



# Kate Walker

A soft approach to hard finishes

WORDS LOUISE SMITHERS

When styling a home, it's easy to get caught up in the fun of soft furnishings such as couches, throws and cushions. Often overlooked, however, are the hard finishes that actually set the scene — and the tone — for the interior aesthetic of a home. From the floors to the walls and everything in-between (think countertops and cabinetry), these more permanent components of interior design are vital to a project's success or failure. All too familiar with the importance of hard finishes is Kate Walker of KWD (Kate Walker Design).

Established in 2013, KWD specifies, sources and supplies the full spectrum of hard finishes. Overseeing a project from concept to completion, the service connects clients with the best building contractors and suppliers in the business. "We work closely with architects, interior designers, developers, builders and contractors so the project process is streamlined and efficient," says Kate, who opened the KWD HQ in Mt Martha Village in 2017 before launching KWD Studio — a design hub for innovation — at the beginning of 2018. "We have unrivalled access to the very best importers of hard finishes, and the relationship we have with leaders in the industry ensures the best possible prices and service."

So where and why did KWD begin? Fostering a lifelong passion for design, Kate worked for her family's tile business for 15 years alongside talented draftspeople, leading architects and tradespeople. "I studied everything there is to know about hard finishes and formed close associations with supply partners, visiting the sites where the stone and marble is sourced, where the tiles are designed and made, and where the timber is hewn," Kate elaborates. "I understand how these materials work, how they perform in each part of the home, and what the latest technological advancements are."

After toiling away in the family business for a decade and a half, Kate recognised a gap in the design market. "So many people I spoke to found it really difficult to pull a whole look together for their kitchen, bathrooms, laundry flooring, joinery and outdoor areas," she states.

Kate envisioned a service that would offer guidance across the whole gamut of hard finishes, as well as advice on interior design or decorating. Never one to waste time, she launched KWD on the Mornington Peninsula offering complete hard finish design solutions to the local area. "Thanks to the contacts I had with importers and manufacturers in Melbourne, around Australia and around the world, I could give my Mornington Peninsula clients access to the best products available," Kate adds.

Rather than aligning themselves with any particular design style or offering cookie-cutter solutions, the KWD crew are influenced by what is right for any given property. Dependent on the land, the light, the surrounding architecture and, most importantly, what the clients love and what suits their lifestyle, Kate and her team act as the conduit between a client's vision and the end result to create a complete solution and ultimately turn dreams into reality.

KWD is an environmentally conscious business that works closely with importers who support ethically produced materials and only source timber from supply partners that offer sustainable choices. They even go so far as to check up on the fossil fuel emissions policy of their suppliers.

Kate's ultimate goal is to make good design accessible to everybody. Considering how quickly KWD has taken off, we're comfortable backing this formidable businesswoman and her creative vision (and with such passion for her work, you'd be crazy not to!). Kate sums it up best when she proudly declares: "Design is not what I do, it's my way of life." 🏡

[katewalkerdesign.com.au](http://katewalkerdesign.com.au)



## KATE SAYS

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