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kitchen design trends

For years we've been hearing that the kitchen is the hub of the home, and it has continued to evolve as such. Homeowners are embracing the concept that the kitchen is for more than food preparation and walls between kitchens and dining rooms, and in some cases living rooms, are coming down.

Homeowners favor open lounge areas and family flex spaces that resemble popular public bistro areas that lend themselves to gathering with family and friends.

People want their kitchens custom-fit to their lifestyles, says Marcelle Gilbeau or Marcelle Gilbeau. "Everybody wants an island. The message within this desire is 'I live a busy life and I want time with my family' or 'I want to be able to eat in the kitchen'—a place that is cozy and relaxing in this stressful, modern world."

Rebecca Gibbs of Beth Haley Design reports her clients are seeking a fresh clean look with excellent design that makes working in the kitchen something to enjoy. "In the future, we believe the demand will be for spaces that are visually clutter-free and have a place for everything."

As spaces become more open, Gilbeau says, homeowners want the kitchen walls to blend with the rest of the home. "We see neutral colored cabinets at the perimeter with a dark island or a pop of color in the center of the kitchen. The neutral cabinets blend



with the walls and make the home a seamless space. For lighting, homeowners want lights over the island and generally desire a more elegant chandelier or pendant than in the

Above, the rustic chic look in a kitchen by Marcelle Gilbeau of Marcelle Gilbeau, accented with pops of color. Below, a contemporary kitchen by Carla Taylor of Hermitage Kitchen Design Gallery featuring tones of gray, the shimmer of quartz, and modern fixtures.

past when the kitchen was a separate space."

Another aspect of the open kitchen is less (maybe none) shelving or cabinets on the main focal walls. This missing storage space might be replaced with a butler's pantry.

John O'Brien with Brentwood Granite says islands have become an integral part of today's kitchens. "Design elements such as pull-out tables incorporated into an island provide additional space for work, family, or entertaining," he says. "Kitchens are increasingly being designed as an extension of other living spaces, and kitchen cabinetry resembles furniture found throughout the rest of the home. Kitchens are becoming more streamlined with a wide-open feel."

"Clean, clean, clean and modern," Leigh Skillington of Karmal-Skillington says. "That's what our customers are seeking in new or





This kitchen by Marcelle Gilbeau features no upper cabinets and an open floor plan.

renovated kitchens. They are responding to more simple, yet highly customized designs made to please the cook.”

Skillington adds that most upper cabinets reach the ceiling and some upper cabinets are being replaced with open shelving of another material for easy

access and to add interest.

“Another feature,” says Skillington, “is replacing some of the solid wood panels on upper cabinets with translucent glass. It’s great to remind you what’s there and lighting those cabinets adds a nice touch.”

According to Rochelle Coll with

Nashville Glass Co. Inc., many customers remodeling their kitchen want to add glass to brighten the work area. “We offer samples of patterned glass for those who don’t want to add clear glass. There are simple and busy glass patterns from which to choose.” She adds that some clients want to add mirror back splashes, and many like the back-painted glass, available in Luminous Red, Pure Black, Metal Grey, Rich Aluminum, Turquoise Blue, Deep Blue, Pure White, Pastel Green, Luminous Yellow, and Mocha. She adds that some customers have requested broken tempered glass or broken mirror pieces to be mixed into concrete counter tops for sparkle—“this is for both indoor and outdoor kitchens,” she says.

Like others, Carla Taylor of Hermitage Kitchen Design Gallery reports a continuing interest in a hybrid of traditional and contemporary styles resulting in a transitional mix of details. “In general,

everything is more understated. Younger clients generally select contemporary doors and finishes, adding some pop to the countertop with texture or sparkle. More mature clients tend to gravitate toward traditional and inset cabinetry with raised panel doors but pair it with cove crown and simple beaded light rail and baseboard in a mix of finishes,” she says.

Skip Dean of Dean’s Kitchen Center agrees that homeowners want kitchen cabinets that look like furniture. “We design with posts, furniture feet, design panels on the ends of cabinets, and posts with corbels. Every kitchen is unique,” he says.

Gibbs suggests that one way to keep the modern kitchen from being too stark is to introduce influence from nature. “This can be done through natural stone, reclaimed wood, woven storage baskets and rugs, or natural light. It can also be introduced through nature-inspired colors, wallpaper,



This kitchen by Beth Haley Design features open shelving instead of upper cabinets.

mally thought of for the kitchen. It can bring a sense of comfort to a room that often feels 'hard,' " says Culbreath. "And although in Nashville styles are definitely transitional, we are bringing in some contemporary elements to update a space without the 'sterilized' atmosphere many area homeowners feel from a completely contemporary kitchen."

