

KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

Creating a Kitchen That People Will Want to Live In



Photo by: Charles Ward

Whether it's one person preparing a sophisticated gourmet meal or the whole family pitching in on a hurried supper - enjoying a cup of coffee with the morning paper or casually entertaining a group of friends - paying bills at the computer or helping a youngster with homework ...homeowners are spending more time in their kitchens. So it comes as no surprise that kitchens have become one of the most important rooms in the home. Today's kitchens often convey a sense of richness with quality materials and attention to special details like crown moldings and stylish hardware and fixtures. But even more importantly, they meet the individual needs of the home and its owners. We recently spoke to Charles Ward, CKD, Lisa Anderson, CKD, ASID, and Megan Warren of Ward's Kitchens and Baths in Omaha, Nebraska, about some of the essentials and extras that go into today's best kitchens. They highlighted the following trends:

Contrasts

The "everything must match" thinking of the past has been replaced with an emphasis on variety. Once the standard, oak is now giving way to fine grained woods such as cherry and maple. Mixing different woods and finishes (i.e., stain, paint, glaze, whitewash) adds interest and depth to the room. Using a different countertop or finish on one item, such as a work island, makes it stand out.

Appliances

Attractive in both contemporary and traditional settings, stainless steel appliances are widely used. The pewter finish is particularly popular. Other appliances are often concealed with wood panels. This is especially true in kitchens that are open to formal living areas. Bosch makes a dishwasher with all the controls hidden for a total cabinet look. Fisher & Paykel makes a dishwasher drawer that is also hidden. Another trend is to include two ovens and two dishwashers.



Photo by: Charles Ward.

Kitchens have evolved from utilitarian workspaces to favorite spots, open to the primary living areas of the home.



Photo by: Charles Ward.

The notion that "everything must match" has been replaced with an emphasis on variety in the materials used throughout the kitchen.

Counters

Remarkably durable and perennially beautiful, granite, slate and marble are being used quite extensively. Sometimes perceived as exorbitantly expensive, granite countertops don't have to cost a great deal more than other high-quality surfaces, provided a slab is not overly thick and does not feature elaborate edging. Tile mosaics are used to add interest on back splashes.

Storage

To the axiom, "you can never have enough storage," the designers added, "make the best use of the storage you have." Roll-out shelves, vertical tray dividers and pull-out can pantries provide easy access. Drawer inserts keep silverware, utensils and spices organized. Recycling bins make quick work of trash. Appliance garages give counters a clean look by hiding toasters and can openers.

Floors

It's important to choose flooring material consistent with the rest of the home. Tile is distinctive, but it can be cold if not heated underneath and its hard surface may require an area rug in work areas where prolonged standing occurs.

Decorating

Vivid colors are in vogue because they add life and energy to a room. But it's most cost effective to choose neutral colors in more expensive items such as counters, cabinets and floors and reserve more daring choices for items that are easier to replace, such as paint and wallpaper.



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illumination

Track lighting has largely been replaced with recessed, adjustable can lights that can be aimed at different work areas. Decorative lighting fixtures are often added to spotlight a dining area or work island and accent lighting is used inside display cabinets, on top of wall cabinets and in the toe space around islands.



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Charles A. Ward, CKD, is owner of Ward's Kitchen and Baths, Inc., winner of 10 national design awards. Charles A. Ward and his company have more than 19 years experience specializing in kitchen and bath design, interior design and remodeling. For more information visit: www.wardskb.com