



# *Air force*

The latest extractors have upped the ante in suction efficiency, noise control and eye-catching design

Report: Linda Clayton

Designed by Dante Bonuccelli for Dada, this cylindrical island extractor is part of the Trim modular kitchen collection and hides extraction and lighting within its stainless-steel core. It measures 67cm wide and costs £4300



The humble cooker hood's star is rising as manufacturers push design boundaries to create show-stopping extractors. Many of the latest extractors could easily pass for a chic light installation, and incorporate high-grade lighting, often on dimmable switches, to provide ambient lighting by night. While stainless steel continues to dominate sales for its durability, 2010 has already witnessed an increase in glass-clad extractors – most notably jet black or pure white.

The more exotic materials and shapes of the statement extractor, as perfected by Elica's already iconic Star crystal extractor, also continue to impress. "Look out for decorative patterns, pearlised paint finishes, and custom-made extractors that allow you to choose the colour and material you desire," suggests Air Uno's chairman Geoffrey Baker.

### Find your perfect match

There are two main types of extractor: those that re-circulate the air, and those that extract it outside. Few serious chefs will choose a re-circulating extractor if external venting is available. However, re-circulating extractors are usually chosen in scenarios where there is no easy external route, in an apartment or listed building for example. Some people also prefer to re-circulate to avoid heat loss, or the expense of drilling through walls when no existing extraction is in place.

Those taking the re-circulated route should look for models with multiple active charcoal filters; four is not unusual on modern extractors. The latest charcoal filters from Elica remove 87% of contaminants when new, can be cleaned in a dishwasher and are still 50% efficient after 36 washing cycles, while Blanco has produced a carbon cassette that will deal with 95% of all fumes, fat and gasses. Models with a built-in warning light to indicate when the charcoal filter requires replacement are also useful.

The extractor width is determined by the width of your hob, which should be the same width or narrower than the extractor (never wider). The formula to calculate the minimum level of extraction required is simple. Multiply the width of the kitchen by its length and height, then multiply that figure by 10 (the number of times the air in the room should be refreshed per hour). So a kitchen measuring 5m-wide x 5m-long x 2.5m-high will require a minimum extraction rate of 625m<sup>3</sup>/hr. ▶

**Above:** Designed for 90cm-wide hobs, CDA's EVB9 extractor comes with clear or black glass side panels and has three regular speeds, plus an intensive setting for blasting away steam. Its Clean Air function can be used all day to continuously refresh kitchen air. It costs £512 and includes halogen downlights and touch controls **Right:** Made from undulating gold Murano glass, Elica's Gold Steam extractor brings a touch of glamour to any décor. This shimmering re-circulating extractor features a three-speed illuminated Magic Wand touch sensor and remote control unit, and comes in ceiling or wall-mounted versions with long-life washable filters. It retails at around £1350 **Below:** Add a decorative touch with Euroline's Mirabilia Moonlight extractor by Falmec, which has a beautiful floral surface pattern illuminated from within. The internal lighting is dimmer controlled for adjustable mood settings, and it offers four-side perimeter extraction in ducted or re-circulating format. Prices start from £1435





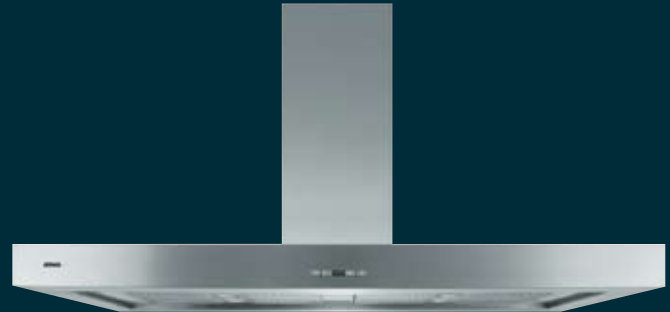
**Above:** A panel of dramatic black glass appears to hover under the sleek Sombra 68 extractor, priced at £2234 from Blanco by Gutmann, creating the impression of lightness. Technical benefits include double condensation filter technology and a high extraction rate of 1200m<sup>3</sup>/h, achieved via a new form of central rim extraction. **Below left:** Gorenje's designer Ora Ito range has recently been updated with this sleek white extractor, DKG 552-ORA-W. Behind its opaque glass exterior lie a powerful four-speed extractor, plus two halogen lights and touch controls. With a maximum extraction rate of 850m<sup>3</sup>/h, it comes with a five-year parts and labour guarantee and costs £1164. **Below right:** Available in two versions, wall mounted or island, Caple's Cube extractor has a stylish white glass fascia, with a 75W light providing fused, ambient illumination by night. It boasts remote-control operation, a maximum extraction rate of 800m<sup>3</sup>/h, measures 40cm wide and costs £883.



