the cutlery drawer or whether you have your cutlery stacked. And I think that is such a polarised not a question, but a polarised view for some people.

It's like they either love the cutlery drawer, they think it's fantastic, or they really like the caddy. And I can't stand the cutlery drawer 'cause it just- ... it takes too much time, and yet most of my relatives in the Netherlands, everything was just all precise and she loved it. I think that's one of those key things.

You really need to know what's gonna suit you best.

Rob Sinclair: You do.

Frances Cosway: I bet- And I- ... you like the cutlery drawer.

Rob Sinclair: You're correct.

Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: But Frances, it's only recently that I like the cutlery drawer, 'cause when I bought a house, new h- a new place the the, the Miele dishwasher, it was the first time I had a cutlery drawer and I was excited to start using it, and I thought, "Oh, this could be interesting.

But the thing I love most so if we... a- and by the way, everyone's gotta have their own, a decision-making here around what's, what suits them. And Frances, I respect your position here. Many brands actually are flexible enough that, either a cutlery basket or a cutlery drawer is available in the same model.

Yeah. And particularly, Miele and and and Bosch in particular have got some really flexibility that you get to choose. Buy the model, it comes with both. Take one of the ones that you don't want out.

Frances Cosway: Which is

Rob Sinclair: great. Yeah.

Frances Cosway: Cause then you can try it.

Rob Sinclair: Yeah, exactly. So the thing I've loved about cutlery tray is-

if I take the time, yes, Frances, to stack the knives together, the spoons together, the forks together they wash perfectly every time. Yeah. There's no spooning And if I'm, if I've been particular enough at the start, I just get to grab a pile of knives, put them in the cutlery drawer, a pile of forks and put them away.

Frances Cosway: So not only do we put them in each spot, but we actually take the time to start off forks with forks, knives with knives, spoon with spoon, teaspoon with teaspoon, and it means the unloading part is so much faster. It's just grab, grab, grab, put them in the drawer. Yeah. I suppose you're doing the work at the start rather than at the end. I just can't possibly believe I can get my kids to do it when I can't even get them to keep their cutlery

Rob Sinclair: out. I understand. But for me, the real benefit in dishwashers is, so there's ... when you look at a dishwasher for me, there's some real important criteria, as there is in every category of things to assess, to make sure you're working towards what suits your needs.

So stacking is crucial. If you use wine glasses, then you need to find a dishwasher that's gonna satisfy your wine glasses. If you don't, and you use coffee cups and glasses and mugs then find the dishwasher that suits you best for that. If you cook a lot, and you're regularly looking for a spot for a fry pan, a pot, a colander, plus your normal crockery and cutlery and wine glasses, then find a m- a real multipurpose, flexible dishwasher.

And they are absolutely available. Understand what it is you're putting in wine glasses, baking dishes. If you've got larger diameter plates, take it to the store. You must take your things that are important to you- ... in, into the showroom. Take your wine glass, take your biggest plates you use all the time.

If you're using Mum's, Mum's, third generation Bessem fry pan or pot or baking dish, take that baking dish into the store and make sure it's gonna fit. And, when you really do get the right dishwasher that's got the most flexible stacking- ... then you're gonna have, I think, the most enjoyable experience with it.

So stacking is crucial. Wash performance is crucial. And of course the lower the noise, the better. And better quality brands dry better. So drying, wash performance, stackability, and noise. They're the four criteria.

Frances Cosway: Okay. So on the washability, so all those other things, except for the drying and the washability, you can pretty much assess by taking your stuff in, and that's awesome advice, actually, to take your big plates in and so forth. But how can you understand then how good it's going to wash and how good it's going to dry? Because you can't try before you buy.

Rob Sinclair: So it's a great question. Dishwasher's one of my favourite categories. I've been selling them for 30 years.

And, I was talking to clients on the weekend in, in, in Geelong, Saturday, Sunday, dishwashers. There are brands who have been making dishwashers for 50 plus years. Miele, Asko-

Frances Cosway: Bosch, yeah ...

Rob Sinclair: Bosch, just to name three. And I can also put in there Siemens, which is also made by Bosch, Neff, which is also made by Bosch, Gaggenau, which is also made by Bosch.

But if we just talk the Bosch, Siemens group, the Neff, or the the Asko group and the Miele group and then also possibly the AEG brand, these are brands that have just had a pedigree in making great quality dishwashers. So if I look at Miele, flexibility of stacking in their new range is extraordinary.

Frances Cosway: It's amazing.

Rob Sinclair: yeah. Yep. And the final thing that gives you the ultimate stackability, Frances, if you're doing a new kitchen and you can get an 86 centimetre gap beneath the bench top then put in the taller tub, supersize, extra large capacity machine into the kitchen. Because that extra height means if you're using the cutlery tray at the top, you'll have the cutlery tray at the top- a very area to put taller wine glasses even pots, colanders, and the like will fit on the top.

And then you have this whole bottom basket with height for bigger pots, bigger colanders, large plates, cutting boards, baking dishes will all fit in the grid system of the bottom basket. So you get

this really incredible ability to wash bigger things in the bottom, medium things in the middle shelf, and then have your cutlery stowed away in the cutlery basket, giving you so much space throughout the whole dishwasher to fit more than you could have ever imagined particularly in a busy household where you're cooking regularly, maybe you entertain a bit, or you just like cooking for the family in general I find the taller tub dishwasher is something to try and find in a new kitchen.

Now, you, they're harder to re- almost impossible to retrofit into an existing kitchen, so it's nice to split that.

Frances Cosway: But if they're 86, they should fit under a standard 900. It's just gonna affect the kicker.

Rob Sinclair: Yeah, correct. Yeah, just a matter of double-checking that. And I think, you're, it's just ano- another thing to look for in a taller tub machine is just to make sure you've got that space beneath the benchtop.

We, we find on some kitchens, Frances, where the, you'd know this better than I would being in design, but when we start going to a 60 mil profile on the benchtop, it then eats into the dishwasher space. It does. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah and look, we're even designing kitchens now where they are the benchtop is being higher than 900 because we're actually getting taller.

So if both both adults in that home are quite tall, we're actually building the benchtops to be 95 or 950 off the floor anyway, so that's great advice. So who's making the extra large dishwashers? What brand? Miele, obviously.

Rob Sinclair: M- Miele, Bosch, Asko are the th- AEG. Okay. They're the three key brands.

