

Kitchens & Baths *Unlimited*

Kitchen cabinetry at heart of floor-plan harmony

The kitchen has become the showpiece of most homes. The space that once was reserved for preparing meals and doing dishes — a room where hosts would never dream of taking their guests — is now a center for entertaining and socializing.

In nearly all newer floor plans, the kitchen is open to the family room. During renovations in older homes, the space often can be opened up by removing a wall.

These open designs mean that kitchen cabinets are very visible. As a result, they have taken on new importance, and today's homeowners often choose cabinetry with the look of fine furniture.

Installing cabinetry that complements the architectural style of the home and that blends with the overall décor and furnishings is important. You must create a harmonious look so that spaces seem to flow together.

For example, if other



A chimney-style hood by Omega, placed above the cooktop, provides a visual focal point in this light, airy kitchen.



Rich, dark-wood Omega cabinetry and matching panels covering the doors on this refrigerator/freezer give this kitchen a formal look.

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An island in a different color than the rest of the cabinetry avoids an overly matched look.

Cabinetry can set the mood in bathroom

Whether you're rushing to get ready for work or enjoying a relaxing soak in the tub, your bathroom should be an attractive, inviting space.

Builders are devoting more square footage to master baths, designing them into luxurious private hideaways.

However, even in an older home with a smaller bathroom, the proper cabinetry and fixtures can give the space new style and flair.

Do you want a modern, glamorous, spa-style look that will make you feel pampered? Prefer a Caribbean theme that lets you imagine you're in the islands? Of course, darker woods and classic-style cabinetry or antique reproductions set a different mood.

Explore a variety of cabinet styles before making a decision. Once you know what you want, insist on good quality. Bathroom cabinets are constantly exposed to heat and moisture, so a poor-quality piece is likely to deteriorate quickly.

Look for all-wood construction and skilled craftsmanship. Doors should be sturdy, and drawers should glide open and close smoothly.

A bathroom is one place you can escape to in order to be alone and to refresh and rejuvenate yourself. Spend enough time and effort decorating it so that you can enjoy it to the fullest.

Under-counter storage, island designs need professional planning

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rooms in your home are decorated quite formally, you probably wouldn't want to install French-Country-style kitchen cabinets.

When choosing cabinetry, look for quality craftsmanship. Are the joints dove-tailed or just laid up against each other? Is the finish professionally done, with wood grains carefully matched? Does the finish feel smooth? What is the reputation of the cabinet manufacturer? How long has the company been in business?

Different woods and finishes can establish various moods. Deep, rich mahogany, walnut or cherry can create an elegant formal look. Lighter woods and finishes, such as maple and birch, produce a more casual ambience, while white-painted cabinets can deliver a cheerful, European-Country-style tone.

Including a few cabinets with glass or open fronts will produce a lighter, airier look, and you can use them to display beautiful dishes or collectibles.

A professional kitchen designer can help with storage space. Shallow pull-outs, for example, usually are

more efficient and accessible than single, deep storage areas. Revolving shelves can make corner units more convenient.

Kitchen islands are popular. They often double as a workstation and seating area, and offer a convenient spot for guests to gather and visit the cook. An island also can provide extra storage space.

Choosing an island in a different color or finish than the rest of the cabinetry can create a whimsical look, while one that matches will create a traditional feel.

Undercabinet lighting can make a workspace more efficient, provide a warm ambience and accent certain features. Details such as crown molding and quality hardware are the finishing touches that add beauty and personalize your kitchen.

Whatever the décor, your kitchen should be a space that reflects your personality and welcomes family and friends.

The opinions expressed in *Real Estate Weekend* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of *The Palm Beach Post*.



This Omega island provides extra seating for friends to gather.



A planked-wood Omega island adds an unexpected country touch to this otherwise contemporary kitchen.