

by Patrick Galvin

KITCHEN DESIGN TRENDS *and* TECHNIQUES

SPACE-*SAVING* TIPS

Kitchen space is determined immutably by the size of the room. A 10x12-foot room can have 120 square feet of floor space, and with 8-foot ceilings, 960 cubic feet. That's it. Or is it? Creative kitchen designers, aided by innovative products, find ways every day to fudge a little on the dimensions for extra space. More importantly, they have learned imaginative ways to use or arrange the kitchen's components for more effective use of the space that's there. The question is how to do it. Here are ten ideas that can create order and space in the kitchen. They can add value to a kitchen at little or no extra cost. And the builder who uses these or other innovative space-savers will have an edge in the marketplace.

1. Add an appliance garage.

This is a small extra cabinet that usually sits in the little-used space at the back of an interior corner of the counter. It usually has a tambour door that pulls down to hide the mixer, toaster, and other small appliances that otherwise stay out in the open and add to counter clutter. Most cabinet manufacturers include it to match all of their regular lines.

2. Shelve the appliances. A brilliant idea for keeping the counter clear of all those small appliances is an appliance shelf in an appliance wall cabinet. It should be a pull-out shelf in a standard cabinet, but the door is best

hinged at the bottom, opening from the top at countertop level, but not protruding out beyond the shelf when it is pulled out. The real trick is to install two or three dual outlets in the back of the cabinet so the small appliances can stay there on the shelf while in use. They are disposed of simply by pushing the shelf back into the cabinet and closing the door. Such a cabinet can be ordered from a custom manufacturer. But a builder using stock cabinets can simply leave a hole between other cabinets and order an unhinged door and sliding shelf, adding the hinges at the bottom. Or the builder can order the cabinet with sliding shelf plus unmounted door with separate hinges. A piano hinge might be needed.

3. Use backsplash space. Poggenpohl cabinets, for example, can be ordered with about 9 extra inches of backsplash space for various small drawers, wire racks, and other gizmos to create useful storage. This area can be lighted with small fluorescent tubes and can be covered with tambour or sliding doors. This pushes the base cabinets out farther into the room, but that is often acceptable. A builder using stock or other custom cabinets can accomplish similar results by framing out the stud space, or by cutting out between the studs. That might allow only 4 inches, but 4 inches can take cups, glasses, spices, and various other items. This



Cabinets taller than standard 30 inches can be used for added storage space, as in this Poggenpohl kitchen.

space can be increased by furring the base cabinets out a couple of inches.

4. Put wall cabinets on the floor. In some small rooms there simply isn't enough room for base cabinets along a wall. Or there might be a window you want access to without bending over a 24-inch base cabinet. An easy trick is to mount wall cabinets on a toekick along that wall. Standard wall cabinets are 30 inches high, the same as base cabinets without toekick and countertop, so the toekick and top would bring them to the same height as other base cabinets.

But they would only be 12 inches deep, leaving more space in the room or allowing access to any windows. If a supplier won't sell wall cabinets with a toekick, set your cabinets on 2x4s.

5. Hide space behind cabinets. This variation of idea #3 gives homeowners a place to store the kitchen stool or serving cart. Place a short run of wall cabinets 15 to 18 inches away from the wall. If you use a 36-inch-wide wall cabinet on a toekick, with a 1-inch corner filler to butt against the other run of wall cabinets on a toekick, it leaves a space between the



Appliance garages are made by most cabinet manufacturers to match cabinets. This one, from Home-Crest, has an attractive tambour door to keep appliances out of sight.



A pull-out shelf for small appliances is mounted here with other 24-inch deep cabinets. It is wired with dual outlets in back of cabinet, and has a tambour door.



The backsplash area provides extra space in this Poggenpohl installation. A builder can duplicate this by moving base cabinets 8 or 9 inches from the wall, and putting in a shelf and sliding doors.

cabinet and the wall for stool and cart. Cover the space with a custom countertop that goes all the way to the wall (supported there by 1x2s), and order a door to fit the opening. The door will need a piano hinge. Using wall cabinets here cuts central floor space by only 3 inches to 6 inches, but it does sacrifice some cabinet space.