And when I use the Bosch brand, of course I think it's important to point out, Frances Bosch, as a company, globally own Bosch, Siemens, Neff, and Gaggenau. Th- all of those products are German-made for the most part and they're a hugely powerful global player when it comes to manufacturing appliances and having a bunch of different aesthetics across the range.

They don't have everything coming from the one factory. Gaggenau's built in the Gaggenau factory. Neff's built in a Neff factory. Bosch and Siemens tend to share the same factories. So just when I look at brands, Bosch group, and then Miele as a brand, Asko as a brand, are by far the three group- the main dishwasher brands to consider.

Frances Cosway: It's interesting, 'cause I actually have an AEG, and I know that they've been trying to get into the Australian market. Mine's six years old but it had a, a huge warranty, and it is absolutely silent. It is just such a great- Love it? I love it. But it took quite a bit of convincing for me, 'cause it's like AEG, but I think they're made in Italy.

But, but- Yeah. But, but- ... do you stock also the AEG stuff? Oh we love it. The you would've heard me mention the brand before. That is- Yeah ... that's the other fourth pillar of the brands that we

recommend and sell. A- again, whether it's built in Italy, whether it's built in Germany, whether it's built in Poland, whether it's built- Are built in the Czech Republic.

Rob Sinclair: The most important thing is AEG dishwashers are made in an AEG factory. Yeah. And, Miele have dryers that are made in the Czech Republic for their washing machines. Bosch have dryers that are made for their washing machines that are made in Poland. But it's always in a Miele factory, a Bosch factory, an AEG factory- using all of their own componentry, and you can just bank it in that their product's gonna be more reliable.

So- yeah ... again, those brands of dishwashers for me, Frances, are the ones to go with, and they have so much, there's so much flexibility across that. And you can, you may have seen the new model that AEG have released, which is called the ComfortLift.

So for people who are finding it a bit hard to bend down for whatever reason, the ComfortLift gives you a basket that's using Hettich or Ha- Hafele hinges. But they're very solid. And when you pull the bottom basket where your pla- where your plates and crockery and pots and pans might be, you pull the drawer, and then all of a sudden it l- it glides up into the- Oh, that's awesome into the height of the top basket. So you- You push it back and it just goes down like this back into the bottom of the dishwasher.

So this ComfortLift dishwasher is a beautiful motion of taking the bottom basket, as you pull it out, it lifts up into the higher position, and then everything is at belly button height to unload and reload.

So again, specific brands are doing specific things to create opportunities for individual-

Frances Cosway: I've just got three clients that are just coming to my head straight away that are gonna love that. Yeah. So I'll get them in. That's fantastic. And-

Rob Sinclair: They, A- AEG is a great- I use

Frances Cosway: AEG myself, and I've just had no issues with it, but I cannot believe how silent it is.

I've never come across a machine that's just so quiet. I ca- I can't even tell it's on.

Rob Sinclair: So when you're looking at dishwasher ratings, just on the noise of decibels, they're all measured in a decibel rating. And, look for machines that are getting beneath 50 decibels. The minute you get-

Frances Cosway: Great advice

Rob Sinclair: the minute you get beneath 50 decibels, 48, 46, 44, even in some cases 42, once you're at 42, you cannot hear it run. You've actually got to go and open the dishwasher to work- whether you turned it on. And that's why in some cases, Frances, we're seeing dishwashers with a an LED display that, that beams onto the floor of the kitchen.

It tells you how many minutes to go before the wash cycle, with a little LED dis- LED lighting display onto your floorboards or onto your tiles. And it tells you exactly how the dishwasher's going, 'cause you can't hear it.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. I'm finding that I have to really look at the, the front- ... to say it's on or not

Rob Sinclair: it's a great problem to have.

Frances Cosway: Y- it is, 'cause it's, they're generally in our open plan living space, they're generally where you are gonna be watching TV, and there's nothing worse than hearing it. Yeah, that's really good advice about the decibels. We've obviously got our traditional freestanding dishwashers, semi-integrated, and fully integrated.

What sort of price difference are we looking at to go fr- from, the freestanding up to the integrated? And obviously it is gonna come down to brand as well. Yes. And then I'll ask you, or let's cover off that question first.

Rob Sinclair: Miele's o- Miele and Bosch are one of the only two brands that does all of the same categories.

So they've got a freestanding machine, then they've got a built-under machine, which is just a stainless steel door. Yeah. But then with the built-under, you can run the kicker plate across the front. Unlike the freestanding, where you can't. Yep.

Built-under is the first one that gives us the ability to make it more tidy with the kitchen and a new kitchen application.

And then of course, semi-integrated is where we keep the control panel and a 140 control panel across the top, and then beneath the control panel, we build the integrated door. So that's semi-integrated. And then fully integrated is where you can't see any part of the dishwasher, and you're putting your joinery handle on there to open it, unless you choose one of the new Miele machines that is knock to open.

You can tap on the door, and the machine will open for you which is pretty cute. That's very nice. But so freestanding I can buy a Bosch freestanding dishwasher depending on the time of month whether there's a a special on or not, or, month variation in prices.

They're starting at 699, 799 for us, so- I'd have to I'd really have to scratch my head as to why I would buy that type of brand at that price point. When you look at all the other brands, and some of them aren't even real brands, and, without being nasty but, there are brands out there like Chic and Salt, th- they're not a brand.

They're not, they don't have factories anywhere else in the world. They're just a label on a product from some factory somewhere in Asia. And I think, for me to be able to choose a reputable brand from $699 or $799, I think that's a really budget-conscious price point. But they're $100 more than the no-name brands is worth it because the product is more likely to last 12 or 14 years with no service calls.

Yeah. Whereas the other machines A, they won't wash as well, they'll be too noisy there'll be issues with the filtration, the stacking won't be as good. And I think, Bosch is a global manufacturer of dishwashers for 40 fu- nearly 50 years. They've got stacking right. They've got the noise low on, on the entry-level models, and they've got the reliability superb.

And then once you step up into sort of the, the more the thousand dollar mark in free-standing dishwashers, then you're starting to get German-made machines. A- and certainly spending more than that really reduces the noise of the washing machine or the dishwasher, I should say, and it gives you a few more functions.

