



The Perfect Kitchen

Gaylord Design creates dream kitchens at affordable prices

BY KRIS JEFFORDS

To the consummate hostess, the reigning or aspiring culinary master, or the family whose central hang-out is somewhere between the cupboard and the stove, Sandra Gaylord, owner of Gaylord Design, says: "Now may be a great time to renovate or update your kitchen.

"We offer designs, as well as custom cabinetry, and put it all together for you. We're a full-service firm."

A Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) and interior designer who has designed for the Busch family of Anheuser Busch fame and has

been interviewed for *Every Day with Rachel Ray* magazine, Gaylord invites clients to envision a safer, more functional and more beautiful kitchen.

Renovating this important room offers both financial and emotional returns on investment. The latter result from creating a space for innovation, fellowship, family bonding and celebration. The former may be enhanced by a CKD, with kitchen renovations yielding a 75-90 percent return if done well.

Gaylord's career as a kitchen designer emerged from a life-long love of furniture and

interior design. She graduated from Marymount University with a degree in interior design and began working on high-profile projects. Soon after, she earned her certification as a kitchen designer from the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA), a process that included studying volumes of technical data and an eight-hour test with written and drafting components.

CKDs must design kitchens that have high standards for functionality and safety as well as for aesthetics. Because these designers' training is rigorous—and continuing—

Photograph by Chris Smith



customers can rest assured that hiring a CKD is a smart move for home and budget. Gaylord uses her knowledge to anticipate and creatively resolve design problems.

Here are a few of the challenges she helps her clients overcome:

Layout: Installing a set of beautiful custom cabinets is sure to make an impact on the appearance of a kitchen. But even the most stunning addition can fall flat if the total layout of the room is inefficient. CKDs consider how many cooks use the kitchen, how much counter space is required for the household, and what configurations are most conducive to frequent entertaining. They determine which and what size appliances best fit a kitchen. (Only dishwashers and garbage disposals come in standard sizes.) The sink, if its position doesn't accommodate the layout, is another area of concern. "Choosing not to relocate the sink to save money can be a bad idea," Gaylord says. "The plumbing required is relatively inexpensive and achieving a better layout is worth it."

By assessing the entire layout—including the kitchen sink—Gaylord makes small kitchens cozy, not cramped, and large kitchens grand, not cold. "It's a matter of evaluating everything and determining if it works," she said. "Make sure the kitchen is safe and

functions and is not just a showcase."

Traffic Patterns: Homeowners should consider the manner and frequency with which people move through the kitchen. A CKD thinks of everything—from door clearances to pet feeding stations. Gaylord develops traffic solutions based on her client's needs. For example, homes with several children, or vacation houses that see a lot of guests, may benefit from out-of-the-way beverage centers.

Integrated Improvement Planning: Gaylord recommends that homeowners avoid partial updates such as replacing floors if there are plans to change cabinetry later. If cabinetry needs updating soon, don't update counter tops first.

Creative Touches: Gaylord enjoys the unexpected when it comes to crafting a unique kitchen. "Putting something in your kitchen that's not supposed to be in your kitchen is always nice. Try placing a baroque mirror or artwork on the wall," she said. "Lighting can really make a difference. In one home, instead of four canned lights, we installed 21-inch, fold-out lights."

While Gaylord is pleased to share concepts that apply to renovations or new construction, she emphasizes the personal nature of re-envisioning a room where family, friends and food converge.

Finally, each client has a different dream kitchen. Customizations can include islands, comfortable seating, open floor plans, organized storage, computer stations or a myriad other elements. "It's really about the client and their desires," she said. "Each generation has its own special needs based on differing lifestyles and stages of life. For example, designing kitchens that meet aging-in-place criteria can allow retirees the opportunity to remain in their home long after retirement."

Gaylord continues to help clients realize their fantasy kitchens in the Lowcountry, Michigan, Georgia and Florida, and is planning a design for the interior of a condominium in Japan next year. She is a dealer for several custom cabinetry lines, and because Gaylord Design does not have the costs of a showroom, she can offer savings to her clients. To see Sandra's tips for avoiding design mistakes, go to www.charlestonstyleanddesign.com. ➤

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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