



HOMES & CONDOS

Well-planned kitchen really cooks



COLIN AND JUSTIN

As is often the case with many of the kitchens we encounter, this particular food prep zone was the result of a “let’s tackle it later” plan that never quite materialized. Our client, Rob, a busy young media executive, had taken over the house from his “snowbird” parents, who’d recently departed Canada for a warmer life in the Florida sunshine. The majority of Rob’s rooms are now fully updated, but his kitchen desperately required to find itself an altogether brighter future. Blimey, it was scary.

The main problem, as we saw it, was a lack of functionality and an overwhelmingly drab aesthetic. Okay, so the kitchen ‘worked’ as far as cooking food was concerned (the stove functioned and the fridge still purred, if a little reluctantly), but true culinary potential had drawn to depressing, radical arrest. So, our challenge was simple — we needed to make the space function as well as we knew we could make it look. Rob, too, felt challenged; as a keen chef he loves entertaining and preparing elegant comestibles for his style-literate circle of friends. But his deathly dull cuisine was, ahem, flat as a proverbial pancake.

Kitchens, by their very nature, are like bathrooms and therefore amongst the most expensive to refurbish. Sure, if existing cabinetry is in sound condition (and appliances passable) then it’s possible to ‘joosh’ with the addition of, say, new handles and modern worktops. But when cabinetry is of a ramshackle persuasion then it’s best to grab the bull by the horns, cash permitting, and start from scratch. And besides, a well-planned, modern kitchen has considerable impact on future real estate value and, in this day and age, protecting the worth of bricks and mortar is ever more crucial.

And so it came to pass that, over gin and tonics in one of Rob’s nicer rooms, we plotted and planned a much more glamorous, domestic world.

Our client’s main concern was that his new kitchen should be cutting-edge, but that it shouldn’t make any overbearing design ‘statements.’ Other areas, such as his living and dining zones, are composed with a palette of grey, black and beige and as these interconnect to the kitchen it made sense to assemble visuals to sit comfortably alongside.

Sometimes clients are at a loss, insofar as their expectations are concerned, but with Rob we had good fortune. He knew — approximately — what he hoped to achieve and, as such, was able to articulate his dream. Even if his ideals were somewhat muddled. Cue the services of two Scottish design translators...

MOOD BOARD

Patching our vision onto a 30-inch by 30-inch board was a simple and foolproof way to ring fence our plans and explain to Rob our ambitions for his new kitchen. Collecting floor samples, tile selections, countertops and a range of paint shades was our first step. Thereafter, we talked ambition and, collec-



BRANDON BARRÉ PHOTOS

A new configuration was created by simply removing the lower and overhead eye-level cabinets. Basic white cabinets were painted a soft beige.



Lack of functionality and an overall drab aesthetic made this kitchen badly in need of a makeover. The new look includes a stainless-steel breakfast bar.

tively, put together a selection of elements that we knew would bring the room alive.

Tip: If you’re creating a mood board, use tearsheets from magazines and build up a schematic profile of the look you hope to achieve. When — and only when — you’ve devised a cunning plan, carefully piece your project together remembering, at all times, our motto: “Think twice, buy once.” It’s a classic money-saving maxim!

CONFIGURATION

While it may appear we’ve made a significant alteration to the room’s layout, in actual fact we did relatively little to open up the space and create an eminently more workable room. We simply removed the lower and overhead eye-level cabinets and moved swiftly to the next stage of our plan.

STAINLESS STEEL BREAKFAST BAR

As an interesting foil to the painted finish of our new cabinetry, we installed a semi-open-plan breakfast bar with handy shelved storage below.

Tip: Opt, wherever possible, for brushed steel as opposed to shiny stainless as it’s a FAR more forgiving medium. We reckon that whomever coined the term ‘stainless steel’ had never actually lived with it in their own home. Sure, baby oil applied with a cloth can reduce marking on reflective metal surfaces but the material is, on the whole, a nightmare with which to love. In practical application? Forget it.

CABINETS

These cabinets are not what they appear to be. Having started life as basic white off-the-shelf units, we carefully painted them softest beige to proffer understated appeal. Paint is the simplest way in which to change the look of cabinetry and, whether updating existing units, or adapting from scratch, it’s an affordable option. Either take cupboards to a professional spray finisher or use a small foam roller and apply several light coats of eggshell. As always, good preparation is key to slick results.

Tip: If you opt for the DIY route, always apply an undercoat and use satin finish, rather than high gloss, which is much more visually forgiving.

HANDLES

While new cabinetry generally comes, from most suppliers, with a flexible range of handles, it can give your project a more bespoke look if you source hardware from separate suppliers. Ours came from Lee Valley and its slick modern nature adds a welcome extra style note.

Tip: Feel free to mix and match different handle styles at different levels to further individual appeal. ‘D’ handles at eye level, for example, would look interesting played against traditional steel ‘pulls’ on base level doors and drawers.

