

Summer: The Perfect Season to Design an Eye-Catching and Comfortable Kitchen

(ARA) - In the summer, most activity moves to the great outdoors. Porches, patios and decks are the official “heart center” of most homes during the warm weather months, especially at mealtimes. Instead of congregating in the kitchen as they do in the colder season, families tend to gather on the patio to enjoy dinner and recap the day’s events.

This leaves the kitchen, with the exception of basic food preparation, vacant and, quite possibly, looking even a bit forlorn and outdated now that it’s temporarily unused. So why not take advantage of this seasonal vacancy and turn this space into something more modern and family friendly before the cold winter months return?

Because it plays such a prominent role in any home, an outdated kitchen can lessen the impact of the well-thought-out style you’ve worked hard to infuse into the rooms that surround it. Sure, it might be a functional cooking workspace, but it’s also the one room where people tend to gravitate. Why not make it a place where you can work sensibly and have family and friends gather comfortably to share a meal or lively game night.

Taking a tired kitchen from drab to fab is an easy goal to achieve on any budget. All you need is a little paint, a few decorating elements and some creativity.

First, think color. Chances are you haven’t changed the palette in that room in years, and with paint, it’s the quickest, easiest and most cost-effective change you can make. In high-traffic rooms where food is stored, prepared and served, most design experts recommend using a semi-gloss paint finish for easy clean-up and maintenance. Because of its shiny finish, it also tends to brighten a room because it reflects more light than other finishes.

What’s more, you now can find a high-quality semi-gloss finish in zero-VOC paints, such as Dutch Boy’s odor-eliminating Refresh paint with exclusive Arm & Hammer technology that reduces household odors – another great feature for busy kitchens.

“Because it delivers exceptional low-odor application, durability and washability, Refresh semi-gloss sheen is a smart choice for any room of the house,” says Mary Ward, Dutch Boy Paints senior product manager. “Add its odor-reducing technology, and it’s really the ideal coating solution for kitchens where pungent food odors can linger in the air.”

When deciding what colors to include in your updated space, think appetizing. Color experts and Feng Shui practitioners caution against using blue, saying it’s an unnatural color for food and also an appetite suppressant. Soothing greens are said to aid in digestion. Golds boost vibrancy in poorly lit rooms. Earth tones provide a formal, yet calming, feel to a room. Reds and oranges have long been associated with stimulating appetite.

When repainting your kitchen, don’t forget to think beyond walls and trim. You can also update aging chairs, the table and even old cabinets with fresh new paint colors. Add in some new fabric for chair cushions, and you’ve easily transformed stale, old furniture without much expense.

If you're looking to upgrade to new furniture, remember that a round kitchen table instead of a traditional, long rectangular one also can add new intimacy, making this favorite gathering space even more inviting. To further update the room, ditch the 1970s lighting and go for something more modern and fun, such as decorative, funky glass pendant lights. Another new trend to try is on the opposite end of the decorating spectrum - 1950s retro-inspired fixtures. Whatever you choose, don't forget to also install some functional, yet attractive, task lighting for the work areas.

Overall, think mix and match to add a little more casual feel to the space. Steer away from the kind of fussy curtains your grandmother might choose and update off-the-rack window treatments with tassels, cording, beads or contrasting fabrics for more visual appeal. Or, for even more punch consider covering windows in fashionable fabric Roman shades. Instead of a dated oilcloth tablecloth, cover your tabletop with funky, unexpected placemats to offer a more contemporary edge. Don't have money to update that old linoleum floor? An inexpensive patterned rug hides scuffs and wear and instantly brightens the space.

Break the rules and have fun in decorating. When you're ready to gather together back inside after a summer season of dining on the deck, your creativity will give you a space where you'll want to spend time during the cold months.

Courtesy of ARAcontent