

It's HOT in the Kitchen



Things are heating up in the kitchen. Always the hub of the home (pandemic or not), the kitchen is the place where family and friends congregate. It's the place where holiday meals, birthday cakes and everyday dinners are made. It's also where you share a cup of coffee with a friend, play games with the kids and have a late night heart-to-heart talk. The kitchen is where memories are made and, in our opinion, is the most important room in the home.

We sat down in the kitchen to find out what's cookin' with architect and kitchen designer, Marina Shektman of Studio M in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

BY MARY BETH STANLEY

IS A WHITE KITCHEN STILL HOT?

Yes! The white kitchen is a classic that's here to stay. It blends beautifully with any type of cabinetry and allows the space to look brighter and larger. Cabinet manufacturers now offer a wide variety of whites and off-whites along with a variety of textures, making this classic even more enticing.

IS QUARTZ STILL KING?

After dramatic price increases in the last couple of years, quartz is holding its standing in the countertop hierarchy. It's still the most durable and easily maintained kitchen countertop surface. With the white marble look that is still a favorite, quartz remains the most forgiving material to achieve the look without the liability of marble properties. For those longing for the real thing, nothing compares to the beauty of natural stone. I see it making a huge comeback, especially in luxury markets.

DESIGNER TIP

Be on the lookout for cool new finishes (think leather, riverwashed and sand-washed) in quartz, granite and marble. Other surfaces like wood, porcelain and concrete will also become more popular.



WHAT DOES TODAY'S KITCHEN ISLAND LOOK LIKE?

Today's kitchen island is everything! It's the kitchen's focal point. As for size, the bigger the better! Present day islands have simple rectangular and square shapes. My clients prefer contrasting island cabinetry, different style doors and hardware that is different from the rest of the kitchen.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH LIGHTING IN THE KITCHEN?

Lighting is the most crucial element in kitchen design. The most common mistake made is when homeowners rely solely on recessed lighting. Consider ambient lighting to give a soft glow to all surfaces, including the ceiling. Task lighting will illuminate all work surfaces and accent lighting will highlight the most important design elements in the kitchen.

DESIGNER TIP

Install an LED lighting strip in the toe kick of the island, to make it appear as though it's floating.

TELL US ABOUT THE MOST INNOVATIVE KITCHEN FEATURES AVAILABLE TODAY.

Smart appliances with wireless controls are very popular. Smart fridges that will help you compile a shopping list, smart ovens with built in recipes and smart touchless faucets that turn on by a motion sensor are all becoming commonplace.

DESIGNER TIP

Add an appliance docking drawer to your kitchen. This drawer is dedicated to charging all your smart devices and is a great way to encourage conversation at the dinner table while tucking the phones away to be charged.

CAN YOU RECOMMEND THE BEST IN KITCHEN FLOORING?

I prefer the look of wood for kitchen flooring. Whether it's a real wood, engineered wood, luxury vinyl tile or porcelain tile plank, there are a variety of products for all budgets. I personally love the appearance of wide quarter sawn oak plank with a water-based finish. Another favorite is a large-format porcelain tile.

WOOD OR PAINTED CABINETS?

Painted cabinetry is a more popular choice among consumers because of its versatility and look, but wood is holding the strong second spot.

BRASS FINISHES ARE BACK IN A BIG WAY. WILL THIS TREND CONTINUE?

Brass is still a thing! Tasteful mixing of metals is also in. With a variety of different finishes like brushed brass or

nickel, gold-plated, oil-rubbed, copper and matte black, there is no shortage in variations. If you're not sure, stick to classic good-quality chrome plated hardware.

MOST POPULAR PAINT COLORS?

This year is about creating a relaxing and soothing environment. Warm neutrals, soft pastels and cooler hues are transitioning to warmer, creamier tones. Grey cabinets are giving way to taupe and greige. For those with more adventurous taste, color is becoming bolder and more daring. Think all shades of blue, green, aqua, warm caramel, yellows and matte black.

DESIGNER TIP

Use bolder color on islands, accent cabinets, backsplash or kitchen accessories.

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