So free-standing dishwashers, I think the best price guide would be somewhere between $700 and sort of $1,200. If I went to the sort of the built-under machines, I can buy those for sort of $1,000, give or take. And if I go semi-integrated for us, then I'm really starting to spend $1,000 through to $2,000, and all of the variation will be features.

Once I move to $2,000, I move to those taller tub machines where you've got the XX- XXL cabinets in there. They're on the higher price point. Kicking off semi-integrated at $1,000, and then the quieter I get, and then as I move into tall tub, I'll start going to $1,500 through to $2,000. When I go to fully integrated fully integrated dishwashers will start around the $1,500 mark, and then move right up to $3,000.

And, when you go to machines that are at $1,000, they're already quite and then moving up the price range again towards $2,000, we'll see the XXL or tall tub cabinet come into play. And then the new release dishwashers from, say, Miele, where you're going at $2,499, and they've just released their new series of Generation 7000 dishwashers.

They've just literally got onto our floors, and it's the, it's a world first of automatic dispensing of your detergent into the dishwasher. So it has this a canister that goes into the door and it does 28 washes without you having to fill up your detergent compartment once. And I think the nice thing about this is the dishwasher in the rinsing, in the initial rinse, so you turn on the dishwasher in the first six minutes, it's just spraying water everywhere, and it's getting the dirt to come off the plates and just beginning the process of preparing to wash.

During that process, it's actually analyzing how much dirt's in the water, so it can then determine how much detergent to use and what- ... what temperatures might be required. And then it will give you a proper dispensing of the detergent. At the very And obviously, $2,000 for a Miele fully integrated and above with that new auto-dosing technology, for instance.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, I can understand from that you're going to use less detergent. So I- with the dispensing then, it means that, You're obviously gonna use less detergent. You don't need to be too fussed ab- but I'd say it's then also more environmentally friendly because you're not using as much detergent, and I assume then you're using powder rather than the tablets.

Rob Sinclair: Correct.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, okay. And then- And powder's always much better

Rob Sinclair: and Miele have obviously spent an awfully large amount of money investing into what is the best type of combination of powders to give you great wash result, minimal impact on the environment and as efficient use for wash performance as possible.

So you're putting as little detergent in as required.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. God, there's a lot more to dishwashers than just it's gonna wash your... It- there's just so many things to consider. Yeah. And I had... Oh what was my other question? Oh, I think it was around the buying criteria in terms of what, what's what's really gonna make a difference, but we've covered it off in terms of stacking and, all all the different flexibility that you're going to get.

I know for me, it was all about could I get my wine glasses in. We actually hand wash all our bakeware and everything else, but it is really looking at the flexibility and getting the adaptability and the stacking that you've got option.

Rob Sinclair: It's so important. The Miele that I'm currently using, which is a four-year-old one, I'm just about to change it over 'cause I'm lucky enough to be able to do so.

But the, the new stacking that's in, in these Miele machines that are being brought out for wine glasses is much better, and that's probably the only criticism I've had of my existing Miele is that the glass stacking is a little bit weak. But the that's been solved with the new range of dishwashers.

It's got beautiful silicon little grabs that, you know that when you push the wine glass in, the actual grab comes against the wine glass stem so it can't move at all. It's just beautiful how it works.

Frances Cosway: I feel like I need to upload my dishwasher. I f- Only six years old, I still think that's pretty new, but it's sounding pretty flash.

Now, because I lived in Europe for so long 450 dishwashers were really big over there from a space- Yeah ... saving perspective, and I found here that I've been back for 10 years, but the 450 is really not that popular here. Or where are you seeing people use? And I th- see also that the price you pay for a 450 it's almost like a false economy unless space is just such an issue.

Rob Sinclair: I think your space would have to be super tight because to- ... you're 100% right. Pound for pound, you're gonna spend more for a 450 than you are- Yeah ... for a 60 centimetre version of the same dishwasher. Which then really the only reason you're gonna spend $1,400 for a, a 450 wide dishwasher is 'cause every centimetre means something in your apartment.

It's that- Yeah ... the design's that tight. It's, if you can save 15 centimetres, it's m- allowing a bigger fridge, which might be more of a priority.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, absolutely, and it's it d- does make it really cost prohibitive here unless, exactly as you say, you need those extra 15 centimetres 'cause it's just not worth it, where I absolutely loved my 450 in Amsterdam.

And dishwashers are pretty unusual- there because I just don't have the space. But the 450 was gold. And when I came out here and wanted to design for 450, it's oh, these, they're so expensive.

Rob Sinclair: They are. And I think it's important to know that they're still available here, Frances. Don't get me wrong.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, I've seen them.

Rob Sinclair: Yeah, so Miele of course have them. Smeg have one. So yeah, just there's two great quality brands that you could consider and possibly still one in the Bosch range, but I can't remember.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, I had a Neff, I think. Yeah, great. Which is much bigger in Europe than it is here as well ac- across the board.

Frances Cosway: Absolutely. That's awesome on dishwashers. Everyone's gotta take their wine glass and their and their dining plate and not feel like they're a fool. They look like they're pretty smart if they go into a showroom and know what they're looking for.

Rob Sinclair: It'll pay dividends in the long run of enjoying-

Frances Cosway: Totally

Rob Sinclair: your new dishwasher.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. Such awesome practical advice. And again, this, everything you're saying is always going back to the functionality, which is just music to my ears.

Rob Sinclair: Yep.

Frances Cosway: All right. Let's talk about ovens. So so many different things. I'm gonna let you lead here, but there's so many different things about ovens, whether it's from a design perspective, we have a lot of people come to us with, "I definitely want a wall oven."

And obviously one of the big contenders for that is because it's more at waist height, it's easy to get in, it's easy to look at things rather than bending over for something that's under the bench. However, from a design perspective, we've often found that once we've shown them the compromise they're making in terms of the bench space they can have, they then decide to go for an underbench oven, a freestanding oven.

What I'm finding is that big cooks who want a 900, it's not necessarily available to get that in a wall oven option. And also cost. I find that to get a cost-effective option it's often more cost-effective to have a freestanding, which is all in one. We can put the kicker underneath to make it look a little bit more aesthetically pleasing.

So I think there's so many things to think about. So where do you start when someone comes in and says, "Oh, I'm after an oven"?

Rob Sinclair: So straightaway

Frances Cosway: I bet you that's what they come in with.

Rob Sinclair: Absolutely. It's 100% right.

Frances Cosway: “I need an oven.”

