

Kitchen and Bath Design for 2012

FOR TODAY'S RIGHT-SIZED HOME PLANS

ISSUED FOR BUILDER AND DEVELOPER MAGAZINE, MARCH 2012

Hottest Kitchen Design Ideas

In today's unstable economy where qualifying for a mortgage is becoming increasingly difficult, homebuyers are learning to purchase new homes within their means. As a result, new floor plans are becoming "right sized" – meaning that all rooms within the home are sized properly to be adequate and comfortable without any wasted space. Buyers are more discerning than ever before and demand top value for every square foot they purchase.

Consumer preference surveys show that buyers want quality of space over quantity of space in their "Everyday Living Spaces" – one large room uniting a kitchen, eating area and family room. They are willing to exchange seldom-used formal living and dining rooms for larger Kitchens and family rooms instead.



So the first new trend in Kitchen design: **Everyday Living Spaces**. Floor plans arranged this way are perfect gathering spaces where everyone hangs out together whether for dinner after work, homework after school or spending special days together with family and friends.

Function is paramount in Kitchen design but style is important too. With the Kitchen in view from the other rooms, Kitchens are looking less like a utility and more like a living space. Today's Kitchen styles may be defined as "classic, yet contemporary". This blend of mixing old and new is a fresh aesthetic that is pleasing to many buyer profiles of all ages. Hot Kitchen color trends include classic whites mixed with grays and dark brown cabinets. Greens are turning grayer – like sage green - rather than granny smith apple green.

about the author



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As Kitchens are becoming more open to the living spaces, they are also becoming more open to outdoor entertaining areas. The transition between indoors and outdoors disappears with sliding window panels that open the kitchen to the outdoor living areas.



A few other hot trends for Today's Kitchens:

- Older Kitchen plans had bartop Peninsulas (like a U-shaped Kitchen). New plans include large Islands with seating. The island now replaces the breakfast nook.
- Sinks are positioned on exterior walls with windows or in the island
- Storage is a premium – Walk-In pantries are preferred, but in “right sized” plans, pullout pantry doors are gaining popularity. Either way, the storage capacity must be maximized for wholesale food shopping.
- A new way to fill the ugly gap between the tops of the wall cabinets and the ceiling is with open show cabinets and specialty lighting (appropriate for 8 foot and 9 foot ceilings). Full height cabinetry is trending for aesthetic purposes and to maximize storage.
- Hot appliance trends (pun intended): propane gas cooktops and steam ovens.
- Recycle centers are growing in popularity – design the waste and recycle bins into the Kitchen plan.
- Add a Drop Zone: located on the route between the Kitchen and the garage, a drop zone is a small counter for keys, mail, cell phones and anything else brought in that can be dumped before it gets to the kitchen, saving valuable countertop real estate.



pantry cabinetry



drop zone

Interesting statistics found from a National Association of Home Builders Survey of Kitchen Features very likely to be included in the Average 2015 New Home: double sinks, recessed lighting, table space for eating, breakfast bars and pullout drawers. Least likely: Small appliance storage area (appliance garage), hot water dispenser, Butler's pantry (probably due to waning formal dining rooms), wine coolers (What?...are they sure?!), fireplaces and trash compactors.

Cooler Bathroom Design Ideas



KOHLER'S
Hydro/Chromatherapy Tub



Photo Credit: www.kohler.com

Today's master bathrooms are also right-sized for two. Remember that buyers prefer quality of space. Well it's true here: Consumer surveys show that buyers are willing to exchange a seldom-used tub for a larger shower – and many of today's new floor plans now include a larger shower standard while a soaker/whirlpool tub is optional. Showers can be “tricked out” with cool new upgrade features such as Kohler's DTV Shower Spa Experience that includes multiple body spray wall jets, an overhead rain showerhead and a control interface to adjust the water pulse and temperature. It even has chromotherapy – the science of relaxation using colored LED lighting. Completing the shower trick: doorless glass shower enclosures, shower lockers (built in shampoo niches), curbless shower floors with linear trench shower drains with decorative or tile inlay grates.

If buyers ask for a soaker or whirlpool tub, offer a new idea: tubs with air bubble massage. It is like bathing in champagne. Millions of tiny bubbles combined with chromotherapy takes relaxation to a whole new level.

With tougher competition for sales, today's value-minded buyers are more discriminating. Elevate their expectations by delivering the quality of space and options they want in the two rooms that matter most in a new home purchase decision. Design for today's buyers preferences and their budgets: right sized plans done right. ●

about our firm Canin Associates believes great ideas and great placemaking merge when connections are made to the regional context, vernacular architecture and the cultural heritage of a region. Our 31-year old interdisciplinary firm of idea-based professionals is committed to creating sustainable resort and mixed-use communities that enrich the quality of life and are wonderful places to live, work or visit.



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