

# Create your own...

## Unique, Detailed, Inspired Kitchen

By Hank Matheny, ASID, IIDA, IFDA

Many consider the kitchen the most important room in the house. It serves a functional duty, offering a home for meal preparation, but its true importance reaches far beyond. For most people, the kitchen is the gathering place for family and friends to visit and socialize. It acts as the heart of all the families' activities.

When planning your new kitchen, there are many items to consider. With a little thought, you can incorporate detailed items that not only add inspiration and function, but also give your kitchen the unique character and personality that sets it apart from the ordinary.

### A Real Glass Act

Glass has been around for over a thousand years. Yet this versatile material can be as contemporary or as rustic as you desire. Think about beautiful leaded glass doors added to a cabinet to give it a dressier look and to show off a collection of dishes. Glass front refrigerators are now available that can give your kitchen a commercial cook's appeal. Tempered glass countertops add a sculptural feel to an island bar top while providing a sparkling soft shine. Lighting fixtures featuring antique milk glass or contemporary swirl glass adds a jewel like sparkle to any kitchen. You may think about adding a bit of glass mosaic tile to your backsplash. It is available in hundreds of colors and many interesting shapes and sizes and is a way to infuse your tile work with personality. Therefore, no matter whether you prefer antique rustic charm or contemporary innovative sophistication, glass adds a sparkle of life to any kitchen.

### Pot Racks

Now is the time to show off all that

gourmet cookware you have been hiding. Pot racks are a great way to display all the color and variety of today's professional cooking utensils. Pot racks always draw attention, while providing abundant, easy to use storage, especially in the smaller kitchen.

Today's pot racks can also do

double-duty. Many have built-in lights for island illumination. Some have racks for drying herbs or displaying plants. For something contemporary, think of making a pot rack out of copper tubing and pipes. For a rustic, vintage charm, use an old ladder or metal grate as your inspiration.

### Steel a Classic

Over the past several years, stainless steel has become increasingly popular for appliances in the kitchen, providing a professional restaurant look. However, stainless steel can be used in other ways. Consider a stainless countertop. Enormously practical, it can add a gleam or shine to an otherwise dull kitchen.

Stainless steel tiles are available to add a spark to your backsplash and are available in a wide range of sizes and styles. Or consider using an entire sheet of stainless steel as a backsplash, harking back memories of a favorite diner.

Stainless steel comes in a variety of finishes so if you are not up for shiny, try one of the brushed or buffed finishes. And for the ultimate in practicality, consider stainless steel cabinets. Even as just an accent, stainless front cabinets add a sleek sophistication that is clean and modern and yet totally classic.

### Hoods - The Art of the Kitchen

Kitchen hoods provide an essential function in any kitchen by removing smoke and odors from the room. However, if the kitchen is the heart of the home, then the hood is the heart of the kitchen. Just as in the past when the fireplace hearth was the center of the kitchen, many designers today make the hood a focal point. Today's manufacturers offer a wide variety of shapes, sizes and styles, many with the look of a piece of

sculpture. Materials range from copper and stainless to wood and tile. Many of today's hoods have built-in hidden spice racks, warming shelves and built-in halogen lighting. For a traditional look, choose a style that mimics the fireplace hearth of yesterday, carved stone or carved wood. Decorative elements such as corbels, carvings and raised panels add a real artisan's touch.



### Wood at the Top

Adding warmth and function to any style of kitchen, wood tops are making a big comeback. And today's wood tops are offered in a wide variety of species including teak, cherry, mahogany and maple. Combined with a large selection of patterns and edges, wood tops can be used as an accent in a sophisticated modern kitchen as well as a focal point for a traditional, old world kitchen. Wood's own natural enzymes add to the ease of cleaning and all the little nicks, dings and bumps that occur over time, just add to its natural charm. Whether you choose to add a built-in butcher block, a butcher-block island or an entire countertop of wood, wood tops add warmth that no other material can match.

By incorporating some new kitchen trends, you can create an inspired kitchen space that is practical, detailed and highly functional and inclusive of your unique personality and style.

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