Rob Sinclair: So we would first try and get a bit of a feeling as to, upright versus in the wall.

The upright cooker, as you've pointed out, Frances, it gives you capacity typically because I'm gonna, con- refer to it as an upright cooker, that's something that's at least 900 wide. Yeah. That gives you the bigger oven capacity and then the big cooking surface in all one, all in one unit.

And, with brands like Smeg at two and a half thousand dollars to three and a half thousand dollars for their models you know- Fisher & Paykel with some great models in that price point. And of course the Ilve brand who specialises in upright cookers. Really you've got a very, very nice piece of space between $2,000 and $5,000 in an upright stove, 900 wide.

But very important to point out the new series of Westinghouse cookers as well, Frances. Australian made, built in Adelaide, and, these cookers are absolutely world-class in their manufacture. I've been through the Westinghouse plant in Adelaide at on three occasions and seen how they make their products.

They are world-class cookers, so im- important to look at those in the mix with Smeg, Ilve, Fisher & Paykel a- and even the Falcon brand, which is a an English brand of cookers. But importantly-

Frances Cosway: That's pretty impressive if it's up there with the Ilve and that that's really... And the fact that it's made in Australia, that's just an awesome story.

Rob Sinclair: They're really terrific products. The plant i- in Dudley Park over in South Australia is a world-class facility And it's interesting, you, you might have... But so they bake the enamel that goes on the inside of all of their ovens to 803 degrees Celsius. When you bake enamel to that temperature, you're getting the absolute best bond between the glass, which is the enamel, and the steel.

So you get the steel and the enamel bonding so tightly it's almost impossible to chip it. It doesn't crack down the future, and that's what the hallmark of great enamelling of the internals of any oven are. So when you look at brands like Bosch, Miele, Gaggenau, Neff they're all, world-class brands.

But the enamelling process in all of their plants is to this 800 degrees Celsius. Electrolux who own the factory in in Adelaide for Westinghouse have put through a line of ovens manufacturing that all... Every product, whether I buy a Westinghouse stove or a Chef Stove for $599, or whether I buy their upright cooker for 3,000 or 7,000, depending on which one I choose, every model of of product is enamelled with the same quality.

So it's a very impressive plant. So the, the uprights are, I think upright cookers are very much a, a product that feels like I am in a, a commercial kitchen space. They've got that Goldstein, Waldorf type of commercial cooker look about them. And I think a lot of our consumers do like that.

They're also obviously very, complete in the fact that you've got a 900 big stove and many of these cookers today you're getting twin fans. In one of the Smeg ovens, there's three fans making sure that the temperature circulation- ... through that really large cavity is nice and even.

So all of those sort of challenges we might have faced 30 years ago with, big cavities but poor circulation of temperature or an uneven heat on different shelves that's been resolved by better brands today. And then of course, once you break above 900 wide there's some new features that are coming to the marketplace, Frances, I think it's important to point out.

Wall ovens, when we get to those and talk about them, have so much flexibility because we can choose steamers, microwaves, combinations of the above, a half in one oven gives you flexibility, so that's all exciting. But upright cookers are bringing those as well. So Smeg is releasing a 1,200 wide unit that, that's also combining a steam cooker inside one of the ovens.

And Falcon have just released their 1,200 wide unit that has a steam cooker in one of the ovens. So I've got a, a- ... in the case of the Falcon, it's 1,100 wide, it's got two main ovens, and then it's got a steam compartment and a warming drawer. So to have all of that together in your 1,100 wide upright cooker is incredible.

Oh, that's awesome. I think that, that's flexibility we were looking for- Yeah ... before and extra features. I and so then I think, the upright cooker is an aesthetic decision, it can be an oven capacity decision- Yeah ... and then it can be also a, a cost effectiveness decision because, to get a big 900 wide oven from Smeg and to get a beautiful cast iron top that's also 900 wide from Smeg, and only spend 2,599 is great value.

And it's the same with the Westinghouse brand. You start at 2,599 or thereabouts right up to their models for self-cleaning, high heat self-cleaning, which of course we call pyrolysis. And to have all of those features in the 900 wide and 1,200 wide cookers today I think is really impressive.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, absolutely. And I know when I y- and, and we get asked this a lot, "Should I have two 600s or should I have a 900?" And I think, and I always go back to it depends on the type of cook you are. Gotcha. You might be wanting to make some cakes and do some baking in one oven, and it needs to be at a particular temperature, and then you might be doing a savory course that needs to be at another temperature.

So it's really handy to have the two ovens. And I needed that yesterday, but I've only got the one 900, and I thought, "Ah, this is when I would actually really have liked my two ovens." But for me it was always, and again, it came back to my frustrations when I was living in Europe where you don't have 900s.

It's almost unheard of. Yes. You have 600s and, I had a big Christmas lunch, I was cooking goose, as you do overseas, and my oven wasn't big enough. And it was like, "This is so frustrating." And being big entertainers and having people over often, I needed the capacity. And, when you're cooking with kids, you can put in four or five, or, four trays of biscuits, so the capacity was big.

And if you are a big cook and you need the width, you really only have one choice. You really can't go two 600s. So again, it comes back to your, right at the start what you said about buying criteria. You have to look at how you cook and some of the, maybe some of the restrictions you've had with your current oven, but how you want to ideally be able to bake.

And it's only when I highlight some of those things about being able to put multiple cakes in or multiple biscuits that people go, "Oh, yeah, I hadn't even thought about that." Yeah. And I think that's where if you're talking to someone on the floor and can really ask you those questions, it'll really then, you'll start to answer and work out that you're going to need the wider oven.

Rob Sinclair: Yep. A- and look for me I have wall ovens. And certainly I do love the fact that I've had the flexibility in different homes that I've renovated Frances. In, in, in some cases I've had under-bench ovens because that's all I could fit, and then in the larger that I've renovated over time, I've had the room to get the ovens up on the, into the wall.

Yeah. Again, design, eh, the capacity and design will always push against each other a bit in this space- Correct ... because, the design criteria could really show off more bench space, as you rightly point out.

Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: And we would, might sacrifice a bit of oven space or convenience to get a better bench top. And that'll come down to you and your client, of course and we fit in with that. Yeah.

Frances Cosway: And they've got to work out what's gonna work best for them. But as designers, we need to highlight to them what some of the trade-off's going to be, and it is that design versus functionality, and working out what's gonna work best for them.

