

# TODAY'S TRADITIONAL KITCHEN

SPECIAL SECTION

## 10 Top Trends

FOR KITCHENS THAT WORK  
HARD AND DELIVER COMFORT

WRITTEN BY AMY ELBERT

**G**ood-bye, fussy Tuscan kitchens! A clean, pared-down, and clutter-free aesthetic with a focus on function and family gatherings dominates today's spaces. Yes, even in traditional settings, kitchens are sporting modern touches like stainless-steel piping details on custom hoods (Chicago-based designer Mick De Giulio's signature touch) and open shelves supported with industrial-chic unlacquered brass brackets. Take a look at 10 cool products and design trends that we see shaping today's traditional kitchen.



“Rough-Sawn European Oak,” “Regency” with antique mirror, and “Morningside” raised panel. (wood-mode.com)



## Clean Lines and Clutter-Free

Watch for linear and streamlined Shaker and flat-faced Euro-inspired door styles with touchable, textured surfaces. Painted and stained-wood finishes, metals, and glass are all in play, and often designers are combining different cabinet styles and colors within one kitchen. Finishes range from European-inspired high-gloss laminates to low-sheen painted surfaces to rustic woods that highlight the natural grain and imperfections. Leather, mirrored, and stainless-steel panel inserts and doors (polished, brushed, or sand-textured) introduce texture and interesting reflective surfaces.

Sliding and flip-up panels on backsplashes with recesses behind them to conceal countertop appliances play to our clutter-free aesthetic. Mick De Giulio, who designed the space above, is also taking a “layered”—kitchen behind a kitchen—approach with floor plans. “The front layer can be viewed and open to the living area, and another layer behind it can conceal the things that tend to clutter a kitchen, like coffeemakers and mixers,” he says.

“I’M SEEING ECLECTICISM AT A WHOLE NEW LEVEL—MIXING STYLE PERIODS, HIGH-END WITH LOW, MODERN WITH TRADITIONAL, AND LOTS OF COLOR.”  
—designer Matthew Quinn



The “Obsidian” refrigerator (jennair.com)

## Cool Cooling

Designers love the flexibility of today’s refrigerators, available as drawers and narrow columns, or with French doors. No longer does the refrigerator have to dominate the room. Designers tuck drawers under counters and often install separate freezer and refrigerator units. With today’s interest in locally produced fresh foods, we’re seeing sophisticated technology that controls temperature and humidity in various refrigerator sections.

That single lightbulb is long gone, and refrigerator interiors are illuminated by super bright and long-lasting LED lights. Jenn-Air ramped up the drama with black interiors where LED bulbs gently build in intensity for a “theater lighting” effect.

With more of us entertaining at home, wine refrigerators and icemakers are popular. Thermador promotes its diamond-shape ice for a dazzling drink that stays cold longer.



“Diamond Ice” (thermador.com)



“Arabelle” by Aerin (circalighting.com)

“Shelsley” chandelier (kichler.com)

“Agnes” by Aerin (circalighting.com)

## Elegant Lighting

Kitchens are looking less like kitchens and more like living rooms, says Kichler lighting executive Jeffrey Dross, so lighting manufacturers are stepping up their game with glamorous introductions. Large-scale chandeliers, lanterns, and industrial-inspired styles are popular for lighting dining areas and islands. LED technology is the newest go-to for illuminating appliance interiors, countertops, and even chandelier bulbs. The light quality is warmer than earlier introductions and the long-lasting bulbs are far more energy-efficient than incandescent bulbs.

“FOR A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE, THE KITCHEN HAS BECOME THE SINGLE MOST DEFINING SPACE OF THEIR HOME.”  
—designer Mick De Giulio

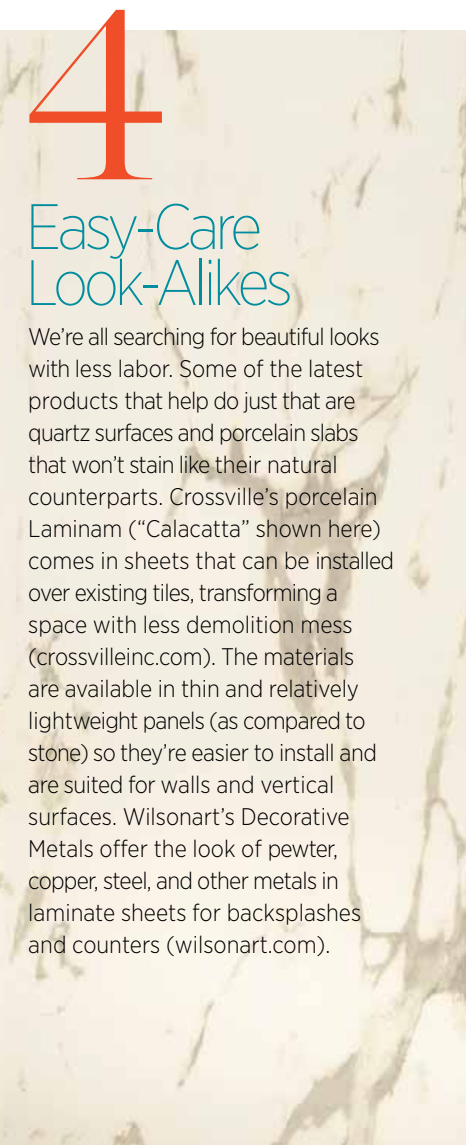
“MY FAVORITE PART OF THE KITCHEN TO DESIGN IS THE HOOD AREA. WHETHER IT’S WOOD, STONE, OR EVEN FAUX STONE, A HOOD ACCENTUATES THE COOKING AREA AND MAKES IT MORE INVITING.”  
—designer Michael Radovic

