

INNOVATION STARTS HERE

When it comes to premium products that change the way we live, Fisher & Paykel is a world leader in innovation. We meet some of the designers and engineers who are bringing the company's vision to life.

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Fisher & Paykel's talented designers and engineers (from left): Simon Woods, Chief Engineer Cooking; Alex Judge, Chief Engineer Refrigeration; Lauren Palmer, Chief Designer Cooking & Dishwashing; Simone Stephens, Chief Designer; Vien McArthur, Chief Designer Refrigeration, Laundry & Rangehoods.

Driving along the winding road from Auckland city to the west coast beaches – the same rugged coastline where much-awarded movies like Jane Campion's *The Piano* were filmed, and where Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was photographed for American *Vogue* – Piha Beach suddenly appears, with Lion Rock anchored in the middle dividing the north and south beaches. With large rolling clouds, bright blue sky, and a large strip of black sand, there is a peaceful ruggedness to the scene, as the beautiful morning light hits that gorgeous black sand that is now sparkling due to the high iron content, from its volcanic origin.

Of course we are not the first to take note of the gorgeous setting, but in this moment Piha is the perfect backdrop to photograph some of the country's smartest innovators. Piha locals head out on their daily walk along the beach, dogs chase tossed tennis balls, and waves continue to roll in as Fisher & Paykel's talented team of designers and engineers get their feet wet.

It's this backdrop that has helped shape the identity of Fisher & Paykel. Along with New Zealand's pioneering spirit and a culture of curiosity, it's empowered them to challenge conventional appliance design, and to consistently deliver products and technology that connect with their customers and their lifestyles.

Vien McArthur says, "It's about the innovation and thinking processes behind these appliances that the customer doesn't see."

A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

Innovation is always the prime focus of Fisher & Paykel's designers and engineers. They are inquisitive about people, how they live, where they live, what they do and how they use things. Designing for a global market, they travel the world – discovering what their customers want and need in their homes. Then they come back to New Zealand, to Fisher & Paykel's two hubs in Dunedin and Auckland, to design, engineer and refine their innovations.

Vien McArthur joined Fisher & Paykel in 2001, and is the chief designer: refrigeration, laundry and rangehoods. He says it's about the innovation and thinking processes behind these appliances that the customer doesn't see. "Take our new washing machine range and the creation of auto-dosing, which measures the soiling level [of the clothes] and the load size, and then optimises the cycle time and the detergent usage. In addition, our

front loaders reduce the amount of microfibrils created during the washing process, to provide better clothes care and help them last longer."

And so customers like Donna Bishop from Avalon in the northern beaches of Sydney, Australia – who recently bought the new Fisher & Paykel front loader washing machine with ActiveIntelligence™ technology – are very happy indeed. "This is the first time I have had a front loader and I'm loving it. It senses my load size and dispenses just the right amount of washing detergent, and adjusts the wash cycle too. My favourite thing is that I can pause the wash, open the door and add more to the wash or take something out." This busy working mother of two high-school aged boys adds: "It has actually changed my life, and I have always hated doing laundry. I seem to have more time and now don't dread doing laundry."



Simone Stephens works with architects around the world to understand where house designs are heading, and puts those insights into new products.

"BEING IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD BUT DESIGNING FOR A GLOBAL MARKET HAS FORCED US TO THINK, DESIGN AND OPERATE IN DIFFERENT WAYS."

SIMON WOODS

THE NEXT LEVEL OF DESIGN

Simone Stephens, a chief designer at Fisher & Paykel, says, "As New Zealanders, we're really curious, we're always looking beyond the horizon. I work with architects globally, and from that we understand where designs are heading – the homes that people are living in."

Working alongside leading architects in this way, showcasing innovative new technologies in Design Workshops, means the architects can provide invaluable feedback around their own requirements. From these workshops, insights are fed to Fisher & Paykel's designers and engineers – and these learnings are integrated into the premium products they develop. No other manufacturer engages to this level with architects – and it's a prime example of Fisher & Paykel's obsession with detail and true commitment to excellence and innovation.

