

KITCHEN TRENDS REFLECT CHANGING LIFESTYLES

KITCHEN AS CENTRAL HUB

Combining the kitchen with a dining area, family room or den creates one large living space or great room to accommodate the increasing variety of activities centered around the kitchen. Often including a fireplace, a portion of this gathering space may replace the formal dining room.

Islands. Demand for islands remains high in today's larger kitchens. The islands may vary greatly both in size and function. They may incorporate multiple levels and be used as prep areas or contain a variety of appliances and fixtures, such as cooktops, sinks or microwave ovens.

Multiple height counters. One size no longer fits all. Counters higher than the standard 36 in. make work more comfortable for taller persons, while lower-than-standard levels accommodate shorter or seated persons.

Multiple cooks. Couples or families increasingly cook together, and kitchens are more and more designed with enough space to allow this activity. One way to do this is through center or zone design, which expands on the three primary centers of the work triangle and can include multiples of the basic and ancillary zones in the space.

Windows. While more and larger windows increase natural light and add to the feeling of openness, they decrease the area available for tall appliances and wall storage. Storage therefore is increasingly limited to base cabinets and pantries.

Recycling. More and more households incorporate recycling into their daily routine, and creating space for temporary storage of bottles, cans and other recyclables is a growing trend.

Energy efficiency. Higher costs and environmental concerns have spurred many consumers to look for



Photo by Matt Schmitt Photography

more efficient appliances.

Green building. Using "green" or recycled products is appealing to a growing number of consumers. Selection of endangered tropical hardwoods like mahogany, rosewood and teak is down.

Kitchen activities. The kitchen isn't just for cooking any longer. It has evolved into a hub where the family meets for meals, converses, entertains and completes homework assignments, to name just a few activities.

Hobby cooking. A departure from day-to-day cooking, hobby cooking makes use of new techniques and appliances to prepare meals and often involves cooking as a form of entertaining, making larger kitchens necessary to accommodate guests.

Health and wellness. A concern over water safety and improved flavor has prompted consumers to request water filtration systems for drinking and cooking. Such devices may be located at the sink, in the faucet housing, or in the refrigerator.

Electronics. Computers, televisions and home audio systems are increasingly incorporated into kitchen plans, consistent with the trend of

the kitchen as a multiactivity space. Parents may prefer to have children use the computer in the kitchen to better monitor their activities.

Technology. Today's appliances are state-of-the-art devices that allow users to choose a variety of settings and start times, monitor temperatures and even sense when food is cooked or dishes cleaned. Some appliances have Internet capabilities that allow users to control them from remote locations.

Outdoor kitchens. Outdoor grilling and the desire to spend more time outdoors have grown in popularity. New appliances and materials allow the designer to develop a complete outdoor kitchen with all the amenities, including grills, burners, refrigerators, beer taps, ice makers, warming drawers and more.

Outpost kitchens. Mini kitchens are appearing in bedrooms, family rooms, basement recreation rooms, and home offices. As part of a master or guest bedroom, many homeowners are incorporating space for a small refrigerator and microwave.

Second appliances. Partly in response to the multicook, multi-

workstation trend, high-end kitchens are seeing multiple appliances. Two dishwashers satisfy needs while entertaining, and double ovens provide more space for baking. Microwaves and other smaller appliances are now frequently found in other rooms of the house.

Variety. Appliances now come in an ever greater range of sizes and styles, including 48-in. refrigerators, 30-in. dishwashers, and extra-wide ovens — all of which require special planning considerations.

Controls. Electronic controls are increasingly common, moving from dishwashers, refrigerators and ranges to glass ceramic and gas cooktops, where they allow expanded control and built-in safety features.

Multiple sinks. Like second appliances, multiple sinks address the trend for additional workstations for multiple cooks. They may function as a salad sink or prep area for the second cook.

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