

Improve form
and function
with artful
upgrades.

Few rooms in the house get as much wear as the kitchen, which means that in the realm of home improvement, nothing can match the excitement of a brand new kitchen, or simply an improved kitchen.

"I had asked Mike Gascho, the owner of Woodmasters Custom Cabinetry, to build a kitchen for me, and you would not believe the beauty of that kitchen. I mean it is awesome," says David Gray. He and his wife, Maureen, recently moved into a new home in an addition to the Watkins Glen subdivision, north of Lafayette.

Gray is most excited about the detail of the new kitchen. For example, shutting a drawer is never a struggle because the door doesn't slam. The drawers get to a certain point, and they close themselves. This hardware is made by Blum, Inc., and is known as Blumotion, notes Gascho, who installed this hardware in Gray's house.

A KITCHEN FOR KEEPS

David and Maureen Gray's new kitchen combines functionality and aesthetics.



"You shut the drawer, and it stops about three inches before it closes, and the drawer goes in very slowly. That way, if you have children, it doesn't shut on their fingers. It makes it a lot quieter in the kitchen," he says.

Peg Downham, who moved into her new house in rural Lafayette in November 2008, chooses her trash compactor as the best item in the kitchen for practical reasons.

"It's time saving, and because I also recycle, I can wait three weeks before I need to take the trash out," she says. "It's safe. There is a lock on there, so if you have little kids, they can't punch the buttons." The trash compactor, which is 15 inches wide, resides in the island—tucked away but easily accessible.

Downham did the design for her kitchen, drawing from 20 years of experience working for a family business—Downham Custom Homes, which also does remodeling in addition to new construction.

A kitchen is for cooking, and electric induction surface cooking is the latest and greatest technology, says Ben Lierman, a chef at Clark Appliance Showcase in Indianapolis. Appliances can be ordered from a Clark Appliance showroom in Indianapolis and delivered to Greater Lafayette within a few days of the order.

"The cooking surface, instead of generating heat, actually generates a magnetic field, and it creates heat from a magnetic field as opposed to from a heating element, which means that the surface itself does not get hot, but the pot does," explains Lierman.

Consumers have to buy a cook top for induction cooking, but most standard cookware will work on it.

"Induction cooking has really changed everything," he stresses. "So what happens is about 95 percent of the energy that the cook top produces, ends up heating the

food as opposed to gas, you would have about 35 percent of that gas flame actually heating the food, and everything else is released into the kitchen." The process is much faster than gas or electric overall, and much greener, Lierman adds. The induction cook tops are made by several different manufacturers, but only a few currently make an induction range.

"However, everything is going to move in this direction, for sure," Lierman says. "Depending on the amount of liquid and other variables, you could say it's two to five times faster to boil a pot of water."

Microwaving is moving into a new era too with a combination microwave/convection oven that can perform all of the traditional functions of a microwave, but it also can grill steaks and chicken with an oven-cooked taste rather than a microwave taste, Lierman explains. And again, speed is the focus, with these hybrid microwave/convection ovens cooking about eight times faster than a conventional oven. The price range on the product varies between \$800 and \$2,800.

Moving on to the rest of the core appliances in the kitchen—the most technically sophisticated dishwashers on the market today use a lot less water to clean the dishes.

"We sell a lot of European-made dishwashers in our higher-end kitchens," Lierman says. "The Europeans for years have focused ▶



Top: A combination microwave/convection oven goes beyond the traditional microwave by offering a grilling feature and faster cook times. Get them built into cabinets to allow for more counter space and extra storage.

Bottom: This ceramic sink is in-set into a granite countertop to produce a seamless design and easy to clean surface.



Granite countertops are beautiful yet durable.

on the water usage and energy consumption, and this focus is newer in the states.”

Better lighting including LED lighting has improved functionality of refrigerators being sold, so that you can find what you need faster.

The combination of functionality and aesthetics is what generates the excitement of a new kitchen, and a beautiful floor can transform the overall look of the room. Ceramic and stone tile, and hardwood are the current trends in kitchen flooring, says Devin Miller, sales representative at Miller’s Flooring America, with stores in Lafayette and Logansport. For consumers who prefer the traditional vinyl flooring, a new product on the market known as flex-floor is easily installed and requires little maintenance.

“The floor doesn’t have to be as level and there is no grout, like you would have with tile,” notes Miller.

Granite countertops provide a unique look that has durability, says Bob Greives, the owner and operator of Greives Granite & Tile, based in West Lafayette.

“It’s like a piece of wood. It’s something that man can’t duplicate,” explains Greives, who designed and installed the countertops in Gray’s new kitchen. Usually, his customers are surprised by the choices available. He works with customers in and around Greater Lafayette.

“The countertops are very lovely and almost impossible to destroy,” he says.

When considering the overall aesthetics of the kitchen, the paint—color, texture and style—is an important component. For example, Downham has glazed painted wood on her cabinets, for a distressed, or worn and antique look.

In modern kitchens you’ll find the latest technology for cooking, but it can also be a place to experience the most up-to-date technology for information and entertainment. In Gray’s kitchen, Gascho installed a flat-screen TV above their cook top range.

“So we can sit at the island, comfortably look up at the television, and enjoy TV in the morning,” Gray says. ❁

For more information and ideas, try these Web sites:

- kitchens.com
- downhamcustomhomes.com
- clarkappliance.com
- lafayettewoodmaster.com
- millersflooringamerica.com

Peg Downham designed her own kitchen to reflect her style and personality.



Top: Peg Downham's microwave is actually built into cabinets in her island, making it easy to reach and freeing up more above-counter space.

Bottom: A built-in trash compactor is practical and makes recycling a breeze. It is easily accessible yet concealed and out of the way.



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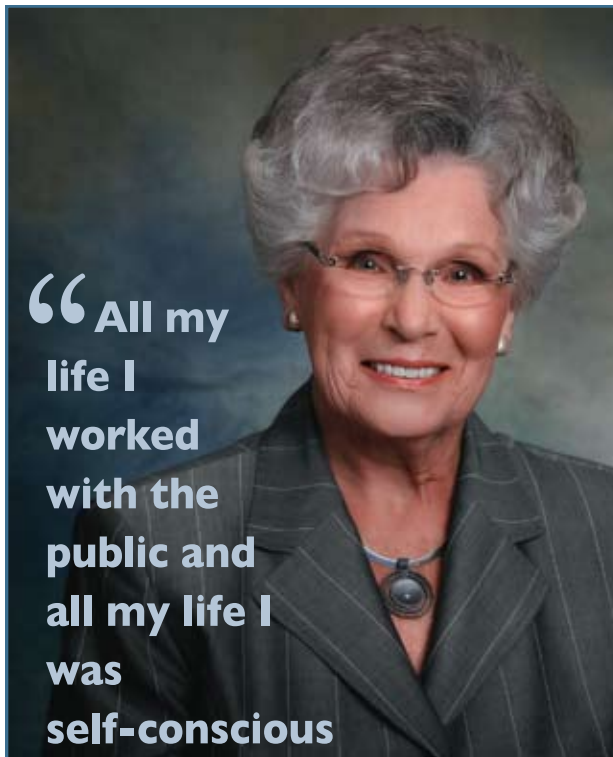
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