

APPLIANCE FOCUS

10 SMART HOME INNOVATIONS

With a growing range of high-tech connected devices on the market, now is the time to consider investing in the latest pieces to make life easier

Words: Sally Smith

What are they?

A smart appliance brings enhanced features to your standard kitchen electronics, including WiFi functionality which means you can operate them remotely using an app on your phone or via voice control.

"The ability to perform everyday tasks completely hands-free means it is convenient and time saving," says Owain Harrison, country manager at Novy. "With more households adopting voice assistants, this is going to be a gamechanger for premium connected appliances."

Why have them?

We are all looking at ways to make our domestic workload more efficient, so it makes sense to invest in innovative products that work intelligently to save time and effort.

"Homeowners are adding smart devices one at a time, gaining an understanding of the benefits and how they can use others too," says Stuart Mayo, head of marketing for connected living at Samsung. "In time, this will lead to our households having a huge variety of products fully connected with each other."

Function

Smart technology gives you more control over your kitchen. Fridges with artificial intelligence will let you know when food expiry dates are coming up, while the dishwasher might send you a notification to your phone when the cycle has finished.

"These appliances offer the next level of resource savings in water, energy, and time," says Tailang Bu, laundry category manager at Whirlpool. "We often have no idea how much electricity we use for each load of laundry - but with a smart appliance, we can learn how to save energy daily."

Need to know

Make sure you are happy with your WiFi signal and its general performance as connected appliances are only as good as

the reliability of your internet provider and need good signal to work properly.

"Go and stand in the room next to where the appliance will be and check the strength of your WiFi," advises James Kingston, group innovations manager at BSH Home Appliances. "Two or three bars should be sufficient, but any fewer and you may need to add a WiFi extender or update your router."

Buying tips

When it comes to smart technology, sticking to one brand has its advantages. For example, the latest washing machines and dryers can communicate with each other via a brand-specific app, so take the time to research which retailer you are comfortable to invest in long term.

"Always check with the manufacturer what the smart appliance offers in terms of functionality," says James. "It may only provide a Bluetooth connection or near field communication (NFC), which means you have to stand in front of it with your phone."

Maintenance advice

Smart appliances can keep you updated with potential repairs as well as regular maintenance. If a fault occurs, they can send alerts directly to your phone, telling you exactly what is wrong as well as offer instructions on how to solve simple problems so you don't need to call out an engineer.

"Nowadays, we simply want peace of mind," says Gino Grossi, brand manager at Grundig. "When an appliance has an issue, we want to know it can be automatically reported and remotely diagnosed - which means it can often be fixed by completing a software update."

Cost

The latest smart appliances cost from around £1000 for a dishwasher or oven - and don't forget, your energy supplier can install a free smart meter which can save you money, too.

**The classy one**

Smeg's connected wine storage cabinet has an adjustable temperature range of 5-20°C and can be controlled via the SmegConnect app, which will handily alert you when your bottles have reached the optimum temperature. **CV1118RWS2 45cm Linea compact WiFi wine cooler, £1799, Smeg.**

**The brain box**

A kitchen companion to watch recipes on, set timers, and add items to your shopping list, Amazon's Echo Show 2 features a 10-inch display, Dolby audio, Skype functionality, a 5MP camera, and a built-in smart home hub so you can easily connect and control your devices using voice or touch.

Echo Show 2nd Generation, £219, Amazon.

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The sleek one

Linked to the Novy Connect app and using WiFi, this extractor can be operated hands-free thanks to voice-control technology which can adjust extraction as well as lighting levels. The appliance can also be integrated with the Novy InTouch induction hob. **6830 Pure'line 90cm integrated ceiling hood, £1919, Novy.**

**The fresh looking one**

With the central fan integrated in to the cooktop, the Elica Intelligent System Technology can automatically decrease its suction power as the smells are eliminated - leaving you one less thing to think about when cooking. **PRF0146210 NikolaTesla Switch induction hob with fully integrated extractor, £2725, Elica.**

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The chef's assistant

In conjunction with the Miele@home app, you can check up on progress of your dishes and turn the oven on and off, whether you're busy elsewhere in the house or out and about. The app also features a recipe function to give you ideas for dinner.
DGC 6800 XL steam combination oven, £4399, Miele.



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The super-efficient one

Control this Samsung dishwasher and monitor the progress of the wash cycle via the Home Connect app on your smartphone or tablet.

It can keep track of when you need to order new detergent tablets, too, by sending you a text.
iQ700 SN278136TE freestanding 60cm dishwasher, £1079, Siemens.



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The clever combo

Communicating using 6th Sense technology and the associated 6th Sense Live app, the washing machine sends programme information

to the dryer so it can automatically set the ideal follow-up cycle. You can also start or stop your wash when required.

6th Sense Live laundry pair, consisting of FCSR12441 washing machine and matching HSCX 10441 tumble dryer, £899 each, Whirlpool.



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The recipe expert

Complete with Amazon Alexa functionality, this Grundig oven can be voice activated to set the timer, programme, and temperature. It features 82 embedded recipes with auto-cook settings, so you can get your favourite dish started using the accompanying HomeWhiz app.
GEBS46000BHP built-in oven, £899, Grundig.



The entertainer

Samsung's Family Hub fridge-freezer has innovative innerview cameras which allow you to check what's inside with your smartphone, no matter how far away you are. You can even browse online and create shopping lists right from your fridge door, play music, plan your meals, watch how-to videos, and plan your week using the family calendar.

RF56M9540SR/EU Family Hub 3.0 550-litre fridge-freezer, £2699, Samsung.



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The sleek one

Select your favourite coffee on the go with the Home Connect app, then remotely start making the hot drink by pressing go on Bosch's fully automatic bean-to-cup machine. With the Coffee Playlist, enter several beverages into the app at once and the machine will prepare them one after the other - just don't forget to put a cup in place.

CTL636ES6 fully automatic bean-to-cup coffee centre in stainless steel, £2069, Bosch. KBB