

Modern trends in kitchen and bathroom design reflect changing lifestyles

New kitchens serve many functions in today's homes

ⓂThe kitchen, once the focal point of home activities, has become the gathering spot for a growing number of today's households, reported the National Kitchen & Bath Association at the Second Annual Kitchen & Bath Symposium in New York.

Complementing this trend, the kitchen is changing from a food preparation center to a great room that can host a multitude of household activities. Today, more than 80 percent of new kitchens are built around the great-room concept, estimates the National Kitchen & Bath Association.

Walls between the kitchen and dining room or family room are coming down. Guests are gathering in the kitchen to chat with the cook or assist in food preparation. Meal preparation itself has become a form of celebration.

To accommodate this type of entertaining, adequate seating is a necessity, often in the form of peninsulas or islands that can double as snack or wet bars.

According to information released during the Symposium, entertaining habits also come into play in kitchen design, influencing everything from appliance selection to counter design.

The person who entertains large groups at home will want a refrigerator that can accommodate party-sized trays.

An over-and-under unit with the freezer on top and refrigerator below may be preferable to a side-by-side unit that characteristically has shorter shelves.

If there is a full-size freezer elsewhere for storing hors d'oeuvre or casseroles, a larger freezer in the kitchen may be unnecessary.

Warming drawers, infra-red heating lights and microwave ovens are other musts for people who entertain frequently at home.

In discussing new developments in appliance technology, Symposium speaker Monte Berkoff, CKD, advised that multiple ovens and duplicates of utensils used in food preparation are a wise investment when more than one person will be using the kitchen at the same time.

The Garden City, N.Y., designer recommends ovens that can switch from conventional to convection to microwave cooking for maximum versatility without consuming too much valuable kitchen space.

Other deluxe multi-appliances include dishwashers with built-in small food disposals that eliminate the need to scrape plates and down draft ranges with interchangeable grills and wok modules.

"In a few years, we'll be seeing freezers that instantly freeze food, for better taste and preservation," Berkoff said.

Lifestyles influence design

In addition to entertaining needs, kitchens should reflect the lifestyles of the household residents. Often there is a correlation between the ages of the family members and the amount of time spent in the kitchen.

When children are young, they spend a good amount of time playing in the kitchen under their parent's supervision. Naturally, wipe-clean surfaces are a must.

As these families mature, schedules tend to vary to the point where a meal a day, or even one meal a week, is a family affair. Then food warming facilities such as warming drawers and microwave ovens become a necessity.

While cooking needs tend to dominate kitchen design, the many secondary ac-



tivities played out in most kitchens should be taken into account.

If there are students at home, a study area should be incorporated. Seamstresses claim nothing beats a wide expanse of countertop for laying out and cutting patterns.

Gardeners would appreciate the installation of a greenhouse window and large patio doors that bring the outside in.

What's most revolutionary about the kitchen is what you can't see, said Symposium presenter Robert Lidsky. The Wyckoff, N.J., designer cited roll out tables disguised as cabinets that emerge by pulling the "drawer" handle... built-in stepladders that put everything at fingertip reach... appliance garages that keep mixers, food processors, can openers and other housewares neatly out of sight in their own compartments at ideal working height.

"It's no surprise that improved efficiency is most frequently mentioned as the primary reason for remodeling," said Lidsky.

"Homes are getting smaller, especially in the condo and multiple housing market, and not all kitchens have the luxury of a full-sized pantry."

"A sophisticated storage system is the secret to keeping order in the kitchen and making the most efficient use of available space," he said. "Roll-out, slide-out or swing-out shelves can make the contents of today's 2' x 2' pantry instantly accessible. Lazy susans can create accessible storage in space that would otherwise be wasted," Lidsky advised.

Simple surfaces predominate

Exteriors are as streamlined as interiors. The European look, characterized by smooth, sleek laminates, solid core plastics and granite or stone-look countertops, is taking America by storm, noted Frank Algier, CKD, Empire Kitchens & Woodworking, Inc., Wappingers Falls, N.Y.

Algier noted a trend towards mixing surface materials, such as tile and laminate on counter tops, is increasingly popular.

A recent survey by the National Kitchen & Bath Association determined that neutral shades such as almond and sand remain strong favorites in cabinets, flooring and appliances.

Black glass appliances are becoming increasingly popular, completing the

sleek European look.

A new kitchen can increase the value of a home up to 90 percent, depending on the quality of the products, installation and local housing values. To maximize resale value, neutral colors with broad-based appeal are the best bet.

For more information on obtaining professional assistance in creating a new kitchen, write to the National Kitchen & Bath Association, 124 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ 07840.

National Kitchen & Bath Week, October 24-November 1, is an annual celebration focusing attention on kitchens and baths, and a good time to explore remodeling possibilities.

Tailor kitchen to household needs

ⓂHave you ever muttered in disgust while emptying a cabinet only to find the desired item buried in back? Have you ever snarled at your oven? Have you ever dreamed about a new kitchen?

You're not alone. The National Kitchen & Bath Association estimates that millions of people share your frustrations, and at least three million of them plan to do something about it by remodeling.

The challenge is not to replace, but to create a kitchen superior to its predecessor... a kitchen that works... a kitchen to be proud of!

According to kitchen design experts, successful kitchen design begins by identifying who uses the kitchen, and for what purposes.

Is it a common family gathering point, or the domain of a gourmet chef? When you entertain, do guests gravitate toward the kitchen or are caterers in full com-

mand? Are food preparation activities shared by a spouse or children?


In the evaluation process, cooking needs are universally recognized at the starting point.

Whether you cook every day, several times a week or rarely will affect the size, layout and type of equipment in your new kitchen.

For example, couples who share meal preparation activities may wish to include such features as two sinks (one for cleanup and one for washing produce), double ovens and built-in counter savers scattered throughout the kitchen.

If your entertaining style is casual, you might consider an entertainment bar built right into an island counter.

On the other hand, catered affairs may necessitate the installation of warming drawers, multiple ovens and wide shelved refrigerators that can accommodate party trays.



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