

## **What's Hot in Kitchen Design Trends**

One of the biggest trends in kitchen design is to open the kitchen to adjacent space. In newer homes there is already a trend towards creating a 'great room' by combining kitchen with family or living room. This is usually accomplished by removing the wall between them.

Other trends are cabinets as furniture, under mounted sinks, natural stone for kitchen countertops, and use of commercial grade appliances.

## **Designing Your Perfect Kitchen**

Today's modern kitchen serves as a family hub of household activity and entertaining. They are now well lit, open places. The kitchen's size and design should address your family's lifestyle and how your kitchen is used for cooking, eating and entertaining. Since the kitchen is called on to fill more roles than any other room in the house they have had to increase in size as well. Today's kitchen design challenge is in creating an open-faced kitchen - one that's part of a dining area, family room or so-called great room.

Both the function and style of the modern kitchen play important roles when tackling a kitchen design or renovation project.

If you're remodeling an existing kitchen or planning a kitchen addition or a new home, here are some current kitchen design trends to keep in mind.

### **Kitchens as Great Rooms**

One of the more recent trends in modern kitchen design ideas is to make the kitchen part of a 'great room', that is to combine the kitchen with an adjacent family room. To create the great room the wall separating the kitchen and family room or dining room is completely removed creating a more open space centered by a spacious kitchen island or peninsula.

There are some definite advantages to expanding the kitchen. You can open up the space and in so doing you make both the kitchen and the other room look and feel more spacious. Also since kitchen cabinetry, countertops and appliances are beautiful pieces of furniture in their own right you can now show off your new kitchen. Your remodeling costs won't really increase all that much by opening up the kitchen other than the cost of extra cabinetry. Anyway the added cost that would be put into this type of kitchen design would be more that offset by the increase in the value of your home.

### **Cabinets Designed To Look Like Furniture**

Furniture-style cabinetry will continue to be a popular trend in kitchen design at least according to the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA). These furniture-style cabinets are considered to be especially popular in the development of kitchen islands. Features that give cabinets a furniture-like appearance are legs or bun feet, corbals onlays and moldings. Cabinet doors are made with solid hardwoods, the most popular being maple and cherry. As for finishes light and medium finishes continue

to be popular, although kitchen designers and trendwatchers also see a growing interest in deep, rich browns as influenced by the furniture industry to some extent and to create a more formal look for the kitchen.

Cabinet manufacturers and kitchen designers are starting to design more individual and freestanding pieces of furniture instead of the usual built-in cabinetry for expanded 'great room' kitchens. This is known as the 'unfitted' kitchen design first popularized by English designers and cabinetmakers. This also leads to another trend of incorporating features from heirloom quality furniture such as glazed, distressed and antique finishes.

### **Undermounted Sinks**

Undermounted sinks in both cast iron and stainless steel are among recent changes in kitchen design because homeowners like the clean smooth look which blends with modern designs. The advantages of an undermounted sink are that it is functional, beautiful and very easy to install. The bowl is attached underneath a countertop. No sink rim shows above the countertop and there is no lip to collect water and catches dirt and crumbs. Instead debris is easily swept into the sink so that the counter can be cleaned faster.

Other recent trends in modern kitchen design include:

- . Countertops: Natural stone remains most popular countertop material with the most popular being granite. Limestone is another popular choice. Mixing different materials is becoming more common, using stone on some counters, butcher block or concrete on others.
- . Appliances: Commercial quality appliances are becoming popular particularly ranges, as are built in refrigerators and European style dishwashers. Warming drawers and convection microwave ovens that can be used as a second oven are also popular.
- . Putting pots and pans into drawers. With heavy-duty drawer glides one can put large, heavy pots in drawers instead of cupboards now.
- . Cabinet door thickness is likely to be 1 inch instead of 3/4 inch since this size is more considered as being of higher quality.
- . Glazed, distressed and antique finishes are being used more and more to replace traditional ornate details once used on many high-end cabinets.
- . Painted finishes now include colors as cranberry, white, off-white and oyster.
- . According to kitchen designers as today's kitchen expands in size and complexity, "mixed orders" are becoming more commonplace. Kitchen islands, wet bars, baking centers and butler's pantries are being incorporated into more and more kitchen designs creating the need for more contrasts-in cabinet styles, colors, types of wood and finishes.