6. Hang the pots and pans. Pot racks are not for everybody—mainly for gourmet cooks and fastidious housekeepers—but this old-fashioned practice of hanging pots and pans from the ceiling at least creates space by getting them out of the cabinets. Pot racks can be made of wrought iron or brass or wood or even swag-type chains. Sometimes they are just ornamental hooks in a dropped section of a ceiling. Sometimes they are hooks on a wall, but that doesn't gain space because it might displace a needed wall cabinet. Just remember, pot racks are not liked universally. Check with clients first.

7. Build in all you can. Homeowners want food mixers, toasters, can openers and juice squeezers, and these all end up as clutter on the countertop. But a mixing center, such as the one available from NuTone, can be built into the sink or counter that provides one motor, recessed under the top surface, with power control and spindle on which can be placed a food mixer, processor, knife sharpener, can opener, juice squeezer, or meat grinder. A toaster and paper caddy can be built into a wall. A microwave unit can be attached under a wall cabinet or be incorporated with a range hood. Even a radio or tv can be attached under wall cabinets. All

of these might mean more effective use of space.

8. Organize cabinet space. Several U.S. and foreign manufacturers offer a wealth of interior fittings and accessories for cabinets. They can provide a place for everything by utilizing all of the space in a cabinet rather than just the shelf surfaces.

9. Use the whole corners. Blind corner base cabinets are economical, but they waste potential storage space. They block off at least two cubic feet in a corner, and the space they provide is inaccessible. Instead, use corner cabinets with revolving shelves that make the entire corner usable.

10. Reach for the ceiling. The standard stock wall cabinet is 30 inches high, leaving 12 inches of space usually occupied by a soffit that is only decorative. Some custom wall cabinets are 31 or 32 inches. But they are also available in 42-inch heights. If your supplier doesn't make them that high, you can add a 12-inch cabinet above or below the standard 30-inch unit, bringing the cabinets all the way to the ceiling. True, shelves near the ceiling are not easily accessible. But there are many items that are stored in the kitchen that are seldom used, (the Christmas punch bowl, for example) and a kitchen ladder can make these items reachable for the few times they are needed.

These are only ten ways to add to kitchen space or to make space more usable. With a little thought, a clever designer can easily add ten more, to make kitchens more functional and homes sell faster. ■

be unused. At \$90 a square foot, that's expensive wasted space.

Cabinets might be a better choice for other reasons. For one, dust will be less of a factor because cabinets have doors. For another, interior cabinet fittings usually result in better organization and more efficient use of space than does open shelving. For another, cabinets can be much easier to install. Behind-the-wall supports for a pantry shelf system must be planned with working drawings provided to installers. Cabinets, on the other hand, follow standard installation.

The Walk-In Model

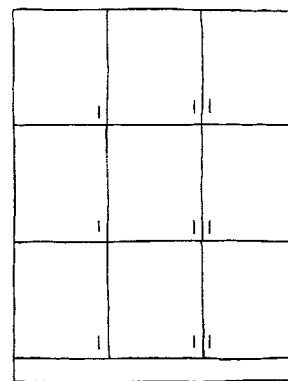
If you decide on a walk-in model, the very minimum for the room would be 4x4 feet.

The traditional pantry includes bookcase-type construction by the builder, but it requires good carpentry. Most builders have found it cheaper to buy cabinets than to tie up their own carpenters with this kind of finish work. Kitchen wall cabinets can be stacked to form shelving. The cabinets should be Euro-style (frameless) for more interior space and easier access.

If they are ordered with doors the dust and nearness problems are solved. If they are ordered without doors, which can save a lot of money, the addition of sliding doors should be suggested.

Storage space is only good if you can see it, so pay attention to lighting. In open shelving, you can use low-voltage lamps between the shelves—one lamp just under each shelf in the back corner. These can supplement the general light from a ceiling fixture. If you use stacked cabinets, place your lighting on the opposite wall with built-in wall brackets (see Kitchen & Bath column *NEB* 3/87) or wall sconces. And make sure your cabinets have white or off-white melamine or vinyl interiors to make the most of light reflection.

