

## Kitchen styles reflect room's role as focal point



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kitchen, as well as the types of cabinetry found throughout the home," said Kyes. "That way, we can tie cabinetry into the rest of the home."

When redesigning or building from the ground up, Struble noted that space and size dictate kitchen accessories.

"It's helpful to bring in ideas or magazine clippings," said

Struble. "That way, we can direct people toward a style that appeals to them."

However, home remodelers should try to have their new kitchen design blend in with other surroundings.

"We theme kitchens to tie in with the rest of the house," said Kyes. "In fact, we can theme kitchens to just about any taste — '30s, '50s, Arts and Crafts, Southwest or Victorian."

Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

Above left, the Jenn-Air ceran top is a smooth surface cooking stovetop that has become a popular customer choice for its easy cleaning and maintenance. Above, the Downdraft electric grill island application is available either as an electric (pictured) or gas unit and has a built-in venting system, which makes it ideal as a freestanding island range. Right, a variety of kitchen cabinet door samples. Most retailers allow customers to sign out a door sample to see how it looks with the rest of their home decor.

Record-Eagle/John L. Russell

## Finding the match for hand-crafted tiles

By The Associated Press

Ceramic tiles are a beautiful accent in many old homes. Whether decorative or plain, the richness of this material commonly lends an air of grace and charm to old entranceway floors, baths and fireplaces.

Like everything else in this world, some of these tiles may become damaged over time and need replacement. In most cases the answer isn't as easy as a trip to the local home center or tile store.

The difficulty in finding matches for old hand-painted, -printed or -carved tiles is obvious. Differences in the way tiles were made years ago make most of today's mass-produced tiles inappropriate replacements for even plain field tiles.

Color variations were common in the glaze of many old tiles. Two glaze variations that were typical of tiles produced 50 years ago are picture framing and crazing or crackle glazing. Picture framing occurs when the glaze puddles around the edges of the tile, outlining or framing it. The latter situation appears when the glaze doesn't actually fit the body of the tile but shrinks at different rates, causing cracks to occur in its face. Today, the pair would be considered color flaws.

Fortunately, both can be reproduced by some of the custom tile studios catering to this type of work. The first step in this process is sending the studio a good sample piece of the tile you're trying to replace. A good quality photo can help if you can only send a section of tile instead of an entire undam-

aged piece. Tile reproduction is a costly process, the major expense being the research and development for the glaze and clay body. Much trial and error is involved here, and the experts depend on their past experiences to guide them. Choosing a glaze color is not like choosing a paint color: What you see is not what you get. The unfired state of glaze is nothing like its fired state. Finding the right match of glaze and clay body is a slow process. Expect to pay from \$150 to \$300 for this work, unless the shop you choose has already developed a matching glaze for a past job and has this information in its files.

Once the color match is developed, the next step is creating the template or mold. Depending on how intricate or carved the tile is, you can pay any-

where from \$100 on up for this work. Matching hand-painted tiles runs from \$25 to \$100 each. Of course, pricing is not a static figure. Each situation is unique.

A less expensive alternative is to retile the entire area, whether it's a fireplace, foyer or bath. Some tile companies offer a line of historic designs that will blend in with your old-home decor.

If you're interested in tile history, you might want to contact The Tile Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 1850, Healdsburg, CA 95448.

This is a nonprofit, member-supported organization for research and preservation. If you want to learn more about this part of your old house, all they need from you is a good quality photograph of the tile and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

## Master baths becoming more customized

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best viewed as an individual process.

"Trends in northern Michigan are toward natural woods, while in other areas of the country white and off-white seems to be the rage. We see a lot of oak, hickory, pine, and maple cabinetry with either tile or wood floors," said Och.

In addition, many consumers are expanding existing bedrooms into bed and bath suites by removing a wall.

"We're seeing a lot of expansion in the bath area, with people putting in whirlpool tubs and pedestal sinks," said Och.

When remodeling, Och suggested consumers focus on functional features and designs, as well as overall color schemes. Color is a major focus for Scott Brady, owner/partner of

Brady Kitchen and Bath Renew in Garfield Township.

"People are tending toward brighter, lighter colors including a lot of off-white, bright white, and almond colors," said Brady.

The key is to lighten up areas that previously may have been shaded with the dark, rich tones of the 1970s and '80s.

"We have a process called speckling where we use a base color and speckle another color over top; it gives cabinetry a Corian look without the cost," said Brady.

For those remodeling an existing bath area, Brady suggested ceramic tile or sometimes hardwood floors for their durability in humid areas, as well as a spray-in coating for shower and bath.

Perhaps the most important

item to focus on when remodeling, however, is adequate ventilation, particularly in older homes. Lack of good ventilation can cause mold and mildew.

Brady also noted that the old clawfoot tubs are making a reappearance with chrome accessories.

At Pohlman's Interior Remodeling in Grawn, owner Dan Pohlman said customers have been wanting whirlpool and jacuzzi tubs and walk-in showers. Keeping safety in mind, some are converting bathtubs into showers with safety bars and seats.

"We use a lot of ceramic tile on floors and woods or solid polymer surfaces in cabinetry," said Pohlman. "Many of our polymers are made to emulate stone surfaces like granite or marble."

Always, however, he said, safety and accessibility to bath areas is important.

"Most people have ideas for bath accessories, but sometimes space just doesn't allow it," said Pohlman.

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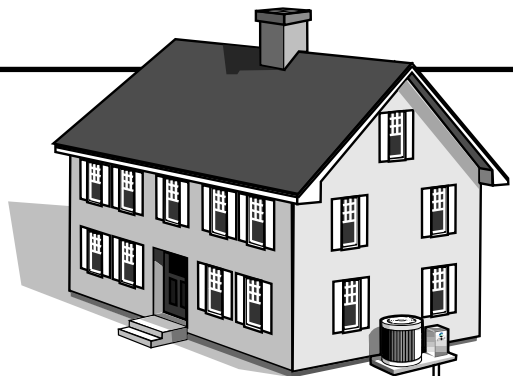
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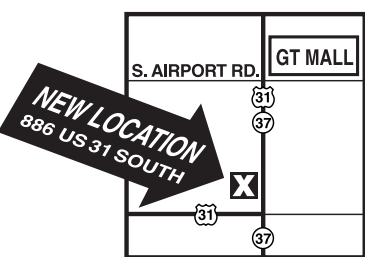
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