It is as much about the refined use of materials, textures and crafted details that Stephens' work with international architects and designers has given her a deeper understanding of the changing nature of the kitchen and laundry. Stephens believes, "There is so much great architecture in Australasia." The heart of the home has taken on a totally different role in recent years, and with the arrival of companion – or modular – appliances, Fisher & Paykel is leading the way with beautifully integrated appliances that change the way we use our space.



Alex Judge is part of the team that developed the new Column refrigeration range.

They are also pioneering a new way for appliances to be distributed in kitchens. The design concept is now about 'Distributed Appliances' – ensuring the kitchen is configured to best suit the homeowners' individual lifestyles. Their award-winning DishDrawer™ dishwasher, for example, can be placed so you have one drawer where you prepare food

and another one in the butler's pantry so that mess is hidden out of sight.

Alex Judge – chief engineer: refrigeration – was part of the team that developed the new Column refrigeration range. He's so obsessed about refrigeration, he's known to take photos of fridge interiors when he's at parties, and these insights have helped him develop a new fully



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SIMONE STEPHENS

THE SOCIAL KITCHEN

In the Dunedin design centre, where cooking and dishwashing appliances are developed, a love of cooking is at the heart of the team. The staff kitchen – or “The Social Kitchen”, as it’s known – is always packed at lunchtime with people cooking and eating together, and during the course of the day it is used for meetings and recipe testing.

“There are various clubs that meet in The Social Kitchen,” says Lauren Palmer, chief designer: cooking and dishwashing. “There are often delicious breakfast smells wafting through the office. I guess the great part is we are sustained by a genuine interest in, and love of, food that we foster here in the design centre.”

Encouraged to get hands-on with the products, Palmer says, “if you’re interested in learning about a new technique or ingredient you can almost guarantee there will be someone onsite with some specialist knowledge, or who is willing to learn alongside you.”

This approach with the appliances mean they are using the products just like a customer would – and this helps them develop and refine designs. A few years ago, Palmer was talking with a colleague about the stress of the oven timer beeping when your hands are full removing a hot dish from the oven.

“You don’t have a spare hand to stop the timer,” she says – a problem that most cooks can relate to. “So we modified the user interface and now when the oven timer goes off, it clears as soon as you open the door. It’s a really simple thing but it helps a lot.”

It’s that practical first-hand knowledge that makes a difference – and this is a theme that runs through all of Fisher & Paykel’s designs. “When cleaning the oven one day I forgot to

take out the side racks [shelf runners] when running a pyro [self-clean] cycle – which can damage the chrome racks,” says Palmer. “We’ve since developed the ovens with pyrolytic-proof shelf runners – so all you need to remove is the shelf itself and you’re good to go.”

THINKING GLOBAL

Standing on this iconic New Zealand beach watching the sea roll in, Simon Woods – chief engineer: cooking – says, “Being in this part of the world but designing for a global market has forced us to think, design and operate in different ways – because we’re not


Fisher & Paykel has won many global awards, including the Red Dot Award.

designing for a single person, we’re designing for a whole range of people.”

For instance, you won’t find a wall oven in a Dutch kitchen – the locals don’t bake because there are so many great pastry shops there. Meanwhile, Chinese families don’t want a cooktop for four saucepans – they want one that will fit two large woks. This local knowledge, combined with Fisher & Paykel’s ongoing research, inspires their engineers. “We’ve had to innovate in order to be the company that we are,” Woods says. “Not just in design but in attention to quality, around our manufacturing systems. We’ve had to think differently. That’s

For Lauren Palmer, a hands-on approach to the products helps Fisher & Paykel develop and refine designs to enhance customers’ lives.

led not just to a culture of design that’s different and innovative, it’s across everything that we do – we start the brief for a project by trying to understand deeply what the customer’s looking for. We’re having to touch base with people from all around the world in order to do that.”

As Woods picks up a tennis ball that a local dog has dropped at his feet, eager for him to throw along the sand, this iconic beach is quite possibly the perfect setting to let ideas flow and real innovation bubble away as these talented designers and engineers return to their hubs and continue to innovate. 



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Keen to learn more from Fisher & Paykel’s talented designers and engineers? Get an exclusive look at our meeting on the beautiful Piha Beach – head online to watch the video. mindfood.com/fisher-paykel-piha

