

WHAT'S HOT & FRESH



Brendan Charters

BRENDAN CHARTERS IS CO-OWNER OF TORONTO DESIGN-BUILD FIRM EURODALE DEVELOPMENTS INC. 2014 BILD RENOVATOR OF THE YEAR. VISIT EURODALE.CA OR FOLLOW BRENDAN ON TWITTER BRENDAN@EURODALE.CA

Now trending for the chef in your home

BY **BRENDAN CHARTERS**

Bell bottoms, bootcut or skinny jeans. Double-breasted, wide lapels or slim-tailored cut. Fashion trends change faster than ever these days in the clothing arena and odds are the outfit you have on today will not be in your regular rotation 10 years from now—let alone in five years. Home decor, believe it or not, is heavily influenced by the clothing fashion world. Another major influence of this favourite room of the home is the technology world. Kitchen trends move fast, and as a follow-up to the article I wrote in *RENO & DECOR* exactly three years ago, we will examine how things have changed in that short period of time.

At Eurodale, we work as an entire team on our design-build projects, so again I posed questions to each of our main client influencers that are involved when we are designing and building for a client. First, Jim Cunningham, Eurodale Architectural Designer, second is Laura Thornton of Thornton Design and, finally, Jimmy Zoras from Distinctive by Design Fine Cabinetry, the group that manufactures the kitchens for our sites.

The question I asked was, “What are the biggest trends in kitchens, and what are the most important room-defining elements you recommend to clients?” Here is their valuable input, which you can use when planning your own kitchen project.



JIM CUNNINGHAM
Architectural Designer, Eurodale Developments

LAURA THORNTON
Principal Designer, Thornton Design

Low Boy: Taking trends from the commercial kitchen, many new spaces have mostly lower cabinets, with uppers seen only in full-height pantries, or over refrigerators. This helps us install windows to maximize on natural day-lighting and views if the kitchen overlooks a nice outdoor setting.

IoT (The Internet of things): The next two years will see 90 per cent of home appliances connect to the Internet and be able to be controlled or monitored by your smart phone or watch, says Samsung, maker of appliances and other technologies. Leave the stove on? There’s an app for that. Cue George Jetson—these appliances will detect temperature, moisture, leaks, fires or floods, follow your commands and notify you when your flambé is ready to serve, or when to call for takeout if you burnt it!

The Hub: Kitchens, if large enough, can be great closed-concept spaces. If the home is small, however, they have to open up and combine with adjacent rooms—often the dining room or family room, in order to ensure connections with others in the home. Very few like to slave alone in the kitchen. To help divide and define the spaces, we have seen islands grow up to 16 feet in length to create a visual room break, a prep space and a critical social gathering place. These are fun, more casual spaces than their closed-concept counterparts, which are typically geared more for serious work.

Floored: Hardwood—on kitchen floors throughout history. Like all good things, it never went out of style (though stain choices do change often). Virtually impossible to pick up a design magazine and not see a kitchen with a hardwood floor—from now, 20 years ago, or 20 years from now. Real hardwood flooring is always elegant, both visually and physically warm. Fewer breaks in floor types makes a space appear bigger, something we all want. Hardwood also matches everything. It is a neutral, and limitless in colour and finish options. Lastly, it’s classic and provides a strong canvas for all types of design, from modern to traditional and everything in between.

Open & Shut Case: The majority of clients request an open-concept kitchen for ease of family life and entertaining, however, there remains a percentage that either do not have enough wall-backing space, or prefer a closed-concept kitchen. A closed-concept kitchen allows forgiveness, retains food smells and sounds, and keeps visual mess out of sight and, therefore, out of mind. And the kitchen interior can also allow a departure in decor from the rest of your home.

Open-concept kitchens appear more spacious, allow parents to interact with kids, or watch TV programming while doing the daily chore of cooking. Most importantly is how great it is for active entertainment, as everyone can be together. The chef, however, needs to be content with working on display and any mess being visible to your family or guests.



Brighten up: The most overlooked or undervalued element in any space and, literally, the most important is lighting. Kitchens are task-oriented spaces and require numerous types of lighting to make them successful spaces. Overall or general lighting, such as recessed pot lights, will illuminate your space but are not ideal for tasks. Task lighting, such as under cabinetry lighting and pendant lights over an island are necessary for safe food preparation.

If your cabinetry has accent glass-door fronts, interior lighting adds ambient room light and lets you show off the glass or the items in the cabinet, adding a real punch to the esthetic. Decorative lighting, which we refer to as architectural “bling” or kitchen jewelry—chandeliers over your table or large statement fixtures over your island—are not only a necessity but add flavour and personal expression to your design. For the right amount of light and to set the mood you are after, make sure to put all your lighting on dimmer switches.

JIMMY ZORAS

Owner of Distinctive by Design Fine Cabinetry

Functionality: Use of internal cabinetry hardware that maximizes space and functionality has evolved greatly. It has transformed shelf and drawer organization. Today you can get many more items in your cabinetry, and have easier access to them. Pots and pans, groceries, refuse, recycling and compost are all easily stored and accessed in full extension drawers, magic corners, pop-up doors and appliance garages. It allows the kitchen to work functionally and maintain better visual form by creating a defined space for everything and keeping counters clear and ready for work.

Countertops: Quartz countertops are now most often the first choice as they are stain-free, non-porous and environmentally friendly relative to their stone slab counterparts. Quartz suppliers have also introduced huge advancements in the design of slabs in recent years, very closely resembling granite and marble, without the maintenance concerns of those stone types.

Lighting: More technology than lighting, the shift from halogen lighting to LED lighting allows for 80 per cent less power consumption for the same lighting output and with a fraction of the heat. Lighting spectrums have advanced dramatically over the last three years and, in many cases, the difference between the two is negligible.

Finishes: Cabinetry door and shape styling has moved more towards contemporary in the past few years. The typical shaker door has given way to more flat panel surfaces with either a prominent wood grain, a solid colour or a combination of both. High-gloss cabinets are also very popular with PET laminates.

Lastly, I suggest working with a professional to get great, qualified advice and the best results. Start at **renomark.ca** to find the professional renovators that have the skills required to do the work and are bound by a strict code of ethics and conduct, ensuring a great experience.

It will be interesting to see what develops over the next five years in the most important room in the home. One thing is for sure and that is: there is no better room in the home to have fun and take a chance at creating something unique to you. Creating an inspirational space is the first step to creating your next delicious meal. Bon appetit.♦

