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Kitchens for the Twenty-First Century

If you're either planning or daydreaming about remodeling your kitchen, you've probably noticed the exponential jump in the number of options for plumbing fixtures, appliances, lighting, wood finishes and counter surface materials that are available to today's consumer. New features are adopted in the high-end custom kitchens and then they trickle down to be the expected norm in all parts of the market place. Since the twenty-first century kitchen is the social and functional crossroads of the house, the kitchen design must be seamlessly integrated with the rest of the house. The goal of remodels remains the same: to enable the cook to do more with less energy and less time.

Varying the top height of wall cabinets and creating pantries that resemble furniture more than utilitarian storage are design ideas that are gaining rapid acceptance. Cherry and Maple have become standard cabinet finishes. Look for the use of more exotic woods such as alder and ebony in the future. Glass fronted cabinets with lighted shelves and display niches are another way the kitchen can be "dressed up" to blend with an adjacent formal space. Using dimmers and task lighting on separate controls allows the kitchen to fade in the background when viewing TV in an adjacent room.

Here are some of the features that will become common in this century's kitchen:

1. Snack bars set up at kids' height in the kitchen with a microwave for popcorn and cooling drawer for drinks will keep them out of the main work area of the kitchen. The cooling drawers by **Dacor** don't have a compressor and are an economical alternative to a wine chiller.
2. Multiple sinks are becoming more important when there are two cooks in the house. Put a garbage disposal in each sink for ease of clean up.
3. Pull out appliance garages in the morning room or next to the tables can store the toaster and coffee maker.
4. Raise the dishwasher six inches off the floor to make loading the bottom rack easier. The new **Whirlpool** dishwashers have flat silverware trays and fully adjustable racks that allow anything from tea cups to soup kettles to be



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washed safely. The 30" wide dishwasher from **Dacor** has 25% more space than the old 24" wide dishwashers. This is great news for people who have large families or who like to throw dinner parties.

5. Deep pull out drawers for pots and pans are replacing cabinet doors. This improves accessibility and eliminates banged up door backs. Pull out racks for spices located next to the cooktop and pull out trays for trash cans are also popular.
6. The popularity of high end stoves such as **Viking** and **Le Cornu** (as status symbols as well as for their functionality) have prompted appliance manufacturers to vastly improve the controls on their cook tops. **GE Monogram** stoves have such precise temperature control that you can melt butter in a paper plate over a flame (without burning the plate!) or flash stir-fry at high heat.
7. The use of natural materials (stone and wood) for counters and floors will continue to gain acceptance as their costs drop due to increased consumer demand and competition. Granite is less than the cost of Corian because there are so many more sources today than five years ago.
8. Seventeen percent of the Generation X'ers want a computer or **Play Station** in the kitchen. This too will become a standard feature in the near future.

Good design advice doesn't cost money; rather it builds value in the end product. The opportunity to learn all your options before you begin a project is yours when you work with a design professional.

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