



Granite countertops, hardwood floors, stainless-steel appliances and custom cabinets are top choices among homeowners renovating their kitchens today.

TIME FOR A NEW KITCHEN?

Six months — at least — to plan and build a dream kitchen from scratch



R.J. LANDIS DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION (2)

Imagine chestnuts roasting in an open kitchen fireplace, warm cocoa steaming in a mug resting on a granite countertop and loved ones sharing and sitting around the center island.

It is the picture of the ideal, festive holiday get-together. But anyone who wants that warm feeling in a renovated kitchen ought to be thinking about it by Memorial Day or the Fourth of July rather than Hanukkah or Christmas.

"If you want to remodel your kitchen from scratch, it will take three to four months to plan and three or four months to do the work," says Ron Landis, president of R.J. Landis Design & Construction. Landis says far too many people wait to plan a

{ BY KELLI MILLIGAN STAMMEN }

kitchen remodel to be done by the holidays until autumn of the same year.

"If you've waited until now, it's too late," says Monica Miller, sales manager for J.S. Brown & Co. "We see it every year. You need to start early and not be rushed."

And since kitchens have come a long way from the basic refrigerator, sink, counter and microwave, there is a lot to plan. The familiar and functional are synchronized in most modern kitchens.

"There are a lot of traditional types of kitchens — some darker woods and lighter woods," Landis says. "There is the eclectic mix of the older style with contemporary uses, from farm sinks and crown molding and copper sinks."

If the kitchen is large enough, an island is essential. "Islands are a useful component of a kitchen," Landis says. "It allows you to do multiple things."

Landis says the traditional kitchen triangle of the sink, fridge and oven can be replicated with a second or third triangle at different workstations.

As kitchens lose wall space by flowing into great rooms and dining areas, islands have become larger, Miller says. They are used not only for food preparation at second sinks but also for cooking, eating areas and storage.

Henry DiYanni, president of DiYanni Homes, takes it a step further. The kitchen island is a family gathering place. "A place where the kids get to talk about the day and have some food to munch on while expressing their views and doing their homework," he says. "It has become a comfort zone. These islands will get bigger as our lives get busier and families have less time to be together. It's a place where Mom or Dad can get dinner ready and still be a part of the family conversation."

Although granite countertops are still the most popular, Miller is seeing more quartz stones and concrete in various designs. One of the hotter trends right now is using industrial glass for countertops, Miller says. It is durable and easy to clean. Another hot trend, according to Landis, is the microwave drawer, which fits under the countertop. "Everybody wants one," he says. "It is a microwave that works just like a drawer. You look down into it."

As far as flooring, Miller says wood is still a popular choice, as is tile.

"Wood is more giving," she says. "Tile is durable but hard to

WHAT YOU GET FOR THE MONEY

If you walked into a \$50,000 kitchen, you'd expect to see some materials and details that you wouldn't find in a \$12,000 kitchen. While there are endless combinations of products and materials available for any kitchen, here are some of the most likely scenarios:

Design Element	\$5,000-\$20,000	\$20,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-plus
Cabinets	Stock	Semi-custom	Custom
Appliances	Freestanding with standard features	Freestanding with paneled fronts and standard features	Built-in with professional-style features
Countertops	Laminate	Wood, tile or solid surface	Stainless steel, stone or solid surface
Flooring	Vinyl, laminate or linoleum	Tile	Stone or hardwood
Sinks and faucets	Stainless steel, self-rimming single- or double-bowl sink	Multiple undermounted, enameled cast-iron or stainless-steel sink	Multiple solid surface, integral sinks and pot-filler faucet by the range
Architectural details	Painted or vinyl walls and ceilings with simple or no molding and trim	Wood-paneled or plastered walls and ceilings with some detail work in molding and trim	Beamed or pressed-tin ceilings, stucco walls, extensive molding and trim, hand-carved accents, glass tops and chrome finishes

stand on for a long period of time." Surprisingly, sheet goods are creeping back up in the market. "Vinyl and linoleum are more attractive now," she says. "Everything makes a comeback."

Landis says stainless steel is still the most popular look for appliances.

"I was just wondering if maybe 15 to 20 years down the road, will stainless steel be dated?" Landis says. "There is so much of it out there."

He says about 75 percent of his customers prefer stainless steel, while the rest usually go with wood panels that blend into

the woodwork.

Tastes do change as homeowners head into different stages of their lives. "For 30- to 55-year-olds (stainless steel) is still in," DiYanni says. "For the 60-plus (clients), they are tired of the constant cleaning due to handprints from the grandkids."

Another fashionable theme is a mix of different color woods. "The inlays and designs can be similar, but the colors can be different," Landis says.

DiYanni agrees. "Buyers are moving away from the cherry color and more towards the chocolate and chestnut colors." White cabinets are still hanging in there with buyers mixing these with color cabinets in the same kitchen.

Glazes on the kitchen cabinets give the space a distinctive appearance as well, Landis says. "The pigment color doesn't block out the wood grain," he says, but adds, "It is a unique look in the finish, but it can raise your cost 40 to 50 percent."

For people hoping to make their kitchens green, as in environmentally friendly, there are a few ways to do it beyond purchasing appliances with the Energy Star logo on them, though that price tag is larger as well.

"The bottom line is it is still kind of expensive," Landis says. "If you can put in a \$17 bulb compared to a \$117 bulb, most people say 'let's go with \$17.'"

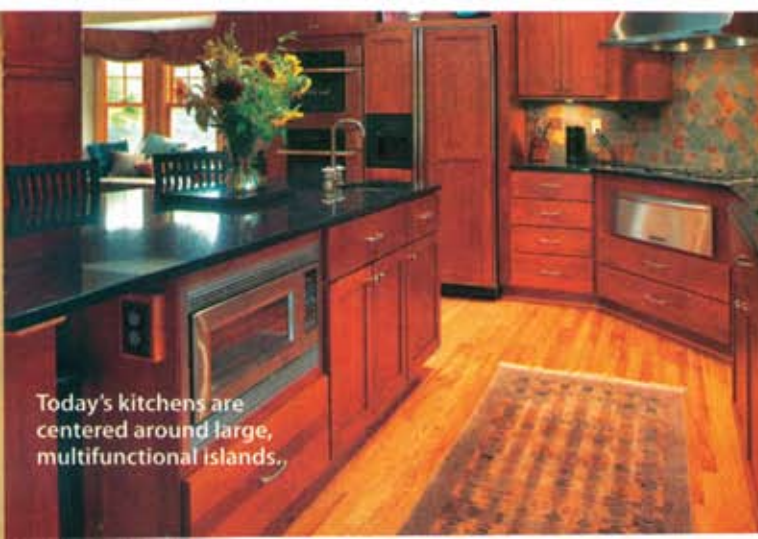
Still, people are asking for ways to go green in the kitchen, Miller says. "There is a lot of interest in it," she says. "But we get conflicting information about it."

Many products claim to be environmentally friendly, but there is a question of whether or not they truly save energy, she says.

Landis, Miller and DiYanni all agree that no matter what changes a client wants to make in the kitchen, taking the time to plan is essential.

This is the room in most homes where families have gathered for generations. With the right appliances, lighting, flooring and setting, it can be the place people want to be for every holiday of the year.—AH

Kelli Milligan Stammen is a freelance writer for At Home in Columbus.



Today's kitchens are centered around large, multifunctional islands.