## Multi-Function Cookers

Steam ovens and induction cooktops are gaining popularity in the U.S., designers and manufacturers say. Steam is a healthful way of cooking because it preserves the food’s moisture, flavor, and nutrients. Induction is a fast and energy-efficient cooking method because energy is supplied directly to the cooking vessel and no heat is wasted. To give cooks more options, manufacturers are combining cooking technologies into one appliance, such as a microwave/convection oven or a steam/convection oven. When installing a microwave oven, New York designer Michael Radovic prefers placing a drawer model under the counter for a low profile.



Steam and convection oven (thermador.com)



## 4 Easy-Care Look-Alikes

We’re all searching for beautiful looks with less labor. Some of the latest products that help do just that are quartz surfaces and porcelain slabs that won’t stain like their natural counterparts. Crossville’s porcelain Laminam (“Calacatta” shown here) comes in sheets that can be installed over existing tiles, transforming a space with less demolition mess (crossvilleinc.com). The materials are available in thin and relatively lightweight panels (as compared to stone) so they’re easier to install and are suited for walls and vertical surfaces. Wilsonart’s Decorative Metals offer the look of pewter, copper, steel, and other metals in laminate sheets for backsplashes and counters (wilsonart.com).





## 6 Fun Faucets and Super Sinks

Multiple sinks are the norm in kitchens today, and deep apron-front sinks in a variety of materials—from stainless steel to fire clay—are popular choices. Options in function and finishes abound in the faucet world too. While stainless is always strong, other finishes gaining attention are carbon bronze and patinated brass. Tapping into our thirst for pure clean water, many faucets include easy-to-change filters, and Grohe's "Blue" faucet adds one more treat—dispensing sparkling chilled water from its tap.



"Victorian" kitchen faucet and "Hillside" apron sink (dxv.com)

“WE LOVE INCORPORATING METAL INTO AN ISLAND COUNTERTOP OR IN A TEXTURED TILE METAL BACKSPLASH.” —designer Justine Macfee

## 7 Amazing Metals

While stainless steel remains ever popular, several appliance manufacturers are spinning the color wheel. KitchenAid introduced a black stainless collection, *right*, Jenn-Air offers a refrigerator with a black interior, and BlueStar, *below*, features a staggering 750 color choices for their Pennsylvania-made appliances. International brands like La Cornue and Bertazzoni Italia are seeing an uptick in color too. “Consumers love the pop of a warm, vibrant red, yellow, or even orange range to add personality and a focal point to the kitchen,” says Valentina Bertazzoni, fifth-generation manager at the Italian company.

There's an influx of copper, rose gold, and unlacquered brass finishes on faucet fixtures, hardware, decorative hood treatments, and lights. Unlike the polished brass of years past, finishes are warmer and softer. Oil-rubbed bronzes exhibit a lightening up too, and designers are mixing metals within a kitchen. “I love an unlacquered brass pull with polished nickel accents on a gray or black door,” says designer Matthew Quinn. Another trick is mixing textures, such as using a hammered nickel and polished nickel on the same handle, he adds.



Black stainless-steel refrigerator (kitchenaid.com)

Pastel turquoise range (bluestarcooking.com)



## 8 Charged Up

“Today's family of four has an average of 12-plus mobile devices at home,” says Amy Hahne, a vice president at electrical giant Legrand. The company offers several solutions for juggling those devices, including the Adorne Under-Cabinet Lighting and Power System, a rail that provides multiple plug-ins on one out-of-view strip. Brackets that suspend tablets or phones from the rail keep devices safe from spills and easy to view. A pop-out outlet, *above*, has three sockets and pushes flush when not in use. (legrand.us)

Wireless options abound for charging devices and controlling lights and appliances. Watch for wireless charging capabilities like the Corian Charging Surface (buildinginnovations.us.dupont.com/charging-surface) built into countertops. More options should be on the market in the next year, electronics experts say. Matthew Quinn happily notes these advances mean an end to designing kitchens around TV screens. “Kitchen televisions are disappearing as everyone moves to streaming live content on their iPads!”

