



ENHANCE YOUR HOME

Update Your Kitchen in Five Easy Pieces

By Valerie Clubine

The kitchen is often referred to as the heart of the home. No matter how spacious the rest of your house, this is where everyone seems to gather. If your kitchen is not living up to its potential and is overdue for a makeover, but your budget won't stretch to pay for a total remodel, you can still update five essential elements in your kitchen with a small budget and a little do-it-yourself. Each of these will make a big difference in the look of the space and you can tackle them one at a time as the money and the time becomes available.

1. CABINETS If your cabinets are wood, they can be stripped, then stained or painted to look like new. If they are melamine, you can still paint them – just be sure in both cases to clean them thoroughly and apply a high quality primer before painting to ensure excellent results.

2. COUNTERTOPS AND BACKSPLASH can be just the high impact change that your kitchen needs. If you're planning to replace your countertop, which ones will provide the durability you need at a price you can afford? Your choices run from a wide selection of laminates at truly reasonable prices, to more expensive but longer lasting choices such as stone and solid surface products. New technology is allowing stone slabs such as granite to be cut at a reduced thickness – with proper underpinning and a built-up edge, you can get the look of a substantial stone counter more reasonably than ever.

The selection of tiles available for your backsplash is almost endless. Many people choose this area to add a favourite colour to their space; however, this is not an element you want to change frequently. Choose fairly neutral tiles with interesting textures and rely on accessories for pops of colour. Far less expensive and easy to change as the mood strikes.

3. LIGHTING is an easy way to update the look and increase the efficiency of your kitchen. Replacing old florescent drop ceilings with an interesting chandelier will increase the height in your work area. Add undercounter lighting and drop pendants over the island or peninsula, and you won't believe how fresh the space feels!

4. STORAGE is a common problem in many kitchens. An armoire or antique dresser adds character to your space while providing storage for linens, dishes and cooking staples. You can also install simple shelves on decorative brackets, top with wicker baskets that can be easily lifted down to access linens, cutlery, and maybe all that stuff in your "junk drawer"

5. HARDWARE can make your kitchen shine with new personality. New drawer pulls and doorknobs in brushed nickel or with sleek lines and unusual shapes will make a world of difference in the look of your kitchen.

Five simple changes that will make your kitchen a beautiful and efficient space - without breaking the bank.

Valerie Clubine can be contacted at Signature Interiors • 647-403-4924



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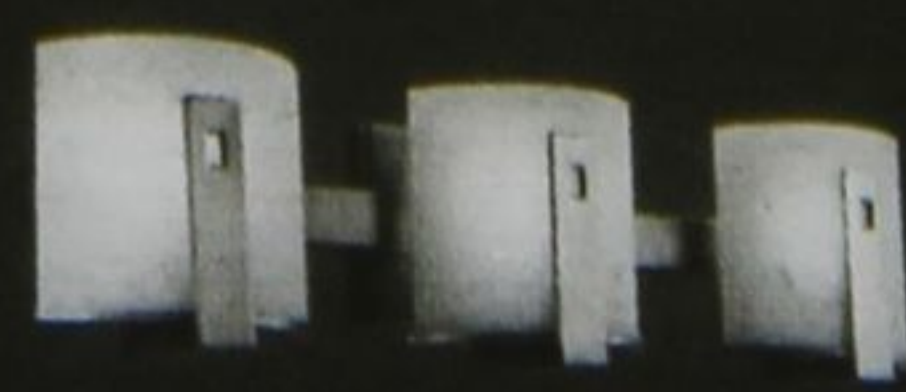


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