

What Your Neighbors are Choosing in Cabinetry

by Sarah Day

Planning your new kitchen involves many big decisions. What style cabinetry you want? What are the colors you should choose? What type of counters and floors will you pick? When making these decisions, a lot of folks wonder what other people who are remodeling or building choose. Is there a trend to follow, or should you be your own person? What's best short term & what's best long term – resale popularity vs. durability vs. your own personal vibe?

I can't answer all of these questions definitively, but I can give you a sneak peek at what your neighbors here in SLO County are doing. We see our Clients picking out a wide variety of cabinetry styles for their homes. Let's look at two of my recent customers – they illustrate very different final products, but much of the same thought process.

The first kitchen is a remodel here in San Luis that took a boring and out-of-date kitchen and gave it contemporary style. Our Client began by visiting San Luis Kitchen's showroom – she had a gut feeling of her style, but no way to express that feeling. She toured the showroom and found some ideas that were close, not exactly right though. We then directed her to our Collage Boards (with photos of kitchens done in widely varying themes and styles), brochures and books that we keep in the showroom to provide inspiration, and also to our gallery of past projects. And, lo and behold, in one of the Wood-Mode brochures she found exactly what she wanted!

It's a modern look with hints of Asia thrown in. The doorstyle is flat and made of a lightly stained cherry wood with contrasting dark frames and trim. She chose a granite with light hints of green, a funky glass tile backsplash, and a strong, dark wood floor. Stainless appliances and a matching wood light valance over the sink rounded out the look.

She did not want to move any walls in her home so she stayed with a simple U-shaped kitchen, and focused on the efficiency of the cabinet storage options rather than going for a huge space and extensive remodel. We designed in lots of deep drawers for pots and pans, 2 full lazy susans, a double pull-out trash cabinet, tray & cookie sheet storage, special cutlery organizers and much more. Lots of wall cabinets provide lots of storage.

The second kitchen I want to tell you about is in a beautiful Victorian cottage in Arroyo Grande. The owners had taken the time to decorate the home with period furnishings, striking wood floors throughout the house, and warm, inviting color choices. Sadly, their existing kitchen did not do justice to the rest of the home. In a large open room the kitchen sequestered itself the side with a peninsula dividing the length of the space. Next to the peninsula was a secondary dining area and bay window just squashed right in. Then add a door to the garage and an exterior door and there was barely enough space to turn around!

As the Clients already had a formal dining room, our solution was to use the entire room for the kitchen. This allowed us to use the range-top and wood hood as a focal point to draw the eye into the kitchen. We added an island and reoriented the sink so that the person cleaning up can still join in with the party in the rest of the home – they are no longer shoved off into a corner and forgotten. Since the exterior door was somewhat redundant (another exit within 20 feet) we sealed it off and gained space for a double wall oven and built-in refrigerator with matching decorative panels. The bay window now has pride of place between the island and a beautiful new hutch – the perfect place for quiet breakfasts and late night card games!

The Clients knew that they wanted the style of the cabinetry to reflect the Victorian origins of their home, so they chose a raised panel door with mitered corners and bead detailing. At first they were planning a white painted finish for the whole room, but after visiting San Luis Kitchen's showroom they decided to add in accent pieces of a dark cherry-color finish for both the island and the hutch. We included extensive trim, crown and moulding details, bead board and corbels, toe valances, a mantle style wood hood, dark granite counters and new faces for an existing pantry – all adding to the nineteenth century ambiance. The contrast between the white main cabinet and cherry color accents is both highlighted by using a cool green wall color and softened with a variety of decorative accessories scattered through the space.



I believe that it is best to choose the style that best reflects the rest of your home, the lifestyle you enjoy and, most importantly, your own personality. Every kitchen should be unique – trends can influence you, other people's ideas have merit, but, in the end, you are the one living in your space and it must reflect you!

