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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

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Local designers share their favorite kitchen designs and how to make the most utilitarian space in the home stylish.

Written and produced by Blake Miller



Meet the Designer
MELISSA LEE



BLUE *HEAVEN*

Designer Melissa Lee of New South Home looked to Plaza Midwood's eclectic, modern aesthetic for inspiration for this kitchen built by Joyce Building Co. Instead of an all-white kitchen with traditional details, Lee used of-the-moment neutral blue for pops of color to complement the shake-style cabinetry.

What She Did

ADDED TILE Lee added a geometric-patterned blue tile to the underside of the quartz waterfall island to create interest to the otherwise all-white kitchen.

WARMED UP THE SPACE With such a cool color palette, Lee added warmth to the space with brass hardware by Top Knobs, a pair of pendant lights by Generation Lighting, and open wood shelving.

MODERNIZED THE BACKSPASH To give traditional subway tile a contemporary twist, Lee had the backsplash laid on a stacked pattern, resulting in a more streamlined, modern look.



KITCHEN SPLURGE

"Lighting. I feel like finding the right lighting for your kitchen can make the whole space pop. Even adding great task lighting such as a pretty decorative sconce over the sink or under cabinet lighting can be a game-changer."

BEST DECORATING TIP

"When in question, pick white. Martha Stewart has had a white kitchen for twenty years, and it still looks beautiful. A white kitchen is classic and won't ever go out of style."

SECRET SOURCE "Kitchen Posts Daily on Instagram features a kitchen 365 days a year. Whenever we're working on a kitchen, we love going to that account for inspiration. I think it's great because it shows you how different kitchen design can be."

KITCHEN DO "Don't forget the underside of the island. It's just another place to add interest to an otherwise blank canvas in the kitchen."

KITCHEN DON'T "If you're designing a kitchen from scratch, leave enough room—a forty-five-inch walkway at a minimum—in the galley area. Anything less is too crowded."



BRIGHT & AIRY

This SouthPark home received a much-needed makeover, which included a more open kitchen. Designer Maggie Crandall was enlisted by her repeat client to install a kitchen design that would update the space with more modern finishes and colors and allow the space to breathe a bit.

What She Did

BROUGHT IN COLOR The custom cabinetry in Benjamin Moore Hale Navy and the quartz countertops and waterfall island were the springboard for the design. "Navy is a safe option if you want to go outside the box from a white shaker, but not too bold that you will get sick of it after a few years."

KEPT IT OPEN The custom open wood shelving and hood by Josh Utsey allow the wall opposite the living space to breathe. "The ceiling height is lower because it's an older home, so adding cabinetry here would've closed off the space."

ADDED PATTERN Kitchens tend to be absent of any pattern, so Crandall elevated this all-white kitchen by adding the patterned tile from TileBar on the underside of the island.



Meet the Designer **MAGGIE CRANDALL**

KITCHEN SPLURGE "I love splurging on things like a waterfall island, which, in this kitchen, was definitely needed to take it up a notch design-wise."

BEST DECORATING TIP "Go with something custom if you can. We had the shelves and custom hood ledge built by Josh Utsey. It's nice to have a feature in the kitchen that is unique to that space. It adds some character to it."

SECRET SOURCE "When styling open shelving, I like to mix in everyday plates with some taller vases and planters. A great place to source items like that is Anthropologie."

KITCHEN DO "If there's a question as to where to stop the tile, the answer is to tile the entire wall."

KITCHEN DON'T "Don't be afraid to add a bold element. It can be scary because a kitchen is a large investment, but adding a unique or fun element into the mix will make you love it that much more. If you can't commit to a full-patterned backsplash, pop one up on the back of the island or behind the coffee station."



BEACH CHIC

Architect Matt Benson and his wife, interior designer Barrie Benson, were tasked with designing a home that, while new, exuded the charm of old Southern beach homes. The kitchen in the oceanfront Figure Eight Island home needed to take advantage of the panoramic views while coupling form and function in a stylish way.

What They Did

MADE OLD, NEW Drawing inspiration from decades-old Southern beach homes, the couple added pecky cypress throughout the home and in the kitchen to balance the more modern lines and architectural details.

KEPT A LOW PROFILE The custom banquette swathed in wipeable vinyl by Martyn Lawrence Bullard for Osborne & Little was designed low enough so as not to impair the ocean view.

MINIMIZED THE HARDWARE In lieu of drawer and cabinet pulls, Matt Benson designed the cabinetry with hidden notches underneath the panels to open and close sans hardware, resulting in a cleaner look.



Meet the Designer **BARRIE BENSON**

KITCHEN SPLURGE

"Finishes on the cabinets can sometimes be very expensive. But, honestly, they're what make kitchens really polished and finished."

BEST DECORATING TIP

"Add a banquette when possible. There are so many hard surfaces in kitchens, so it's nice to have an area where you can lounge. You spend so much time in a kitchen, so having a well-designed, custom banquette that also has extra room for people to perch on while you're cooking or entertaining is really important."

SECRET SOURCE "I love Addison Weeks hardware. I designed a line for them. If you're remodeling your kitchen, hardware is a great way to bring in some personality. Also, Bird Decorative Hardware & Bath has a great showroom and great sources."

KITCHEN DO "Try a chandelier over your island in lieu of traditional pendant lights. Your kitchen will look so much prettier at night."

KITCHEN DON'T "Don't go overboard with counter stools. Less is more. It's better to have barstools that don't make such a huge statement and can tuck away easily. Unless you have a really big kitchen, you just have a mess of barstools. So keep them low and minimal when you can."