So the other thing that I always highlight to my clients, and I'm sure you'll get to this, is, yeah, not all ovens are the same in terms of width. So no 600 or no 900, you've got to look at the internal measurement. And I know that's exactly... I bought a Neff in Europe 'cause it was the biggest I could get inside.

So why are some of them what makes them so much smaller inside versus a bigger cavity? I think it's got to do with the cleaning mechanisms that are in there. Why aren't they all just the same inside?

Rob Sinclair: O- obviously each brand has its... air circulation is the most important thing in an oven.

So w- when a manufacturer is making an oven, they're bringing to the criteria of, I'm gonna put a baking dish in to do roasting or biscuits. Maybe gonna have multiple level cooking for cookies. Maybe I'm gonna do a pot roast in a Le Creuset French cast iron pot- Yeah ... with a lid on.

They're trying to cater to all types of cooking from around the globe. And number one thing they're trying to always achieve in any oven, no matter which the manufacturer is to try and get the temperature in the bottom shelf, the middle shelf, and the top shelf- Oh ... all the same. Yeah.

Neff as a brand, for example, the way their air circulates in their oven is unique compared to, say, the way Bosch circulate their air, or the way Gaggenau circulate their air, or the way Smeg or Ilve try and get the air flow around their ovens. And, if you look at a brand like Wolf, which is an American oven- they've even they put the fan that used to be in the middle of the oven sitting here. They've taken the fan and put two fans into the corners of the oven but up vertically, and they're a spinning fan, tangential fan like this, not one that oscillates like this. So you got two fans in the corner allowing to create this con- concave back, giving you even more space and depth in the oven.

Wow. So my fans are now in the corner, so the airflow is perfect. They're full height, and they deliver this really amazing airflow. So every brand- You have to be paying

Frances Cosway: then for, because Wolf's pretty serious stuff.

Rob Sinclair: Yeah, they're s- they're a seriously good oven. They're pretty serious.

Rob Sinclair: But I use that example more of the differences are every brand's fighting to get the best performance of airflow- Yeah, and evenness of temperature throughout the compartment. So every brand has their way of doing that. And, again recognizing what it is that you do at home is most important. I don't do a lot of pastry b- or cake baking but I love for me a, a- chicken roast is in once a week I would do a chicken roast and sometimes twice.

And I love other forms of roasting as well. So when I'm doing a chicken roast, I wanna know that my chicken can sit in its baking dish, and then I've got room for my favourite potatoes that need to fit in the oven as well, which are the Hasselback potatoes that go on a completely separate shelf with some roast cauliflower.

And so those are all sitting there doing their thing, and the roast chicken's on another level. And I can do all of that in a 60 centimetre oven it's because I've chosen well. I've got a 44 centimetre width from one rack... By the way, it's not from the enamel to the enamel, it's the width from the inside of the shelving to the other inside of the shelving.

That's 44 centimetres across usable space. And to your point, Frances, every one of them is different. Some of them are only 41 centimetres and that three different centimetres- Yeah ... makes a difference. And then sometimes the lowest shelf position isn't low enough, so you don't have enough height in the oven to have a proper sized roast- Yeah and a second rack inside the oven.

Yeah ... so you'll s- you'll see us in a easy fashion in m- of our stores. We have rubber chickens. So we're regularly putting a rubber chicken on a dish to show how big a chicken looks in the oven, and then putting the second rack in above the chicken so you can see how much room is still above the second rack, and I think that's an important thing to determine.

So bringing in favourite baking dishes is a must. If you've got a Bessemer baking dish that's part of your cooking routine, we're not here to change that. Bring that in and let us learn how we can find the right oven with you to, to suit those needs. But again, understanding what you do.

Do you bake? Do you roast? Do you want flexibility? Then choose an oven that's gonna give you all of those things at once. And, brands like NEFF, brands like Bosch and Siemens and ILVE and SMEG and others are all great products that do this. And even the new range of Westinghouse in their in their ovens, again, built in Adelaide, they've just got some fabulous features.

The number one thing I'm gonna be looking for though in an oven, o- other than its performance, is I really think it's important to consider if your budget can get you to self-cleaning

Frances Cosway: it's self-cleaning means-

Frances Cosway: I was just about to ask you if that's really a fad or whether that's a really serious thing

Rob Sinclair: It's a super serious thing.

Today you can spend $1,200 on a 60 centimetre oven, and that would be a Westinghouse even a Bosch and those ovens have the high heat self-cleaning. So it's a dedicated program that you will turn on once every three months, depending on how much dirt you make, and it heats up the oven to 500 degrees Celsius.

That is a running cost of 50 cents to do that, so there is a small cost. But I'm not using any cream cleansers, I'm not using elbow grease. I'm just turning the oven on to 500 degrees Celsius for an hour and a half, and it changes the fats into ash. And that then, when it's finished, I let the oven cool down, and I can go and get a nice wet sponge and wipe out the oven and it's spotless.

Bearing in mind that all the ovens that, are making this quality enamel heat it up to 803 degrees Celsius, they're the ovens that can ca- cater for this high heat cleaning. Yeah ... so for me, to your point earlier, Frances, capacity crucial, and sometimes considering buying a second oven or even a, a combination oven with a steamer, which I'm sure you'll all discuss the benefits of steamers at some point.

But- We have ... the ha- having flexibility of having more than one oven can be very handy. And I must admit I've always enjoyed wherever I could in a kitchen, wherever I was doing a renovation, to have a second oven, or an oven that was maybe an oven and a steamer combined, was very helpful.

Frances Cosway: Absolutely. And I know that a lot of clients are going a lot more down that steamer route, although not necessarily understanding that's a completely different cooking type. And I have lived with a girlfriend of mine who had one, and it was amazing how quickly she could cook. So just quickly on before we go onto steam ovens- Yeah just the normal ovens, and if you are going to have an integrated, how big can you get them? What's the maximum size? Because I know you can't get them in nine. I believe you can get Miele doing an 800 or a 750 wide. Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: You're talking an oven

Frances Cosway: Yeah, oven. An oven that's integrated, built in

Rob Sinclair: Oh, so you mean just installed into the wall?

Yeah.

Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: It, so wall ovens will be depending on the manufacturer, we have them available 60 centimetres wide. There are some brands that do 700 centimetre wide. There are some that are doing an 800, not many, I think only one of them. It might be an Ilve. And then of course you've got 900.

