



kitchen TRENDS

by **YANIC SIMARD**

APPLIANCES

As technology advances, one of the most dramatic changes we can see to the modern kitchen is the incredible number of options available for custom and unique range hoods. I love the clean look of pieces such as the Thermador Masterpiece series — when the hood is this beautiful and simple, there's no need to hide it. Home kitchens are getting more and more like a real chef's headquarters every day, with restaurant staples such as warming drawers and wine refrigerators popping up everywhere. Microwaves are moving to under the counter, often using a drawer instead of a door to make lifting hot items in and out more convenient.



Many companies even make built-in automated coffee machines to get as much clutter off your surfaces as possible—no barista required! Aquabrass makes a great user-friendly version of a pot-filler faucet, called the Zest, which gives you the pull-out multi-functionality of an industrial fixture with a stylish and elegant look appropriate for an inviting kitchen.

COUNTERS:

While we've recently seen total integration of cupboards and appliances into one perfectly clean line, a new trend emerging is the return to a more furniture-based look, rather than minimal built-ins. By this I mean you can find little details creeping in that let kitchen cabinets—and especially islands—feel more like stand-alone pieces than part of a continuous set. For example, while most kitchens have the lower cabinets raised off the floor enough to create a toe space, now designers are adding traditional feet to the corners of each section, echoing the look of an elegant vanity. At the same time, ending the countertops flush with the face of the cupboard allows those two elements to merge into a furniture unit, rather than looking like the cabinets and counter are unrelated. At my design studio, we've been loving the use of mixed materials for the countertops, pairing quartz and marble to let distinct areas have their own identity. I love working with Marble Trend and Caesarstone—mixing calacatta oro with grey quartz produces a beautiful look, and of course, there is also an infinite array of other possible combinations.

FLOORING:

An ongoing trend in both open and closed plan homes, playing against the more furniture-like counters, is a unification of flooring types throughout the space. Running continuous



wood flooring from your dining room throughout allows the kitchen to feel less like a separate work space, and more like part of the larger environment. It also avoids unsightly joints between wood and tile, which are often less than ideal. Hardwood or engineered wood may not be quite as durable as tile when facing dropped pots and pans, but the right selection mixed with a little care can yield a more elegant and comfortable floor for the chef of the house to stand on. In the photo above, you'll see Brushed Oak Luxe Ravensdale from Kentwood — I loved it for this home and it can fit into virtually any style of kitchen, from traditional to minimal. If you do prefer an even softer look, many people are finding an elegant runner rug (much longer than it is wide), following the line of the cabinetry, can add a pleasant visual break to the floor, and be cleaned or replaced in the event of a catastrophic spaghetti spill. This classic Scandinavian style can warm up your space visually, and you can switch out your rug later to get a punch of new colour.

LIGHTING:

Borrowing from art galleries and museums, some recent lighting trends have focused on making the light sources disappear, so the sparkling surfaces can have all the attention. Traditional style pot lights for the ceiling are nothing new for kitchens—they are very



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practical sources of direct light for cooking and suit the tasks well, however, new shadow box style pot lights seem to be becoming more popular with their modern style. Lately, many such lights can be found recessed into tiny alcoves in the ceiling, which allows a slightly more extended fixture to angle the light to hit more specific targets. This creates a sophisticated look, and lets you avoid unsightly track lighting. Creating much larger recessed areas over the kitchen island is another popular trend, as this helps define the area as a special gathering place—which is fitting, as despite our plans this is so often where the real party happens! Of course, since the kitchen is such a celebrated space, it also deserves some statement lighting of its own, and many homeowners are electing for grander pieces rather than modest pendants. While your hidden lamps are doing a lot of the work, a brilliant chandelier over your island again helps to define this as a central space, and keeps the room from feeling too strictly functional.

COLOUR:

My absolute favourite colour of the year, which you can find popping up in designs of every taste and budget, is not just a colour but a precious stone: emerald. As a wall colour in paint or paper, rich jewel greens add a layer of depth and drama to a space, but also allow other lighter colours to breathe—it can be the focus, or a near-neutral backdrop, depending on the shade. Beautiful glass bowls, vases and sculptures can be easily mixed into an existing kitchen space, and since leafy tones are around us all the time in nature, we are instinctively tuned to like greens with almost any colour scheme. Drop by Avenue Road to see their selection of great home accessories (as well as furniture)—I find exciting new things every time I go. Another trend I’m loving is not just any colour, but actually chrome! Now I know you have probably heard of chrome for appliances, even backsplashes—this is a timeless look. However, lately designers have been applying touches of silvery glamour to the kitchen cabinetry, like the one shown here from adding to the gallery display case aesthetic. Stainless steel

complements the cool emerald shades wonderfully, and frames the view through your cabinet windows like an elegant piece of art. (By the way, if you don’t have any windowed cabinets, now is the time. Your beautiful dishes and glassware have been hidden away for too long!) Look to SieMatic, and especially their BeauxArts.02 collection, to put a little metal in your mix.

BACKSPLASHES:

Kitchen backsplashes tend to fall into one of two categories: timeless, neutral looks, or very personal style statements. Having your backsplash retiled isn’t something you do every day, so you need to absolutely love it. A style I’ve found recently is the beautiful diamond “pillow” tile from Deco-Tile. It creates a quilted effect, mixing the soft curves of an elegant sofa with the durability of tile. At the opposite end, companies like SieMatic are creating backsplash “systems” that transform the space into either multi-functional shelves, cupboards, or racks, so you get the most usability out of your space while maintaining a beautiful, built-in look.



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