Creating pantry storage on one or two walls of a utility room or in a basement or attached garage presents much the same challenge as a walk-in pantry. But while the walk-in would be a feature only of a custom home, pantry storage in one of these other locations can be an attractive extra in a spec home.



For a functional pantry wall, stack nine frameless wall cabinets (each 30x24 inches by 12-inches deep) on a 6-inch toe-kick. Infinitely adjustable shelves give much more efficient storage space than fixed shelves.

One alternative some builders provide is shelving in the landing at the top of the basement stairs. It will be somewhat restricted, since the space is seldom more than about 3x3 feet. Six-inch-deep shelving from floor to

ceiling on the wall adjacent to the door can provide fairly good storage for canned and paper goods and will not extend beyond door framing. If you go to a more usable 9 inches deep, however, it might block movement of large objects such as furniture into or out of the basement.

On Display

If the final choices mean having pantry storage in view of the living space, then how you do it is even more significant, since the storage will be acting as important design elements. Corbels for any open shelving in the living are must be decorative parts of the design.

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If the final choice means having storage in view of the living space, keep in mind the storage will be acting as an important design element.

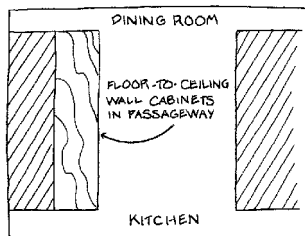
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And any open shelving for pantry use must be covered. Nobody wants the groceries on display.

The obvious answer, already suggested, is to use a bank of wall cabinets or factory-built pantry cabinets.

Pantry cabinets are offered by most cabinet manufacturers in widths of 18, 21, 24, 30, and 36 inches. Standard depths are 12, 13, 18, and 24 inches. Standard height is 84 inches, the soffit line. For kitchens where space doesn't allow for tall cabinets, there are also wall and base pantry cabinets that can be fitted in wherever the design allows.

Any of these might be fitted with revolving shelves or with various spin-out or fold-out compartments.



Pantry storage can be fit into many spaces—such as between two rooms in an extended doorway.

The builder might also plan an extended doorway between kitchen and dining room, with extra width to allow for cabinets or shelving. If the doorway is extended to 4-foot-long, and the width increased by 12 inches, it would allow for a bank of kitchen wall cabinets from floor to ceiling.

So, while the old walk-in has new appeal for the busy modern shopper, and belongs in the planning files of today's builders, remember also that pantry cabinets are, in fact, the modern version of the old walk-in. The new-style pantries provide the storage without taking the floor space that has become so expensive. ■

Patrick Galvin is the author of Kitchen Planning Guide for Builders, Designers and Architects, and the former editor and publisher of Kitchen & Bath Business.

THE RETURN of the PANTRY

With the current trend toward two-income families, people have less time to shop. Less shopping trips means greater volume per trip, and a greater need for storage. So it's not so surprising that a recent survey revealed a renewed interest in the old-fashioned, walk-in pantry.

The original pantry was a room located between the kitchen and dining room for arranging and serving food. But that purpose is a little gray at the temples for today's world. Though such a room might have some nostalgic value, a storage area between kitchen and garage, for easy unloading and then easy access, makes more sense. But at today's square-footage costs, where can pantry space come from?

Shelves Sometimes Better

We have several choices. We can really provide the old-fashioned walk-in room if the homeowner wants to pay for it. Or we can update the idea with modern products that supply the needed shelving but cut floor space requirements dramatically.



Walk-in pantries are nice but waste a lot of floor space. It's often better to use pantry-type cabinets in the main kitchen area or in other multi-use spaces.

At the design stage, addition of only one foot in one dimension might provide for a 6-foot bank (or more) of wall cabinets in the kitchen, floor to ceiling, which would give 48 cubic feet of storage in only a 6-square-foot footprint. Wall cabinets are 12 inches deep, and have the advantage of infinitely adjustable shelves. This makes the storage totally flexible, allowing even for gigantic packages of pet food. And the walk space is in the kitchen, not in a separate room, where most of the time, it would