

Kitchens *Unlimited*

Create a timeless kitchen by selecting flooring, cabinetry simultaneously

When the time comes to plan the kitchen in your new home, it is best to select all the permanent design elements simultaneously. "Permanent design" refers to fundamentals such as flooring, wood molding, cabinetry and built-in shelving that can be expensive, and/or difficult, to change later.



Permanent design should work together to form an integrated whole that is beautiful and functional. With today's open floor plans, it is a good idea for elements in the kitchen to blend with those in other rooms.

Choosing a design center that can supply all the components of permanent design under one roof will save time and effort and probably money. You also will be able to see how various materials, colors, textures and shapes complement each other — before making decisions about permanent design.

If you begin working with a kitchen designer before the home is built, he or she can offer advice about placing walls, doors and windows to make the best use of the space. The kitchen designer will want to know about how you cook, how you entertain, and what other activities likely will take place in the space.

Once the walls, doors and windows are in place, it is time to select the decorative elements of permanent design. Start with flooring. Whether you choose wood, stone or tile, flooring is a major investment and will set the tone for your kitchen's style.

If you use the same flooring throughout the common areas of your new home, the spaces will look larger and more flowing. When making a selection, consider not just appearance but also durability and maintenance. If you have children or pets, for example, your flooring choice might be different than if you live alone.

Base, chair-rail and crown moldings add character and can go a long way toward transforming a kitchen from ordinary to *extraordinary*. The beauty and definition these accents add are well worth the investment.

White or light-finished natural-wood moldings can create a homey, casual look; darker woods lend a more formal feel.

If you choose base molding that complements the color and texture of the floor, it will act much the way that a frame does around a painting. The same is true for how crown molding can work with the ceiling.

Cabinetry is perhaps the most prominently visible of your permanent design elements. A wide variety of style and color choices are available. As with moldings, darker woods lend a more formal look to the kitchen.

Glazed and painted cabinets also are enjoying a renaissance. They can create a nostalgic feel that many homeowners love, and they generally are more casual than natural wood.

Countertops are another element in permanent design. Granite is the most popular material today because it is beautiful and easy to maintain.

Other natural stones, such as slate, and solid-surface materials, such as Corian or concrete, have their pros and cons. A kitchen-design center will have a knowledgeable professional available to explain them to you.

As you decide which countertop is right for you, take time to think about your lifestyle. Then consider how the material and color will integrate with other permanent design elements in your décor.

When you make good choices about the permanent design elements in your kitchen, it will be easier to change the look with inexpensive alterations such as paint, wallpaper, hardware and appliances. When the permanent design elements are timeless, so is your kitchen décor.



Photos by Robert Brantley Photography

Glazed and painted cabinets like these from Distinctive Kitchens & Baths are enjoying a renaissance. In this custom home by SRD Building Corp., white cabinets create a nostalgic and inviting look.



A decorative hood from Distinctive Kitchens & Baths is a visual focal point in the kitchen of this custom home by SRD Building Corp.



Many South Florida homeowners today choose dark wood cabinets like these to blend with furnishings in other rooms that are visible from the kitchen.

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



Distinctive Kitchens & Baths used furniture-quality cabinetry to help create a luxurious retreat in the master bath of this custom home by SRD Building Corp.