All of those can be installed under bench or in the wall.

Frances Cosway: Okay, so you have got 900s that go in the wall?

Rob Sinclair: Yes, definitely.

Frances Cosway: Okay. That's the part that I d- Yeah ... I didn't think was available. They only went up to 800.

Rob Sinclair: So even if you take the two different Smeg ovens that come in a 90 centimetre, both of those can be, they can be mounted at any height you choose.

It- Oh, that's fantastic ... it's purely just a matter of choosing the right, creating the right cavity to suit the oven. And in some cases I've even seen Frances, where some p- crazy, but some clients have put two 90 centimetre ovens on top of each other in the wall which is a lot of oven.

Frances Cosway: Crazy. That's a lot of oven. Yeah. Okay.

Rob Sinclair: A- and just on ovens too, I think, just back to the key criteria, look at your capacity and make sure it's gonna fit what you fit. Look at the furniture and the accessories that the manufacturer provide you to do the job. Biscuit trays, deeper baking dishes.

Some brands give you nothing. Some brands give you two or three wire racks and two or three one biscuit dish and one deeper baking dish. When you're getting two and three of these and you're getting all of the, this type of internal furniture in an oven, these are the things that give you the ability to use the capacity of the oven to its maximum.

'Cause when you're using a, a, a full deep pan baking dish made by Bosch and it takes you out to the 44 centimetre width- ... that make, that means you can get four chickens in their baking dish. Yeah. And I know it's probably a little bit over the top, but you could fit four chickens or in your case, maybe a giant turkey.

You know- No, I like a goose. Yeah. Oh, sorry. A goose. Like goose.

But, again, understanding what you cook and how you cook is important. Looking for good furniture that comes with the brand and not, And some of them have them available as accessories as well.

Frances Cosway: They do, yeah.

Rob Sinclair: So some brands have a complete set.

So competition between the better brands can sometimes come down to the door furniture. It can come down, sorry the, sorry the racks inside the oven. Yeah. It can be full telescopic racks that can also make the oven more usable. So telescopic racks are worth considering I think really all ovens today have about six to eight functions.

Fan forced functions, non-fan forced functions, and combinations of fan with grill or fan with a bottom element that allows you to then have the full flexibility of whether you're a baker or a roaster or a combination of both. So choosing functions, choosing ovens that have got six or eight functions to give you total flexibility, I think can be very beneficial.

And then, make sure you choose the brands. For example, Neff would be a classic oven. If I was a baker, which I'm not, but if I was a baker, that oven is globally renowned as one of the best baker's ovens on the planet. It's got dough proving functions, it's got all sorts of things that allow you to really be an incredible baker and a roaster of things as well, so yeah.

It's

Frances Cosway: interesting with Neff because they just don't seem to be as popular. You're in the trade, but I just don't see them being as popular here as what they are in Europe. They're huge in Europe, I just don't think their brand is recognised here and they need to probably get some traction.

I know, are they...?

Rob Sinclair: It's, it... I think it's coming. Philip, the CEO of of Bosch Siemens Group, who own Neff and Gaggenau as well- Yeah ... he's really seeing quite a strong play on the Neff brand coming. But, the they're 25 years behind Bosch, Miele, Smeg- yeah ... and other quality brands.

And, Miele Australia is the second largest market outside of Miele Germany in the world. It, so-

Frances Cosway: Wow.

Rob Sinclair: It's unusual to have such a prominence, but they've been such a successful brand 'cause they've been here since, the, the '70s. It's funny, I had a lady on 3AW with me the other day, and she'd bought a dishwasher off my dad in 1973.

It's still going. It's still

Frances Cosway: working. It's still... I knew it. Amazing. Why? Of course it's still working. That's amazing, but that's incredible about Miele, 'cause Australia is such a small market, really. Yeah, it's small. We're a big country, but a tiny market. So for us to be the second biggest market outside Germany is phenomenal.

Absolutely phenomenal.

Rob Sinclair: At one point we were, at one point we were the biggest market for answers outside of Germany. It's only recently the USA has taken us over.

Frances Cosway: It's just amazing. Yeah. Yeah, that really blows my mind. Steam ovens. Let's quickly talk about steam ovens because they are getting a lot more traction.

Actually, I was, I wanna ask you one more thing about ovens, and that is what are your thoughts on gas ovens? Oh, great question. So I've used gas ovens. I've I've found them difficult because I'm not used to it normally. It's not, it's never been my predominant style of cooking in a gas oven and, certainly the older style gas ovens didn't have a fan and you'd have to obviously-

Oh,

Rob Sinclair: I've had one of those

Regulate your temperature 'cause the top of the oven was hot, the middle of the oven was medium, and then the bottom of the oven just didn't cook anything. The modern gas ovens there aren't many available. One of them, of course, is the- yeah, Blempre

Frances Cosway: one

Rob Sinclair: Blempre. But the key one is Westinghouse built in Adelaide. Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: They make An incredibly good quality gas oven. They're fan forced, Frances, but I suppose in the past maybe when electric ovens were taking half an hour to heat up, the gas oven was hot in 15 minutes. Now, today, electric ovens are hot in six and seven minutes.

So-

Frances Cosway: Yeah, no that's actually something else I was gonna ask you. I think there's also this misnomer that if you've got a big oven, it's gonna take a lot of energy just to heat up, but I think that's no longer the case, is it?

Rob Sinclair: No, it's not.

Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: We- we've got really good quality elements. They're nice and efficient, and then good quality fans distributing the heat, and most importantly, really good insulation around the oven- Yeah

both on the front of the door, four layers of glass, not one, and then really good quality insulation all the way around the cavity means that once it's hot, it stays hot.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, I can just remember the gas oven when I was growing up. It just leaked like crazy. In fact, that's where you'd go and get warm.

Yes. And I still to this day, out of the habit of having a gas oven, put all the stuff to cook on the top- Yes ... and all the stuff that I want to cook at the bottom because it's just such a habit. But I think that gas ovens are bigger for bakers, I think. They're better for bakers, if I understand correctly.

They're still not... it, it- It cre- ... it's horses

Rob Sinclair: for courses ... it creates a slightly, it creates a slightly more moist environment, but again, I think we're talking about ovens and so on where these comparisons were being made 20 and 30 years ago.

