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a chef's dream

Color options and new materials help modern kitchens win over erstwhile critics

BY PURNELL T. CROPPER

Once the rap on contemporary kitchen design was that it was stark and unwelcoming. But today's manufacturers are creating rooms with inviting living areas while stepping up efficiency with better storage and functionality.

Spacious modern kitchens are designed with the whole family in mind. They have open layouts that allow views of other rooms, multiple cooking stations to make way for helping hands, and small office areas for your morning coffee and laptop.

One way to warm things up is with color. The broad range of available hues allows you to be serene and subdued or flashy enough to reflect your personality.

If you like the pared-down look of modern kitchen designs but are not sure one will fit in with the rest of your house, you can blend traditional with modern by mixing materials and colors. Think red lacquered cabinetry offset by an ebony wood stand-alone storage pantry.

Steel and granite countertops are still

popular, and newer options include blue-stone, glass, and acrylic.

Here are a few local companies that can create and customize a modern kitchen:

Snaidero

Known for its daring kitchen design, Snaidero nabbed a 2006 Good Design Award for its latest luxury kit, Venus, by Ferrari stylist Pininfarina. Many modern kitchens are right angle-crazy with minimal color, but the sporty-looking



Poggenphol's Plusmodo, equipped with hingeless drawers, doors, and cabinets

GRAND PLANS

Venus setup features dramatic curves along the countertops and shelves, and it comes in bright coral red. Venus comes in a number of different combinations of materials, including Microtouch, an eco-friendly microfiber that feels like leather. You can see all its features under energy-saving LED lights.

Morristown, 973.734.1616, snaidero-usa.com

Mobili De Angelis

The Italian company introduced its solid-wood custom kitchens to the U.S. market eight years ago, but it has produced fine cabinetry for three generations. MDA combines a strong tradition of European craftsmanship with updated design concepts and materials such as frosted-glass doors and stain-resistant Hi-Macs acrylic countertops to create elegant, contemporary kitchens that can blend into modern

and traditional surroundings. MDA can complete the job with stylish flooring options, such as honed white marble with embedded Swarovski crystals, and chandelier lighting. MDA recently opened a showroom in Livingston.

Montclair, 973.744.2447, mobilideangelis.com

Poggenpohl

There is incredible tidiness apparent in all Poggenpohl kitchen designs: Appliances are indistinguishable from cabinetry, hidden behind doors. The company's latest gift to hyper-organized cooks is the Plusmodo, a hingeless kitchen. Plusmodo presents a balanced mix of open and closed storage areas, clear glass trays, illuminated shelves, and gliding doors. Additionally, the company offers an earth-conscious alternative to natural wood: long-lasting melamine cabinets

available in teak (the tree is beautiful but endangered), zebrano, and oak finishes.

Paramus, 201.587.9090, poggenpohl.com

St. Clair

Although opulent traditional designs are its calling card, St. Clair can hunker down and create streamlined kitchens that carry a familiar, homey feel that others may lack. One of its projects, in Toms River, features lacquered maple cabinets, stainless steel, and giblee granite imported from India for the countertop and backsplash, giving the kitchen a hearty, lived-in look with clean, modern lines. The company can install a near endless array of extras, including beverage centers, panels to hide appliances, and LED accent lighting.

South Orange, 973.762.9500, stclairkitchenandhome.com



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