Kitchen renos surge in popularity as people spend more time at home

'When you enjoy your kitchen space, you use it more'

Louise Rachlis

Over the past couple of challenging years, kitchen and bath designer Natalia Pierce has seen a shift to healthier lifestyles.

"People are spending more time cooking, eating healthier and going back to family mealtime," says Pierce, of Detail By Design. "With restrictions on eating out, meal preparation took on a more significant part of everyday life and instead of finding it annoying, many families have embraced the better lifestyle.

"Most often the clients that I work with are avid cooks and have a higher demand for functionality," she says. "That said, once specific zones for preparation and cooking activity are created, there is more space and so more people can be involved in the kitchen. There is more effective use of space for storage. And when you enjoy your space, you use it more."

"For years we have seen a trend to a more family- and home chef-oriented kitchens and dining rooms," says Norm Lecuyer, president of ARTium Design Build. "The trend has exploded since the pandemic hit as homeowners have had access, through social media and television, to a previously unknown world of culinary wonders.

"Not only has meal prep become a more important focus of our homeowners, it has become a major part of life at home. Couples are cooking together, kids are cooking. Cooking has become a family activity."

A Detail By Design client in Aylmer, Que., just completed a kitchen renovation using the same amount of space. "We moved the cooking surface to a different location," says Pierce. "We had it properly ventilated and we created multiple zones where people could be cooking, cleaning, prepping — everyone was in the same space doing their own thing — and nobody was tripping over one another."

"The most common design request of our homeowners is for more," says Lecuyer of ARTium Design Build. "More counter space in the kitchen, more storage space, more functional cabinetry, more seating, more advanced appliances, more room for guests, more engagement with the dining and family areas. And more space; kitchen and dining room walls are falling all over Ottawa. The impact of renovating the heart of the home can change the entire home. Our customers are astounded at how these renovations can change the way they live in their homes."

He says that ARTium Design Build's first goal when designing and renovating a kitchen is to ensure its functionality and modernization.

"A lot has changed with respect to kitchens and family life. How do we make the kitchen work better? After that, the customer wish list — and of course the home and the budget — will drive where the project will go. Be personal with your functional requirements and esthetic, but watch out for flavour of the month — pun intended — design ideas. Remember avocado green kitchen appliances?"

Be prepared to spend some money, he adds. "Kitchens are expensive, but they are one of the best investments you can make in your home. If you design and renovate your kitchen well, you and your family will reap the benefits for many years to come."

Pierce advises those who are considering doing a kitchen renovation to look for certified designers who will bring a level of expertise to the design that greatly improves the lives of their clients.

"Homeowners should hire a professional designer and builder," agrees Lecuyer. "This will be the renovation of a lifetime. Invest in your home and family."

DETAIL BY DESIGN

This kitchen renovation by Detail By Design uses the same footprint as the original kitchen but provides more space for meal preparation and cooking.

ARTIUM DESIGN BUILD

Homeowners are asking for more of everything for their kitchen renovations: More counter space, more storage space, more functional cabinetry and more seating.

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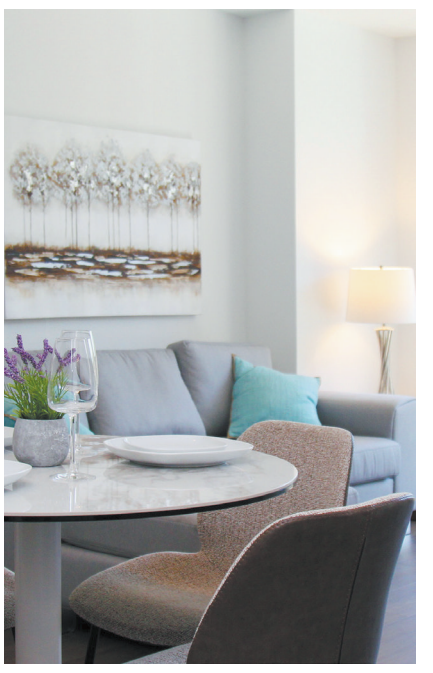

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