Frances Cosway: Yeah.

Rob Sinclair: Any good quality oven today because it seals well, will create a nice moist environment and with a fan to, to to evenly distribute the heat within.

And for me, whether it's gas or electric, it's not gonna make much of a difference. No, and I think from a sustainability perspective, we're moving away from gas anyway. People are now going to even electric fireplaces and things like that just because we're moving away from gas, but I just wanted to get your view on it.

Frances Cosway: Yeah ... 'cause they are still available and- Yeah, and, and- And, ... we still sell them, Frances, and I respect those people who love them,

yeah.

Rob Sinclair: One of my closest friends her grandmother, who loves making shortbread, she only knows a gas oven. Yeah. She's 80, she's nearly 90 years old, and for her it was so important to keep what she was doing the same.

Not to reinvent the wheel and it's important. If you love gas then by all means have gas again, because that's what you know and love. Yeah.

Frances Cosway: It's the same with stoves, yeah.

Rob Sinclair: It is, yeah.

Frances Cosway: All right so steam ovens. So you were talking about earlier, you can get the combination, so it's a normal oven and then also a steam, which is really attractive if you want a second oven.

Correct. And then also having a steam, but then there are also the standalone products. So where do you see so the type of cook or what sort of functionality what are people looking for if they really wanna get a steam oven? What, what sort of... Is it cooking? Is it speed? Is it-

Rob Sinclair: So there's, I think there's a whole bunch of things that pile into it.

So first of all just a straight steam oven is obviously fabulous for cooking vegetables, fish, chicken fillets. A- and of course it's only got the moist style of cooking 'cause it's just a straight steam oven. It's not a combination where it's also an oven and a steamer. So the straight steam oven for me is a really great quality product, whether it's a Bosch, a Miele or a, a Siemens, any of those sort of brands.

You're probably gonna spend $1,000 and combine it with your oven. What I love about them is their large capacity and they're very gentle in the way they steam. So compared to a stove top, which I've done plenty of stove top steaming in my time whether it's for beans or asparagus or snow peas, the steamer compartment or the steamer oven itself is much gentler.

It's much bigger, but it's also a much gentler style of steam. We've all overcooked very quickly on the stove top. It's much harder to do that in the steam oven. And because it's just a beautiful, gentle style of steaming, you tend to see more vitamins and nutrients held inside the, the veggies that you're steaming.

And obviously the control and the ability to manage it around fish and chicken also is really nice. For me, a steam oven really comes alive when I make it a combination steam oven. My accuracy of temperature becomes much stronger And this is where things like sous vide cooking also come into play.

Now sous vide is typically a water bath where I can set the temperature to 50 degrees Celsius or 60 degrees Celsius and I can cook food, particularly m- red meats, fish, chicken and really get a a cooking of the protein very accurately all the way through. But just if I just do the steam combination, I have a steam combination oven at home.

I love my vegetables. Things like asparagus snow peas yellow beans, green beans oh, those little things- They're not overdone ... the little leafy things.

Frances Cosway: Nothing

Rob Sinclair: worse than- They're never overdone. ...

Frances Cosway: Warm floppy asparagus.

Rob Sinclair: Or as artichokes. I regularly will cook or steam artichokes.

Even beetroot can be steamed. Any f- any form of vegetable, of course. I love what that does to my, my, my vegetables and the nutrients are held. The, the, the steaming of asparagus where you can set the steamer for nine minutes and you get exactly the same result every time and the alarm goes off, it's great.

But I, then being able to combine steam with your cooking, so if I'm doing a roast chicken, for example, I can have added steam to my roast chicken or my fillet of beef, and be cooking that in a steam environment where I've actually got less shrinkage, more moisture held into the meat as I cook.

So fantastic. It's also much faster, in my understanding, with a steam oven. It's a much a faster cook. Yeah, y- absolutely. And I think, f- for me also you're starting to ... When you're adding steam to an oven you're really bringing in very unique skills that are coming in, in chefs in commercial kitchens which many people today, particularly after COVID-19 and the amount of time we've all spent at home.

The number of cust- customers, Frances, who have learned how to make sourdough is unbelievable. Oh, nice. Yeah. They've now got their own sourdough culture at home and they're coming and looking for ovens that'll make their sourdough bread perform even better. Added steam when you're cooking sourdough bread will give you an even crisper- Crust

Outside on your sourdough than a normal traditional oven, and these are techniques people are looking for. So it's exciting times.

Frances Cosway: So you don't think then the steam oven is a fad?

Rob Sinclair: Definitely

Frances Cosway: No, it's here to stay.

Rob Sinclair: Yeah we sell an extraordinary am- amount of them and, But I'll look at it again as just, it's giving me the ultimate flexibility in my domestic kitchen.

I've got the ability to be, in a combination steam oven, I've got the ability to roast, steam, combination steam, roast, bake bread. Regenerator as a function's awesome. The roast you did the previous night, I can have my roast potatoes, my, my roast beef gravy mashed potato, whatever it might be, all regenerated inside my combi steam oven, and it is almost as good as, if not better than, the night before.Frances Cosway: I love it, the regenerating of the night, the leftovers. That's absolutely fantastic.

Rob Sinclair: And the fi- the final thing I've certainly mastered, which I really enjoyed learning about, has been this whole sous vide cooking. So you need a vacuum sealer on your bench, for example.

I can have a Sunbeam vacuum sealer or I can have a, an Italian vacuum sealer. Or even in the case of mine, my vacuum sealer is actually a warming drawer from beneath my oven. I slide it out, and then, recently we've really mastered the art, my fiancée and I, we've mastered doing a rib eye or fish and chicken breasts.

So we put a rib eye in at 54 degrees Celsius for one hour. So this is a nearly a 750 gram rib eye, and it's going straight into the... So it's vacuum sealed first- Yeah ... with a bit of pepper, some herbs, all that sort of stuff, olive oil. Then we put it inside the combi steamer for one hour at 54 degrees Celsius.

It is now this... The actual steak is perfectly cooked to a medium-rare level. If I want it more cooked, I'd cook it at a higher temperature for one hour. I might go to 58 degrees for more more well done. Or if I went to 50 degrees, it'd be rare. So it's total control of the cooking environment.