Amanda Gates of AB Interiors reports her clients seek ease of use, sleek lines, easy cleaning, and functionality. "Our clients are choosing uncommon back splashes and more whimsy with accents like fun pendant lights." She adds that sleek hardware is popular, and that clients are moving away from stained finishes. "We're doing a lot of painted cabinets, some in creams and white, but predominantly in fun colors like blue, orange, greys, and aquas."

Reporting that clients want a very clean look in their tile and countertops, Jane Langford of

Werthan, LLC, says quartz countertops are gaining in popularity. "They mimic natural stone, however than have a more consistent look throughout the material. White marble countertops are still the rage," she says. "And while clients want the look of a 5 cm slab, they are reluctant to pay for that and settle for a laminated edge that gives the appearance of a 5 cm countertop."

Skillington reports that whites, pale greens and blues, grays, lighter stains, and even blacks are all being used. "As cabinets become more clean with fewer embellishments, the center island is still an area where most clients want a look that is different from the cabinets. Generally, homeowners are selecting clean cabinetry and rustic islands. And while appliances hidden by doors and cabinet-matching panels, many of the newest appliances are definitely made to be seen," she says.

"Most popular finishes now

are painted cabinetry in white or cream tones," says Taylor. "If we mix finishes, typically the perimeter of the kitchen is a neutral color and color is added on the island, which is frequently a shade of green or gray, or maybe a combination of shades."

Bohnnne Jones of Decorating Den, who recently returned from the National Kitchen & Bath Association annual show, reports that white painted cabinets are a top finish choice, and brushed stainless and nickel hardware is still very popular, although antique brass is growing in popularity. "There was also plenty of bling. Jewel encrusted cabinet and drawer pulls were featured, and bas relief tile was shown a lot," she says.

Medium color stains on maple or cherry are popular, according to the experts. And Dean says that while traditional doors are popular, the company also specifies a lot of shaker-style doors.

Deborah Warner of A-1 Appli-

or sculpted lighting and hardware," she says.

Cabinetry is still moving toward a furniture look agrees Samantha Culbreath of Beckwith Interiors. "That means in terms of finish as well as style. We have frequently pulled finish samples from furniture manufacturers as inspiration for cabinet makers to branch out into finishes not nor-

ance Co. reports that she sees cabinets being finished in natural stains or factory paint. “We are using less glazing in cabinetry,” she adds, echoing many others. “Color is coming into play with small appliances and accessories that can be easily changed and updated over time.”

White in appliances is making a comeback, Warner says. “Expect to see more manufacturers trending to white. Jenn-Air has had its own

floating glass white for a while and Whirlpool has a new “Ice” collection combining white gloss or black gloss with stainless handles. And Miele will soon be introducing a European design available in white.”

Area experts also agree that roll-out shelves, drawers sized for particular uses, drawer inserts, and other customization in the kitchen are very popular.

“Storage accessories to maximize space are very important,” says Taylor. “We’ve seen an increase in the use of drawer bases over roll-out shelves and in pantries we use can racks on the doors and shallower shelves to allow flexibility for storing bulk purchases or taller packages. Base or wall spice pullouts are popular. Pullout waste bins, lazy susans, and tray dividers are all high on the wish list for homeowners. Plate drawers help in kitchens that don’t have a lot of wall storage options.”

In agreement is Jones who says, “We saw wonderful drawer solutions—even under the kitchen sink—creating more usable space than ever. There were time savers, such as drawer inserts that allow you to keep your spices in a removable ‘spice caddy’; there were drawer inserts that store multiple layers of wraps (aluminum foil, plastic wrap, wax paper) with built in cutters.”

O’Brien adds that in addition to base cabinet drawers and other storage options mentioned, clients also favor full extension drawers with a soft close feature, soft close doors, pot and utensil racks, and corner cabinet storage options. “There’s also a great deal of interest in pot filler faucets, coffee bar areas, bar sinks, and a home office/television area,” he says.

Shelf Genie offers a number of glide out shelves to customize storage in kitchens featuring cabinets and pantries. Features include full extension pull-out tray dividers, pot and pan shelves, and other customized solutions for specific accessibility, storage, and organizational needs. ♦