



Tasteful Designs

6 Creative Kitchens

BY LACEY JORDAN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN W. McDONALD

Kitchens of old were boxy spaces strategically separated from other living areas. But today's kitchens are no longer thought of as individual rooms. Instead they are routinely regarded as part of a larger whole, with artful elements seamlessly integrated into a home's design.

These days, a kitchen is the social center of the home, providing so much

more than a place for cooking and cleaning. It's where our day begins and ends, where family and friends gather for conversation, and where we plan everything from entertaining to paying bills.

Because kitchens serve several needs, homeowners tend to spend more time (and money) improving their kitchen than any other room.

In the Wiregrass especially, cooking and entertaining is an art. Speaking with local cooks, we found kitchens that exhibit open, thoughtful designs with sleek storage and smart tools. To facilitate Southern hospitality, these kitchens achieve the perfect blend of fashion and function.

As an interior designer, Deidra Laird of Designs by Deidra knew exactly what she wanted when remodeling her kitchen—a vibrant space ideal for entertaining.

So she enlisted the help of professionals and within seven months spiced up her and her husband Wesley's kitchen design.

She recruited Glen Wood to tear out the old floors, Bob Taylor to layout the new Turkish travertine flooring and Harry Wigham to create a bar area. With the new floors laid and a workable design in hand, Deidra and Wigham started construction on the bar. The resulting lavish nook is complete with a hammered, rollover copper sink, a refrigerator to chill wines and carefully antiqued cabinetry.

Having some experience choosing granite, Deidra opted to pick a slab from the showroom rather than make a decision based on a small sample. She originally wanted Crimson Cream but wasn't willing to delay the renovations to join a waiting list. So she went to Southside Granite's showroom in Destin and found a choice piece. "The Crimson Gold was new and absolutely perfect for my room," Deidra recalls. "They made a template and let me choose where they would cut the slab, so I knew exactly what I was getting."

Using unique materials like glass and copper, Deidra created an unusual back-

splash to complement the colorful countertops. Usually confined to bathroom décor, glass tiles have made a comeback since their heyday in the 60s and 70s. "I guess it's the decorator in me that likes to use new things in unexpected locations," Deidra notes. She found the tiles in Clay, Metal and Stone in Montgomery and Brian Kelley installed them along with the copper over the range.

Without compromising the backsplash design, Deidra's friend Steve Pierce incorporated a pot filler over

the stove top to reach four of the six burners. The water instantly heats up to 200 degrees, perfect for sterilizing or making a quick pot of tea or bowl of oatmeal. This and other amenities, such as the couple's large, central island, simplify food preparation for Deidra and Wesley, who both enjoy cooking and entertaining.

Another vital element when designing the new kitchen was color. From the lively green walls to the colorful works of art on display, Deidra surrounds herself in bright, cheerful shades. "I didn't want anything monochromatic," Deidra says. "I love the kitchen's color and vibrancy."

Small decorative details such as the fleur-de-lis pulls, imprints and toppers add another element of personal style. "We love to travel," Deidra says. "Some of our favorite stops have been New Orleans and France. So the emblem just fit."

Like the Lairds themselves, their kitchen exhibits color, flair and plenty of personality.

