

Caviar Kitchen on a Corned Beef Budget

We all want one of those beautiful kitchens we see on TV. But, we can't all afford to spend that kind of money on our dream kitchen. So, how can we achieve the gourmet kitchen look without draining our pocket books? Look below for some great ideas!

Cabinets: Buy stock cabinets in lieu of semi-custom or custom cabinets. There are a lot of companies making really nice stock cabinets. I often recommend Kraftmaid cabinets. www.kraftmaid.com Stock cabinets are built in three inch increments. So, plan accordingly to eliminate wasted space.

Storage: If possible build a pantry, not pantry cabinets, but an actual walk-in pantry. You will be amazed how much money you will save. Finishing the space will cost a fraction of what pantry units cost. And, the storage space is amazing, even in a pantry that is only 5 feet by 5 feet. Get the food out of the cabinets and into the pantry.

Countertops: Select wisely, granite can range in price from \$50/sf to well over \$150/sf. If using a high end countertop material everywhere is out of the question, consider putting granite on the island and using laminate on the perimeter counters. You will achieve the "wow" factor of the granite without the cost.

Appliances: Professional grade appliances cost up to 3x more than standard appliances. Companies like GE, KitchenAid, and Kenmore are making professional looking appliances that are great performers. In fact, the current issue of Consumer Reports states, "Our tests of four expensive 36-inch-wide pro-style models did not show any major differences compared to conventional ranges in cooking performance..." In my kitchen, I just put in a set of fabulous KitchenAid appliances, the Architect Series, for ~\$7000. www.kitchenaid.com

Flooring: Choose a durable cost effective material for the floor. Remember kitchen floors really take a beating. You can pick up a good quality ceramic tile for less than \$2/sf at Home Depot or Lowes. People generally focus on the cabinets, counters, and appliances so don't blow your cash on an expensive floor.

Lighting: Lighting is the key to making your kitchen look really great. I recommend using recessed can lights for general lighting. Place the cans 40-48 inches apart and use a minimum of four. Select a few nice pendant lights to hang over an island or bar area. And last but not least, use puck lights for under cabinet lighting. Place the pucks no more that 30 inches apart. www.lampsplus.com

Complement of materials: In my last column, I mentioned using a good complement of materials. Select materials that go together and complement one another. Try to purchase all of your appliances from the same company and make sure they all have similar styling. Cabinet pulls should have a similar shape to the handles on the appliances selected. Take a cabinet door with you when you select your counters and tile to ensure things are looking good together. These simple moves will enhance the over all appearance of your kitchen creating a gourmet atmosphere.

I used these concepts on a recent renovation in Ft. Thomas. Take a look at my website www.aslawterarchitecture.com and check out the Ft. Thomas interior renovation project. You will see that the results can be beautiful.