

PANEL OF EXPERTS



▲ **Susan Dowling**, DesignHouse Architecture and Interiors, Amelia Island, FL



▲ **Jamie Goldberg**, AKBD, CAPS, Jamie Goldberg Kitchen and Bath Design, San Diego, CA



▲ **Eddie Maestri**, Maestri LLC Architecture and Design, Dallas, TX



▲ **Rebecca Lindquist**, Lindquist and Co., Kitchens and Baths, Duluth, MN



▲ **Elaine Pitcock**, AKB, Kitchens by Design, Indianapolis, IN

TRENDS

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The latest ways to squeeze maximum function from minimal space
By Barbara Ballinger

Small kitchens reflect many of the same design trends that their bigger counterparts do, but their more limited square footage requires adjustments, too. Certain materials and colors help make areas look larger; some cabinet interior systems maximize space by making unusable corners functional; and task lighting can visually increase a room's look. We asked five top kitchen designers for their input on major trends. Here's what they said is on the horizon in small-space design solutions.

Main photo: Brian Bookwalter, design by Kitchens by Design; Inset: George Ross, design by Tara Seawright



▲ *Salvaged stone remnants can cut costs*



▲ *Extend the flooring throughout adjoining spaces for continuity*

Q: WHAT MATERIALS ARE MOST POPULAR FOR COUNTERTOPS, FLOORS AND BACKSPASHES?

Susan Dowling: Current trends are solid and light colors for walls, white marble for countertops, wood and large-scale tiles for floors—some as big as 18" x 24"—and smaller subway tiles or glass mosaics for backsplashes. A lot of homeowners also like using salvaged stone remnants to save on costs.

Jamie Goldberg: The less contrast

and the less busy the materials the better, since that makes a room appear larger. It's fine to pair light countertops with dark cabinets, but don't add too many other contrasts. I like low-maintenance quartz for countertops since it's family-friendly. Glass still is popular for backsplashes, but I'm seeing larger pieces rather than little mosaics in wild patterns. Subway tiles also can be installed in larger pieces of at least 6" by 12" as opposed to the more traditional 3" by 6".

Rebecca Lindquist: I'm seeing a decline in natural stones and an increase in engineered ones like quartzes because many consider them more durable, easier to care for and more hygienic, since they're not porous. They also have fewer seams, which is good for a long run, and they can be given more interesting edge treatments when built up. I'm also seeing more hardwood flooring because it often represents a continuation of what's been used in adjacent rooms, which makes the entire area look larger.



▲ Layer lighting options to brighten recessed areas

➤ Open shelving adds depth and personality

Main photo: Brian Bookwalter, design by Kitchens by Design; Inset: Jennifer Mau, design by Norma Zeiger; Bottom right: Sam Oberter Photography LLC, design by Richard Bubnowski

Eddie Maestri: Butcherblock is back for countertops. It works well with wood floors, which a lot of people like. Both can be sanded and refinished easily. Recycled-glass mosaics remain popular, so do classic white subway tiles for backsplashes; more homeowners favor larger 24" by 24" tiles for floors.

Elaine Pitcock: I'm still using a lot of marble and quartz for countertops because they present more of a monochromatic look than granite does; granite tends to look busier because of its patterns. I'm also using more butcherblock, Iroko wood and end-grain walnut. All of these options are safe to cut on.

Q: WHAT'S NEW FOR LIGHTING UP SMALL KITCHENS?

Dowling: I like to use chandeliers to add interest and that

Shabby Chic cottage look, but I also use undercabinet lighting for performing tasks and recessed spots for overall lighting.

Goldberg: Lately I have been using layered lighting and more LEDs for energy-efficiency and coolness. Pendants are still popular but in pairs rather than threes, and also in newer bronze and silver finishes. And I'm still seeing the installation of one decorative fixture over an eating area or island.

Lindquist: Backlighting a glass cabinet front makes a room look larger. I prefer xenon to halogen lamps—it's less hot.

Maestri: Mood lighting is popular, since kitchens, even small ones, are used more for entertaining. I also use undercabinet task lighting that can be targeted, lighting on dimmers and fixtures that don't look too kitchen-y.



▲ Built-in appliances save counterspace



Pitcock: I like one big statement fixture as a focal point so everything doesn't look so dainty.

