

LET'S REMODEL

Kitchen storage has enlarged dimensions

Q: We were clipping ideas for our kitchen remodeling project and noticed there are many updated accessories. What can you suggest we look at for saving space in addition to available products for making a kitchen beautiful and functional?

A: Designing a kitchen has never been more fun with all of the options available. Cutting ideas out of magazines will be very helpful when you sit down with a contractor to create the kitchen of your dreams.

To answer your question, I will focus first on products that are available to optimize cabinet space. We are always looking for neat storage of the items we use everyday and it seems that no matter how many cabinets we install, we fill them up immediately.

When considering drawer space you may want to look at the systems available for cutlery and tableware. They can be removable for carrying to the table. The cutlery dividers can even be two-tiered and you can add a rollout cutting board above the drawer. Sponges, scouring pads and utensils can be at your fingertips in a sink tip-out tray.

Although we have long been familiar with the Lazy Susans, there are many options for organizing such as rollouts in cabinets and drawers. The rollouts can be designed for tray dividers, spice racks and shelving units in addition to bottle and cookware storage.

Recycling centers with storage for two or four containers (for sorting trash from recyclables) have become very popular for the environmentally conscious. Cleaning supplies can be kept in a split level basket under the sink area.

To create a colorful look, add a vegetable bin with the glass or Plexiglas front. Some clients have even added drawers above the vegetable bin with beans and grains. This adds to the coziness of a country kitchen.

Convenience is always a big concern but I find many clients asking how to free up counter space in the kitchen. Toasters and other small appliances seem to be an eyesore, especially when entertaining. You can get rid of the bread box and add it into your cabinet drawers. Appliance garages have been very popular for the toaster, coffeemaker and blender. Toasters and paper towel dispensers can now be put under the cabinet and are opened and extended from a housing unit when ready to be used. Some companies offer very elaborate appliance storage centers.

Because kitchens serve purposes other than cooking and eating, you may want to consider adding a functional desk or bookshelf wall unit. These really don't take up much space and can be used for menu planning, studying or home office space. Ironing centers can



be added into your cabinet design. These centers can be built into a wall cabinet or can be an option that you pull out from above a base cabinet unit.

Spacious pantries are the ultimate in convenient storage with features such as adjustable shelving and swing outs for easy access but a walk-in pantry is not necessary if limited space is a factor. Wall cabinets can be designed for storage of canned goods and other foods.

For a finishing touch in the kitchen you may want to consider decorative railings that are mounted to your countertops. When ordering cabinets look at adding a raised panel for your dishwasher and refrigerator to match your cabinets and give it a built-in look.

Finally, there are many beautiful carved crown moldings that give a custom look to any size kitchen. The options available to the homeowner today are innumerable. Remodeling contractors can show you all of these options and help you design a kitchen around your lifestyle. Remember that most people only remodel a kitchen once in their lifetime. Be sure to include the amenities you know will help you save time and energy in addition to giving you the look you desire.

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For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster booklet, call Gayle Walters, executive director of the Michigan Remodeling Association (MRA) at 810-335-3232, or send questions to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, No. 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320.

Answers are provided by members of the MRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers, consultants and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. Members also answer questions on "Construction Talk" with Murray Gula on WEXL-AM 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturday. You can call your questions at 810-544-1340.

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