## Conversation killers

Noisy extractors can drown out conversation, and are especially intrusive in kitchen-diners. According to The Electrolux Noise Report, which surveyed 2000 consumers, 33% of those buying an extractor wished they had taken noise levels more seriously. Normal levels of conversation lie at around the 58-60dB mark, so look for models with quieter ratings – under 55dB is acceptable. De Dietrich's DHD7000X extractor promises a whisper-quiet 34dB (A) on its lowest setting.

Many decibel ratings are only given for the lowest setting, not the highest, so bear that in mind when comparing models. "A good tip if you're eating in the kitchen is to switch the extractor on a few minutes before you start cooking to get air circulating in advance. You can then switch it off or down while you eat," recommends Vic Sinclair of John Lewis. Using the maximum ducting size possible (as recommended by the manufacturer) will also enhance quiet operation. Avoid flexible ducting as its uneven surface causes noisier air turbulence than rigid ducting. The latest extractors have remote motors, located outside or in another room (often the attic), which removes the noisiest element of the extractor completely, resulting in virtually silent operation.



**Above:** Atag's ES1211MX island-mounted extractor is designed for use with an external motor to achieve virtually silent operation and is enhanced by the company's patented Air Logic filters and exhaust system. It has touch controls with three settings, including intensive, and is priced at around £2000 including external motor.

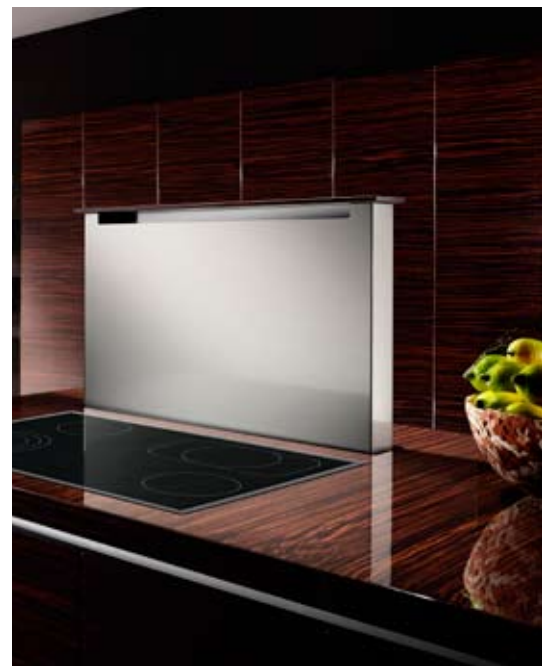


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**Above:** The IKDU 9900.0 PW island extractor from Küppersbusch's Platinum White collection has a high-impact, 90cm-diameter, white-fabric canopy with stainless-steel trim, and four power levels, plus turbo setting, offering up to 950m<sup>3</sup>/h extraction rates. It costs around £3450 **Above right:** The DHD585X island extractor sports De Dietrich's Silence Inside 2 trademark, which promises exceptionally quiet 34dB (A) operation at level one, achieved via an insulated motor mounted on shock absorbers. Operated by remote control, it has four power levels, and a filter saturation warning light. Priced around £1000 **Right:** Air Uno's Parsifal downdraught extractor is available in stainless steel, black and white gloss, or the 26 colours of Corian, allowing seamless coordination with worktops. Its four-speed touch controls include automatic switch-off, and an anti-crushing security device prevents fingers from being trapped when it glides back into the worktop. The 90cm-wide model costs £2250 **Left:** Winner of the Red Dot award 2009, the Miele Cabrio integrates flush to the wall to maximise space and provides streamlined design. The sophisticated stainless-steel and glass motor-driven panel fits flush to the splashback and is activated by discreet touch-sensitive controls that are concealed when not in use, enhancing invisibility. Prices start at £4255



Hide or see?