Q: WHEN SPACE IS LIMITED, WHAT APPLIANCES SHOULD HOMEOWNERS HAVE VERSUS GIVE UP?

Goldberg: Keep appliances that multitask, such as a 30" range with a warming drawer or a microwave with a convection option, and one big sink and a refrigerator with French doors. Do without that second dishwasher and wine cooler, or, if wine is important, get a 15" unit.

Lindquist: Go for microwave-exhaust combinations; 18" dishwashers; integrated refrigerators (and ones with French doors, so the door swing isn't a problem); one deep sink, possibly with a built-in drainboard; and 30" ranges, since anything smaller isn't practical since you lose important features.

Maestri: Grouping appliances allows more counterspace. Samsung makes a great refrigerator with two and four doors. Always get a 24" dishwasher.

Pitcock: First, buy the best quality, which may mean a variety of brands. More manufacturers are coming out with their versions of professional-style models on a smaller scale at a variety of price points. Owners may have to make a choice, like building in a microwave to save countertop space, which might mean giving up cabinetry. Personally, I prefer a range with an oven below to conserve space, as opposed to a cooktop and wall oven combination.

Q: WHAT COLORS ARE MOST POPULAR AND MAKE A SMALL KITCHEN LOOK LARGER?

Dowling: Light colors—whites, pastels and off-whites—always work. But even in a small room, you can add some fun color as an accent, such as a bright orange or pink. Just be careful not to have too many different colors. I don't use a lot of wallpaper.

Goldberg: Use a lot of grays, greens, browns. Dark cabinets are making a comeback because they look more contemporary. Dark wood veneers paired with light countertops work in smaller kitchens, but I wouldn't use too many contrasts. I also like flooring to be consistent in the kitchen and surrounding rooms.

Pitcock: Again, stick to mostly monochromatic neutral schemes, such as those in the cream family, that open rather than close a kitchen visually. I often suggest painting walls and the ceiling a different shade; perhaps the ceiling will be dark for drama, though making it light will make the room look larger.

Lindquist: My goal is to avoid having colors make the room look smaller, which darker colors tend to do. People don't have to use just white, but off-whites and warm vanillas are good, as are lighter maples and other natural woods. Because there's usually not much wall space in smaller kitchens...color can be used more in countertops or backsplashes; good choices are earth tones, warm rusts, deep greens and burnt umbers.

✓ *In a small space, it's best to stick to one dominant color*



▲ *French doors on fridge open easily in tight spaces*



▲ *Run cabinets to the ceiling to maximize storage*

Photo far left: Steven Mays, design by Eisner Design; Inset: GFR Photo, Greg Riegler, design by Cheryl Kees Clendenon; Main: Ana Buttrey, design by Milan Heger, AIA

Maestri: Lots of grays—this hue is becoming the new neutral, and it complements stainless steel. Earth tones and taupes are popular. I still like classic white subway tiles.

Q: WHAT CABINETS WORK BEST IN LITTLE KITCHENS?

Dowling: Opt for cabinets that run to the ceiling with simple recessed panels, or styles without a lot of molding or trim. I like lots of pullouts to stash everything: I especially like adjustable shelves and lazy Susans in corners. I tend not to use a lot of cabinets above countertops, since they run up the cost and close off the room, but cabinet boxes without fronts offer a lighter look.

Goldberg: I use veneers in bookmatched grains for continuity in the room; high-end laminates that resemble glass; cherry and maple finishes; and more dark wood veneers, like peppercorn. Because of more interest in contemporary design, I'm not seeing cabinets stacked. Door styles have a slab front without molding,

or they are in different materials such as stone, leather or metal for a unique and personalized touch.

Lindquist: Simple, flush-front cabinets with a recessed panel and a lightly stained veneer—so that the hardware becomes the jewelry—are great choices for small kitchens. We're seeing almost no oak, fewer dark stains and very few cases of multiple colors; there may be some contrasting trim, or two wood tones or glazes, but not usually three.

Maestri: We are using white cabinets, rift-cut oak and more cabinets with flat fronts. We're also seeing more integrated appliances that seem to disappear, and microwaves hidden in cabinets or garages. Many cabinets have latch-free doors; those that have a handle are fitted with long stainless rods.

Pitcock: Paint-grade woods, MDS board, quartersawn oak with a stain, or maple with a stain or glaze are all popular. The key is not to introduce too many different colors, stains or glazes.