And then I just fin- finally finish off that rib eye on a Le Creuset plate on my induction hot plate. And I sear it, flip it over, sear it, and I've got the nice checkerboard pattern on the bottom of and the top of my rib eye. Slice it and- And serve it into portions on a plate. But the advantage here is the steak has been cooked perfectly and it's cooked all the way through.

All I've gotta do is just the caramelisation on the surface of the meat to finish off that process. And so I've really enjoyed the fact that my combi steamer has converted into a sous vide accurate water bath type of cooking.

Frances Cosway: Yeah, it sounds like for people that aren't that experienced with cooking, they can master these amazing cuts without- Yeah

really thinking, and you don't need a meat thermometer by the sounds of it.

Rob Sinclair: Correct. And

Frances Cosway: then if you're- You get one of like what everyone's using. But then- It's just put in the program and off you go

Rob Sinclair: And then imagine the final thing, which is taking all those wonderful things you might have cooked on a Sunday, pasta sauce, minestrone soup two of my favourite things which I cook at home all the time.

So we have bulk-baked or bulk-cooked pasta sauce. We put them into the vacuum sealer bags and individually portioned one serve as a serve or two serves of bolognese sauce, one serve of minestrone soup or two serves of minestrone, depending on whether it was just the both of us eating or just one of us.

And then it gets frozen in the freezer in the in the sous vide bag nice and flat maybe a centimetre thick. To recook that, it goes inside the combi steamer for 15 minutes on 100 degrees Celsius, 100% humidity. Cut the top of the bag, pour the sauce on top of the pasta, which has been made on the stove top, pour the minestrone straight into a bowl, job done.

Yeah. And you don't need a microwave. Nope. Awesome. It's mu- a much better story 'cause we won't talk about the controversies of microwaves, but I think for those people that are not keen on them, that sounds like a perfect solution.

What we end up with then, if you have an oven and a combi steam combined you've then got this ability to control every style of cooking you want.

And a lot of the, the chef methods which I think are really flowing into m- into domestic kitchens. We're in the middle of obviously a, a change in time where people have never cooked so much. We've had to cook at home. Yeah. And, and- There's a

Frances Cosway: massive renaissance in it ...

Rob Sinclair: yeah, and the renaissance in, in, in cooking-

Frances Cosway: Yeah

Rob Sinclair: people are following chefs online and following recipes that chefs are doing in their own home. It's unbelievable. We've never seen anything like

Frances Cosway: it. It's

Rob Sinclair: huge. Yeah. And

Frances Cosway: the likes of, MasterChef and My Kitchen Rules, and kids are cooking a lot more now too. It is really big.

God, I'm gonna have to update all my co- we're big cooks- ... but we're pretty basic I think in terms of the appliances that we have. But yeah, and it changes so much. Six years ago, steam ovens were not that common.

Rob Sinclair: No. So-

Frances Cosway: That was a real deluxe sort of product, and now it's becoming a lot more of a consumable.

Rob Sinclair: A- again, I think- e- every home's different and it's important to but, there are many of us amongst us who would just get away with a nice, normal oven Frances. But, for those people who wanna extend themselves and cater for more types of cooking that they maybe learnt recently to do if you're doing a kitchen again and you had the ability to have an oven and a combi steam possibly a warming drawer or a vacuum as well at the same time or budget depending of course and space.

But yeah, there's so much flexibility today available in appliances. And again, before you get into the appliance store and get confused, think about how you cook. I- Think about what you like to do. Get

your list together of the type of things that you like to have in your own home environment, and then go and find the oven, steamer, if that, that, that can suit your needs to make your life easier.

Frances Cosway: Completely agree. It, again, it all comes back to the functionality what you said at the start. Yep. And I do say quite a lot as well to my clients, don't worry about all the gadgets and what everyone else is having. If that's, if you're not a cook, there's no point spending thousands and thousands of dollars on something that you're never going to use.

Correct. I just think it's a waste of money. Put your money into something else. Yep. But if you're a really passionate cook or you know it's something that you wanna get into, it's worth investing in something that's going to serve you. But it's just not worth it if it's not going to ... You're never gonna use it, it's a waste.

Like the teppanyaki grill phase and- Correct ... and all that sort of stuff. And

Rob Sinclair: I

Frances Cosway: think,

Rob Sinclair: Frances- It's a really important for us and for anyone, if you just work out where you do most of your cooking. 'Cause some people don't use an oven at all. No, they don't. So don't spend $1,000 on an oven.

Spend $700 on the oven. Yeah. You don't need something fancy. But they might be dedicated in the hotplate area and want something that really has great performance- ... good size. So you can get away with putting your oven underbench, saving your bench space to have a nice 900 wide hotplate.

Whether you go induction or whether you go gas, that's a whole another conversation. But, when you've got enough room to be able to cater to your type of cooking, which is benchtop cooking, not oven cooking, people might wanna cook more on a wok, they might do more sautéing, they might do more casseroling, whatever they do.

We have people who have no engagement in the oven, but can't wait to find the most deluxe gas hotplate- ... that's got all the variations that suit their cooking.

Frances Cosway: Yeah. A- absolutely. And again, it's just you gotta understand what your needs are. Yep. And also your family. It's not just about you, but what your kids might wanna end up doing- Yep

and the rest. I hope that you got lots of information with regards to choosing appliances. It was so awesome to have such a frank and open conversation with Rob from E&S Trading about fridges, dishwashers, and ovens. And boy, oh, boy, did we learn about the brands, the things to look out for. But what I loved about chatting to Rob was just how his passion oozed through his conversation in terms of his knowledge, but just how much he loves what he does.

And it's so enjoyable to chat to someone as well who has a very clear vision for making sure that customers, his customers, are choosing products based on what they need and the performance of those products rather than anything else. And so for me, it was just such an awesome opportunity to chat to someone very like-minded with regards to making sure that, you're not choosing things that everyone else is choosing or what you think you should be choosing, but really based on what your performance requirements are and, as I always say, what your needs are.

And so that was just music to my ears and such a joy to chat to Rob about that. So join us next week for Appliances Part Two, where Rob and I are going to be talking about stove tops and range hoods, and then the other types of appliances that you may want to utilise and incorporate into your kitchen design.

It's a- another really jam-packed episode, and really one of those ones not to miss when you wanna make sure that you're choosing the right appliances, and what's the buying criteria, and how do you know you're gonna be choosing the right one for you. As always, have a great week, and I really look forward to you joining me next week for Appliances Part Two.

Bye for now.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

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