Rise of Multifunctional Taps in Residential Kitchens

Trends and Drivers in Design and Specification



> “The more single-function applications within a kitchen, the greater the household’s energy needs, which makes multifunctional appliances and fixtures a more appealing option for the environmentally conscious consumer.”



INTRODUCTION

At the same time the modern kitchen has evolved into a multipurpose space, the values of today’s typical consumer have shifted. Placing greater value on features that make their lives easier, present-day consumers are prepared to pay more for high-quality appliances and fixtures that offer greater functionality, value-adding features and tangible lifestyle benefits. This mindset applies to kitchen design and tap selection.

Homeowners and occupants want the convenience of exceptionally tasting chilled water, instant boiling water, and quality sparkling water on tap at home, much like they can get at offices and restaurants. This has given rise to a new category of multifunctional taps that can be used to streamline everyday kitchen tasks, such as food preparation and cleaning, as well as dispensing filtered drinking water.

Below we consider the key drivers in the design and specification of multifunctional taps in modern residential kitchen builds.





INCREASING DEMAND FOR FUNCTIONALITY

In a Home Advisor survey, consumers ranked efficiency and functionality as the most important aspects of the perfect kitchen.[1] In addition, according to a global NielsenIQ study, product benefits such as high-quality and safety standards and superior function or performance are among the top priorities that consumers are most willing to pay for.[2]

These trends extend into the kitchen tap category. There is increasing demand for greater functionality as well as different forms of filtered water (i.e. chilled, boiled and sparkling water), all in one tap. This is supported by the fast-growing sparkling water market, which was valued at USD 29.71 billion in 2020 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.6% from 2021 to 2028.[3]

Besides offering all types of filtered water, new functionality is increasingly desirable in kitchen taps. For example, there is an opportunity to improve common weighted pull-out spray systems which can make food preparation and cleaning easier. Touch screen displays, safety features, energy saving modes and integrated water filters are features found in the new generation of multifunctional taps, all of which offer extra convenience to residential users.

CONVENIENCE AND BUDGET ARE KEY DRIVERS

A third of Australians report experiencing chronic time stress, according to the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey.[4] In addition, the rising cost of living means that consumers are more diligent when spending their money. As a result, products or services that simplify, ease, and improve the efficiency of our daily lives will be more appealling.

According to a recent United Nations study, Australians spent on average $580 in 2021 buying 504 litres of bottled water per person.[5] The Australian Beverages Council says that convenience plays a big part in why people buy bottled water.[6]

Instant access to different forms of filtered water at home has the potential to save Australians money by reducing the need for bottled water. It is also more convenient than going out to buy filtered chilled or sparkling water, especially as more Australians are working remotely and spending more time at home.

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS AND BRANDS

Today's consumers care about buying environmentally and ethically sustainable products.[9] People are increasingly aware that the production, distribution, sale, and disposal of the products they purchase have a substantial environmental cost in terms of carbon emissions.

Single-use plastics is one area where consumer habits are beginning to change. Australians buy almost 15 billion plastic bottles every year, with many ending up in landfill or polluting our natural water systems. Not only does it take an enormous amount of water and energy to manufacture bottled water, but they are also produced from non-renewable fossil fuels.[10] Cleaning, filling, sealing, labelling, and distributing the bottles all require additional energy and resources.[11]

Switching to drinking filtered tap water makes the most environmental sense for Australians. In terms of energy consumption, it takes 5.6-10.2 MJ per litre to produce bottled water whereas tap water typically requires 0.005 MJ per litre in treatment and distribution.[12] By removing the need for bottled water, you are also eliminating the need to purchase, transport, store, refrigerate and recycle bottles, resulting in further energy savings.

In addition, it is important to note the cumulative environmental impact of multiple single-function applications. The more single-function applications within a kitchen, the greater the household's energy needs, which makes multifunctional appliances and fixtures a more appealing option for the environmentally conscious consumer.

DRINKING TAP WATER AND HEALTH

Compared to pre-pandemic years, there is a higher demand today for health-related products and services. Market research firm GfK note that 44% of consumers actively look for products and services that help them live a healthy lifestyle.[7]

The health benefits of drinking water are well known. In addition, sparkling water provides a healthy alternative to drinking regular soda. The decline in soft drink sales volume among the top food businesses shows how customers are turning away from sugary soda in favor of healthier alternatives.[8]



AESTHETICS AND SPACE

Homeowners desire a space that is visually appealing and represents their sense of style. This highlights the importance of tapware selection as the tap is often the central focal point of a kitchen space and a key reference for designers when matching surrounding fixtures and surfaces.

Another modern design concern is reducing visual clutter, but for many, the space is just not there. According to Domain's Housing Affordability Report, while property sizes have decreased in Australia, price per square meter has increased dramatically.[13] Designers are pursuing options to achieve aesthetic cohesion within smaller kitchens.

Choosing multifunctional appliances is key to making a smaller space work. A multifunctional kitchen tap that also dispenses filtered drinking water can eliminate an additional tap at the sink, water bottles, benchtop water filters and other similar appliances and fixtures that can clutter the kitchen. In addition, apart from the tap itself, such systems can be hidden underbench, which saves space and contributes to a cleaner, minimalist aesthetic.