Your choice of extractor largely depends upon whether you want to make a statement or simply enjoy clear air. Wall-mounted chimney hoods come in a range of shapes and sizes – wall-hugging designs that don't protrude into the room are especially popular, not least because there's no danger of a bump on the head. Since hobs are frequently installed in island units, there are also plenty of ceiling-hung island designs, many with extendable chimneys for high ceilings, although be aware a bulky extractor can obstruct the eye line between chef and guests.

For a discreet extractor, integrated models can be installed within a wall cabinet, appearing like a regular cupboard when not in use. Alternatively, a downdraught extractor fitted adjacent to the hob pulls odours downwards into the

island, either venting out under the floorboards or re-circulating. The extractor itself electronically glides out of sight when not in use. Or you could choose one of the new recessed extractors that sit flush to the ceiling – try Atag or ABK Innovent. They also have powerful motors (located away from the kitchen), so can be positioned high above the island.

Efficient installation

The most efficient installations extract directly through an outside wall, via the shortest possible route, with no bends. Smooth, round, rigid ducting is considered better than the angular or flexible alternatives. Siemens' brand manager Jane Massey recommends you think of air flow like flowing water. "Flowing water backs up and generates choppy currents as you try to force it through a narrow gap. Also, the noise increases. Exactly the same is true

of air. Ensure maximum diameter ducting, minimum length and as few bends as possible," she explains.

As a rule, any 90° elbow reduces the extraction rate by 50m<sup>3</sup>/hr so bear this in mind when calculating the extraction rate required. Ideally, ducting shouldn't exceed 5m. Reduce this figure by 1m for every 90° bend. "In cases where the run is very long we would specify an inline fan near to the point where the ducting exits the house to maximise efficiency," says designer Carolyn Trevor of Carolyn Trevor Design.

Top tech

Those seeking high-tech features should consider extractors with remote-controlled operation – perfect for activating from the comfort of the dining table. Better still, hands-free operation is the latest development, which sees extractors communicating with the hob, automatically activating

extraction when the hob is in use. For great results, look for perimetric extractors, which are based on the Venturi principle and suck in air around the full perimeter of the fan, producing faster results at slower, quieter speeds.

Some manufacturers have developed an invisible barrier system to further prevent errant odours escaping into the room. It works by blowing a 'curtain' of air downwards from the front of the extractor to the front of the hob – Franke's version is simply called the Air Curtain System, while Gaggenau employs a similar principle within its Coanda Effect extractors. Extractors with 24-hour ventilation keep a constant flow of clean air running through the room throughout the day, while models with automatic cut-off allow you to leave the extractor running to clear away lingering odours after you've finished cooking. KBB



**Top left:** The D99T48 from Neff's Series 6 collection is an elegant 90cm-wide curved canopy extractor designed for extra-wide hobs. Touch controls activate three speeds plus an intensive setting, and features include automatic run-on for 10 minutes after cooking has finished, a dimmer light, and filter saturation indicator. It costs around £899 (0844 892 9033 or [www.neff.co.uk](http://www.neff.co.uk)) **Top right:** Hugging tight to the wall, Baumatic's Ombra3SS touch-control extractor is great for taller chefs, and boasts the latest perimetric technology for faster, quieter extraction. It has four speeds, an automatic cut-off timer and washable stainless-steel grease filters. Measuring 90cm wide, it costs around £899 (0118 933 6900 or [baumatic.co.uk](http://baumatic.co.uk)) **Bottom left:** The horizontal linear design of John Lewis' Triple-Panel wall-hugging extractor creates a striking feature in high-grade stainless steel. It benefits from electronic touch controls with five variable extraction speeds and three neon lights to illuminate the cooking area. It costs £899 for the 90cm-wide model