

The lucrative Nigella effect

The TV cook's mixing bowls and waffle irons are the new celebrity homeware, says **Jessie Hewitson**

After recovering from a messy divorce and settling into a self-sufficient life, many of us might mark such a change with a new haircut. Perhaps we would buy new clothes or start going to the gym. Nigella Lawson goes one better, however: she gets a new kitchen.

It's the centre of the action in her latest BBC Two series, *At My Table*. It is there to show us where Nigella is in her life — that she's a successful independent woman. "Charles who?" the kitchen says. It is expensive and design-conscious, with beautiful dark grey units, copper worktops, open shelving and an enormous island.

A hint of her divorce from Charles Saatchi is given in the introduction to the programmes. "Life can be complicated; cooking doesn't have to be," Nigella says while exchanging a knowing smile with the audience as she decants some flowers into tiny vases for the table.

Strictly speaking this isn't Nigella's table, at least not the one found in her home in central London. It's a kitchen she has had built for filming in a warehouse in Acton, modelled on her real kitchen, although not an exact replica, a BBC publicist says. But the accessories are her own, such as the waffle iron, the bundt tins, copper measuring spoons, the Mason Cash bowls, the £740 copper mixer with £100 spiralising accessory — God bless Nigella for taking a spiraliser, tool of the clean-eating brigade, and using it to make chips.

As usual, viewers watch her pouting foodie innuendos, covet her insanely expensive mixer, then rush to buy the accessories they can afford.

Makers and sellers of kitchenware must be Nigella's biggest fans. Lakeland reports that sales of waffle makers went up 30 per cent week-on-week after they appeared in the programme, and copper accessories by 170 per cent in October compared with September.

Spice Kitchen, a Birmingham-based company, says that after the first episode, when Nigella used Aleppo pepper, a previously little-known spice



Retailers reported a spike in sales of waffle makers after they were featured by Nigella. Left: Mason Cash's Hacienda range also received a boost

found in Turkey and Morocco, it became its biggest-selling single spice.

Mason Cash, the 200-year-old company behind the ceramic mixing bowls that seem to last for ever, found

itself trending on Twitter during one programme. The bowls are usually a pale beige, but Nigella uses a stylish grey and orange one from its Hacienda range.

A website has been launched dedicated to sourcing the items that celebrity cooks use. "Who doesn't want to own the same pots and pans as Nigella?" says Helen Coleman, the founder of Celebrity Homeware. Of the six most popular items bought in the past six months, the grey and orange mixing bowls are the most popular.

According to John Lewis, it is not Nigella or Jamie Oliver who drive the most sales in kitchen accessories, though. It is *The Great British Bake Off*. Paul Hollywood, the perma-tanned judge, is selling a range of bakeware at John Lewis. People are even more keen to have Hollywood's muffin tins in their kitchen than Nigella's bundts, it seems.



Tastemakers 2 Lovely Gays

Russell Whitehead, 37, and Jordan Cluroe, 35, spent ten years acting before appearing on BBC Two's *The Great Interior Design Challenge*.

Shortly after the programme they set up their interior design company, 2 Lovely Gays. They focus on residential interiors, with commissions including a large Arts and Crafts family home in Farnham, Surrey, and an Edwardian renovation in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The couple live in a Victorian house in Forest Hill, southeast London. "It is our muse and a place for us to experiment," they say.

► **What is your biggest source of design inspiration?** Nature, theatre, fashion and the art world. Our favourite film is *I Am Love* starring Tilda Swinton. It is set inside Villa Necchi. We went there a few years ago and it continues to inspire us.

► **Chintz or minimalism?** Both. No matter how minimal we try to get, a little decoration and pattern creeps in.

► **What is your design essential?** A good-quality throw for the sofa.

► **Your favourite interior design "quick fix"?** The edit. Focus on what you want each space to do and edit its contents accordingly; it can really breathe new life into your home.

► **Your prediction for the next big interior design trend?** The vegan movement. New brands such as Piñatex, which offers "leather" made from pineapple leaf fibre, are growing.

► **The design pitfall to avoid?** Don't mistake wacky, crazy or "funky" (we hate that word) for personality.

► **If you could live in anyone's house whose would it be and why?** We just completed an apartment in Waterloo in central London for a client. It's a small footprint, but pure luxury. It has a killer location: we are big theatregoers, so it would be a lovely place to live.

► **When decorating what do you splurge on?** Lighting: the jewellery of the home.

► **What would you save on?**

Accessories. You can mix luxury craft with high street if it has the right vibe.

► **The best piece of design advice you have received?** Coco Chanel's "take off the last thing you put on". Don't overdress your space.

Anna Temkin



Jordan Cluroe and Russell Whitehead

Trend alert Stag motifs

Compiled by
Molly Long

▼ Stag pin candle jewellery, £12.99 for three crocus.co.uk

► Bloomingville Noel stag head wooden serving tray, £15 cultfurniture.com

▼ Stag large bowl, £139 furniturevillage.co.uk

◀ Highland stag double oven glove, £18 sophieallport.com

► Stag lamp, £160 frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk

▲ Pair of stag bookends, £40 outthereinteriors.com