FLOORING

Flooring, in any room, is an important consideration. However, due to the ‘open concept’ nature of this project, we were immediately compromised.

The existing tiled floor was in reasonable condition but we wanted our finished scheme to flow seamlessly from one zone onto several others therefore we decided to unify.

To do this we dispensed with the cold ceramic tiling and replaced it with flexible Amtico, a warm underfoot vinyl compound product that has extra resilience and is therefore particularly suitable for application in high-traffic areas.

APPLIANCES

We like to integrate our dishwashers’ etc., wherever possible, and opted for a concealed double deck drawer system by Fisher Paykel. Positioned to the left of our new oven, the discreet siting creates the illusion of a simple drawer stack.

Tip: When choosing electrical appliances, always think about energy consumption and, particularly in an open plan area, noise emission. The FP dishwasher scores on both counts and is especially quiet as it tackles your crocks and pans. Ideal

RESOURCES

Wall paint: Designer Grey 50YY 63/041 by www.icipaint.com

Flooring: Ebony Amtico from www.spaciafloors.com

Cabinets: Rationell from www.ikea.com

Worktops and steel breakfast counter: www.ikea.com

Cabinets: repainted in Barely Beige Aura eggshell interior paint 524 by www.benjaminmoore.ca

Cabinet hardware: www.leevalley.com

Whirlpool Convection Range: www.maytagstore.org

Whirlpool oven hood: www.maytagstore.org

Fridge and dishwasher: www.fisherpaykel.ca

Sink and faucet: www.homedepot.ca

Black taped window blinds: www.hunterdouglas.com

Die-cast espresso machine and blender: www.breville.ca

Bamboo canisters, wall clock and bread box: www.homesense.ca

Accessories and further room dressing: www.homeoutfitters.com

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NATIONAL SALES AND MARKETING AWARDS

Record-breaking night as Canadians strike gold in desert

GALE BEEBY
REAL ESTATE EDITOR

LAS VEGAS—If I were a betting woman, I would have put my money on the Canadian entries in the National Sales and Marketing Awards 2010, held here Tuesday night at the elegant Caesar’s Palace.

It was a record-breaking evening for Montana Steele Advertising, which won a total of nine gold trophies (out of 46 nominations). The sales team of In2ition — led by Debbie Cosic and Mira Tomljenovic — took home three trophies, and the folk from LA Inc. snagged two awards.

Joe Latobesi of Montana Steele, here with his “date,” son Andrew, was thrilled by the golden evening, with most of the awards coming

from their campaigns for Liberty Market Lofts and 1Bloor.

“I’m Joe Latobesi from Montana Steele, and I love Las Vegas,” he said, after being presented his third award of night.

Their nine wins broke a single-agency record by two, said Lisa Parrish of The Nationals production team.

In2ition repeated their 2009 win as Sales Team of the Year, an unprecedented victory. Cosic thanked their “hard working and tireless team” for making their company such a success.

Cosic and Tomljenovic also won Sales Manager of the Year, and a third trophy was presented to them for Best Brochure for a Community (where they tied with Montana

Steele) for SigNature Development’s Triumph Communities in Schomberg.

LA Inc., which was represented here by vice-president David Klugsberg, won for On the Boards – Ad, for Context Development’s The Liberty District (this award is for a campaign that has yet to be launched).

Klugsberg also accepted gold for Best Internet Marketing Campaign – E-Blasts for Market Wharf, also a Context development, which he thanked for giving them a great platform to create a one-of-a-kind marketing opportunity.

Latobesi summed up the evening by saying, “we really do great work in Canada.”

I really should have bet on the Ma-

ple Leafs!
CANADIAN GOLD AWARDS
In2ition

Debbi Cosic and Mira Tomljenovic
• Sales Team of the Year
• Sales Manager of the Year (Cosic and Tomljenovic)

• Best Brochure for a Community (Triumph Communities by SigNature Developments)

Montana Steele

Rene Desantis, Andy Desantis and Joe Latobesi

• Best Brochure for a Community – Magazine Format (Liberty Market Lofts by Lifetime Developments and BLVD *Developments)

• Best Brochure for a Community (1 Bloor, Bazis International)

• Best Radio Commercial (London on the Esplanade by Cityzen

Group)

• Best Colour Ad (Liberty Market Lofts)

• Best Print Campaign (Liberty Market Lofts)

• Best Signage (Liberty Market Lofts)

• Best Overall Ad Campaign (Liberty Market Lofts)

• Best Design of an Attached Home Plan (1 Bloor)

• Attached Community of the Year (1 Bloor)

LA Inc.

Lawrence Ayliffe and David Klugsberg

• On the Boards – Ad (The Liberty District, Context Development)

• Best Internet Marketing Campaign – E-Blasts (Market Wharf by Context Developments)