"A multifunctional kitchen tap that also dispenses filtered tap water can eliminate an additional tap at the sink, water bottles, benchtop water filters and other similar appliances and fixtures that can clutter the kitchen space."

SELECTING A MULTIFUNCTIONAL TAP WITH ZIP WATER

Zip Water is leading the multifunctional tap category, offering instant filtered boiling, chilled and sparkling water. This is closely followed by user experience – whether it is the great taste of their chilled water, the always-ready boiling water at a consistent temperature or the perfect delivery of quality sparkling water on tap.

Zip Water's intuitive design supports the convenience factor, identifying the importance of seamless integration into consumers lives – consumers can do away with additional appliances, decluttering their kitchens and reclaiming that space.

The company's two latest innovations (Available now) Zip HydroTap Celsius Plus All-In-One Pull-Out and Celsius Plus All-In-One speak to convenience. While both offer pure-tasting boiling, chilled and sparkling water, the Celsius Plus All-In-One Pull-Out is the world's first All-in-One tap with the convenience of five water types, and a unique integrated hose system, delivering a snag-proof pull-out sprayer.

The HydroTap Celsius Plus All-In-One Pull-Out features an underbench compact hose management system that ensures the tap hose retracts without snagging – a consumer insight that inspired the creation of a proprietary hose management system. It is now easier than ever to prepare food, clean dishes or wash down the sink from all angles – doing away with an additional tap at the sink as the same tap will also dispense pure-tasting boiling, chilled and sparkling water at the press of a button.

Both the Zip HydroTap Celsius Plus All-In-One Pull-Out and Celsius Plus All-In-One have Zip Water's intuitive touchpads with antimicrobial protection embedded into the surface for enhanced hygiene, as well as continuous flow for bottle fill and a safety lock for boiling water.

In terms of innovation and sustainability, the Zip HydroTap is a step up from your conventional kitchen tap. It used to be that the only way to enjoy sparkling water was to buy a bottle of it. Stopping the use of single-use plastics is among the most important things you can do to reduce your impact on the environment, and drinking sparkling water from the tap is a much better option than purchasing bottled water.

Zip HydroTaps not only eliminate the need for buying bottled sparkling and filtered water, but the product is also made with energy efficiency and sustainability in mind. The entire life cycle of each HydroTap has been carefully considered to reduce its environmental impact – from the sourcing and processing of raw materials through to ongoing operation, maintenance and filter changing, and finally at the end of the product's life.

Finally, Zip HydroTaps can help designers create beautiful, harmonious living spaces with the widest choice of models, designs, colours and finishes on the market.



REFERENCES

1 National Association of Realtors. “Consumers’ Preferences for the ‘Perfect’ Kitchen.” Realtor Magazine. https://www.nar.realtor/magazine/real-estate-news/home-and-design/consumers-preferences-for-the-perfect-kitchen (accessed 17 September 2023).

2 Leggett, Regan. “Quality and efficacy may beat out price sensitivities amid coronavirus concerns.” NielsenIQ. https://nielseniq.com/global/en/insights/analysis/2020/quality-and-efficacy-may-beat-out-price-sensitivities-amid-coronavirus-concerns (accessed 17 September 2023).

3 Grand View Research. “Sparkling Water Market Share & Trends Report, 2021-2028.” GVR. https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/sparkling-water-market (accessed 17 September 2023).

4 Melbourne Institute. “The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 19.” University of Melbourne. https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/3963249/HILDA-Statistical-Report-2021.pdf (accessed 17 September 2023).

5 ABC News. “Australians are spending an average of $580 a year on bottled water, making us the second-biggest consumer globally.” ABC News. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-17/australias-unquenched-thirst-for-costly-water/102110514 (accessed 17 September 2023).

6 Ibid.

7 Herzog, Norbert. “How consumers are taking control of their health and wellbeing.” GfK. https://www.gfk.com/blog/how-consumers-are-taking-control-of-their-health-and-wellbeing (accessed 17 September 2023).

8 IBISWorld. “Recent Trends – Soft Drink Consumption.” IBISWorld. https://www.ibisworld.com/au/bed/soft-drink-consumption/4947 (accessed 17 September 2023).

9 Frey, Sherry, Jordan Bar Am, Vinit Doshi, Anandi Malik and Steven Noble. “Consumers care about sustainability—and back it up with their wallets.” McKinsey. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/consumers-care-about-sustainability-and-back-it-up-with-their-wallets (accessed 17 September 2023).

10 University of Queensland. “The real cost of bottled water.” UQ. https://sustainability.uq.edu.au/projects/recycling-and-waste-minimisation/real-cost-bottled-water (accessed 17 September 2023).

11 Ibid.

12 Geerts, Robbe, Frederic Vandermoere, et. al. “Bottle or tap? Toward an integrated approach to water type consumption.” Water Research, Vol. 173 (2020): 115578.

13 Domain Group. “House land size has shrunk as cost per square metre increases.” Domain. https://propertyupdate.com.au/house-land-sizes-are-shrinking-as-cost-per-square-metre-increases (accessed 17 September 2023).

All information provided correct as of September 2023. The term “Zip” is a trademark of Zip Heaters (Aust).