

New Homeowners Opening Up to Open Kitchens

The old concept of each room in the house being separate from the others is dying fast. Nowhere is this more evident than with kitchens. Years ago, architect James Sanders told *The New York Times*, the idea was to have it shut off as much as possible because “the activity of cooking was considered noisome, unattractive; one wanted to see the finished meal brought out in a theatrical flourish.”

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/15/garden/15guy.html?pagewanted=2>)

But now, a majority of kitchens in today’s new homes are designed to flow and blend into adjacent living and dining rooms, to let people enjoy watching the cooking of the meal. They are also bigger and more elaborately crafted than in the past, with moldings, specialty lighting, and finely crafted floor and ceilings that you might find in other parts of the house.

(http://www.wsbtv.com/homeimprovement/4904367/detail.html?aracontent=c20_id1772)

A key feature in this trend has been spacious center islands. Some of these have sinks to handle additional food preparation, while others contain sleek ovens and stoves to serve as the central heating source for food. (<http://www.examiner.com/x-612-Residential-Real-Estate-Examiner~y2009m1d17-Top-home-design-trends-for-2009>)

In terms of overall appearance, designers suggest keeping in mind clean lines, featuring contemporary full-access cabinetry while incorporating a very traditional walnut wood. There is no law saying they have to be white. If you prefer glass, steel or concrete instead, think about custom colors and accessories.

(<http://www.norwichbulletin.com/lifestyles/homegarden/x2119711633/Home-Help-Ease-into-modern-design>) The idea is that the kitchen should be a welcoming place for your family and friends.

The biggest selling point of having a well-designed open kitchen is that it can enhance the value of your home. However, remember the phrase “well-designed” here – believe it or not, even million-dollar homes have been built with refrigerator doors that cannot open all the way without hitting the center island, or dishwashers that are awkward to load and unload. Make sure to plan carefully ahead of construction to prevent such errors.

(<http://www.courierpress.com/news/2009/jan/06/invest-kitchen-survive-troubled-economy/>)

Unlike some rooms of the house, kitchens are a place where the whole family will spend considerable time every day. It is worth the effort to make them as inviting as possible for your comfort and convenience.

Rich Van Tassel is President of Royal Oaks Building Group, LLC, an award-winning home building company located in Raleigh, North Carolina.