



Modern kitchens SERVE MULTIPLE PURPOSES

by MARIAM ABOUTAAM

The kitchen is the heart of the home, deserving thoughtful design to ensure it is both functional and inviting. When purchasing a pre-construction home, you can personalize your kitchen by selecting colours, styles and materials included in your purchase agreement, as well as opting for upgrades to enhance your space. In designing model homes, I often start with the kitchen, ensuring it sets the tone for the entire home.

START WITH YOUR COLOUR PALETTE AND STYLE

Experienced homeowners may already have a preferred style they wish to carry into their new home or

blend with an updated look. First-time buyers, multi-generational families or those merging two households may need time to define their aesthetic. Gathering inspiration from online sources, magazine pages and visits to design showrooms can help refine your vision.

KEY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Your kitchen selections will include cabinet style, material and colour; countertops and backsplash materials, flooring, sinks, cabinetry hardware and plumbing fixtures. Having a well-defined personal style and colour palette will streamline the selection process, making the most

of your design appointment with your builder's decor professionals.

Tip: Know your appliance needs. When you attend your interior finishes appointment, arrive having already chosen the exact appliances and have the specifications with you.

CREATING A FUNCTIONAL SPACE

Builders and architects typically design kitchen layouts to meet the broadest of family needs. If you arrive at your decor selections appointment prepared with ideas and a wish list, you'll discover it's easier to personalize your home while achieving your goals. For example, if kitchen storage is important to you,

consider extending upper cabinets to the ceiling. If your floorplan allows, incorporating a floor-to-ceiling pantry with pull-out drawers can provide easy access to stored items while keeping countertops clutter-free.

Tip: Declutter with smart solutions. Add an appliance garage for neatly storing kettles, blenders and other small appliances out of sight. Consider creating a special beverage station or niche for this purpose.

DISPLAY WITH STYLE

Do you need a place to display treasured heirlooms, gifts or travel souvenirs? Glass-front cabinets can showcase these items, especially when paired with interior lighting. As well, replacing upper cabinets with open shelving can serve as an elegant display option, just ensure that reducing cabinet storage doesn't compromise functionality.

ENHANCING KITCHEN EFFICIENCY AND AESTHETICS

Consider who in your household does most of the cooking, as their preferences will influence the placement of key items and work surfaces. Ideally, the sink, oven and refrigerator should form a triangle to facilitate efficient workflow. If your home comes with included appliances, inquire about upgrade options. If you prefer cooking with gas, be sure to add a gas line. For a seamless look, consider panel-ready appliances that blend with cabinetry. Designing the range wall to be a feature, with an alcove, stone clad canopy or floating shelves, will enhance your overall kitchen experience.



DESIGNING FOR LIFESTYLE NEEDS
Your kitchen isn't just for cooking, it may also serve as an entertainment hub, a casual dining area or even a homework space. If you enjoy entertaining, consider incorporating a wine cabinet or fridge into your layout. A kitchen island can double as a bar, a prep space and an informal dining area. If your floorplan doesn't include an island, consult your builder about adding one.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FLOORING
Kitchen flooring must withstand heavy foot traffic, spills and dropped items while seamlessly connecting with other areas of the home. Options such as porcelain tile, engineered hardwood and luxury vinyl flooring offer durability and aesthetic appeal.
Tip: Personalize with small details. Add lighting above your kitchen island on a dimmer switch and change

the ambience to suit your mood; installing a tiled "carpet" in wet areas such as between the kitchen sink and stove is a practical and decorative addition. There are many options for cabinet hardware which can both tie the whole room together and elevate simultaneously.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Discussing these design elements with your family and decor consultant will ensure your kitchen is both stylish and practical, resulting in a welcoming space that is the centrepiece of your new home.

COMING UP NEXT...

In my next column, I'll explore additional kitchen enhancements, such as built-in banquettes, fireplaces, coffee niches, statement lighting and accessories that infuse colour and personality into your space.

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