PHOTOGRAPH: WINDOWSEAT; DESIGNER LOUISE BROOKS; BROOKS AND FALOTICO



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## 9 Comfort Seating

Breakfast rooms, whether they're in separate spaces or simply snug corner banquettes, are back. Upholstered armchairs that cozy around a table or near a fireplace provide comfortable areas to relax and read the paper, work on a laptop, and engage in conversation with those working in the kitchen.

Designers are choosing plush and generously sized counter-height stools for islands and peninsulas, which often are designed to seat four or more people. In addition to comfort, chairs and benches with woven fiber, caned, or upholstered seats and backs add softness, texture, and livability to kitchens—a nice contrast to stone countertops, steel appliances, and other hard surfaces.

Performance fabrics—once used primarily outdoors—are increasingly being used to upholster benches and cover cushions in kitchen spaces. Their stain-resistance and ease of care make them top choices for households with pets and children, and they come in many colors, textures, and patterns—from faux leathers to soft-to-the-touch chenilles.



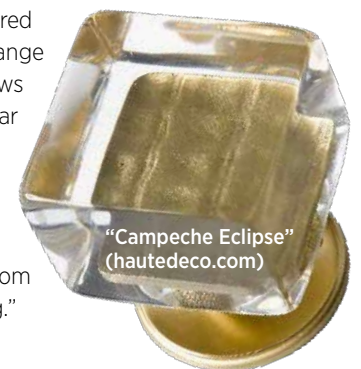
Kravet Soleil (kravet.com)



"Bacifiore" sink, *right*, (kallista.com)  
Duquesa "Jasmine," *below*, (walkerzanger.com)

## 10 Human Touch

Handcrafted materials—from painted tiles to scraped- and aged-wood floors to hammered metals—give a kitchen warmth, color, and character. Designers are covering entire range walls with hand-painted tiles like Walker Zanger's Duquesa collection, *left*, which draws on global and historical design elements. Textured metals are showcased behind a clear resin in the Haute Déco doorknobs, *right*, and Mick De Giulio's stainless-steel sinks for Kallista, *above*. The "Bacifiore" sink's polished distressed finish is handcrafted by artisans to create the look of flowing water. Designer Matthew Quinn says wood flooring is a top choice for kitchen floors, particularly lighter tones and planks with textured and weathered-look finishes. “Gone are the days of choosing wood stain from a chart of 12 colors. Now there is hand-planing, limewashing, cerusing, and doweling.”



"Campeche Eclipse" (hautedeco.com)



# What designers are doing...

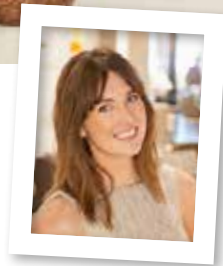


Mick  
De Giulio  
de Giulio  
Kitchen  
Design,  
Chicago



"Two of my favorite exotic woods today are eucalyptus and sucupira. I'm also using hand-scraped wenge wood for hood facing, all trimmed in polished stainless steel. Another favorite detail is a thick serrated edging for shelves and framing.

"I've also been doing more with different metals—polished stainless steel, bronze, silicon bronze, German silver—usually in combination with glass, wood, or stone. Some of the new detailing includes polished stainless-steel-framed glass drawer faces, German-silver side panels in a chevron pattern, and polished stainless-steel piping." (degiulio.org)



Justine  
Macfee  
Catherine Macfee  
Interior Design,  
Truckee, California

"We are rethinking storage in a kitchen and, specifically, upper cabinets. Although we love the look of cabinets to the ceiling, we've incorporated open shelving into our kitchens, and our clients have been digging the look and function. We love how it breaks up some of the massing in the space and lightens the architecture. Plus, it's fun to stack great-looking dishware and accessories." (macfeedesign.com)



Matthew  
Quinn  
Design  
Galleria,  
Atlanta



"I could not be happier with the introduction of my stainless corner sink called the 'SocialCorner' (homerefinements.ca). I have already installed it in several kitchens, and I romanticize that it is bringing couples together and initiating more interaction between parents and their children. We installed the sinks in both of our homes, and just this past weekend, I watched as my mother and mother-in-law prepped an entire meal at my sink. It made me so proud." (designgalleria.net)



Michael  
Radovic  
Showcase Kitchens,  
Manhasset, New York

"The part of the kitchen I particularly like to design is the hood area, because it is a major focal point. I've specified typical stainless-steel hoods from major appliance manufacturers, but custom-detailing a hood enclosure is much more special. Whether it's a stone structure, a wood hood with spice pullouts, or even a faux wood or stone hood, they all make a statement. More important, they accentuate the cooking area and make it more inviting.

"One of my favorite materials recently is poured concrete countertops. We did a 14-foot island topped with concrete that simulates planks of driftwood pieced together and with a 3-inch-thick live-edge detail [above]. The wood knots were realistic and the grain texture was matched perfectly." (showcasekitchensny.com) 📏