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Articles

A Quarterly Newsletter for Connoisseurs of Beautiful Kitchens and Baths

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Professional Design Firms Perform

For most Americans, the kitchen brings the entire home together. It is one of the most versatile rooms, meaning it not only receives a lot of wear and tear, but is also one of the most complicated and expensive rooms to redesign.

Remodeling a kitchen can also be a big risk. If it is done wrong, you may not have a second chance. Therefore, it makes sense to seek out the most qualified kitchen professional in your area, even if the scope of the job seems small. Here are five top reasons to choose a professional kitchen specialist, such as Artisan Kitchens and Baths at Appliance Associates over another source.

Information Resource

Knowing what you want going into a project helps both you and the design firm. By doing your homework before the actual remodeling, you will be able to update yourself on the newest innovations, find what is available and suitable for your home and have a better idea of what to expect throughout the process.

Professional kitchen firms are an excellent pre-job resource for information. Their educational showrooms demonstrate not only the latest product innovations and technologies, but also functional design concepts.

Needs Analysis

One of the most important steps for a positive outcome is realizing up front what your needs are. A professional kitchen specialist, through asking questions and visiting the home, will help you discover your exact wants, needs and limitations.

The time given to this appointment allows the specialist to better understand your family, lifestyle and project goals. This is crucial for at least three reasons. First, it helps develop better design solutions within your budget. Second, it eliminates mistakes and oversights that can lead to unwanted surprises and/or delays. And third, it will help you determine whether this is someone you would like to work with over the next few months.



Professional Services

A kitchen is constructed onsite from hundreds of material components according to a set of plans that reflect your dreams. And, there is no actual way of seeing how your kitchen will look or perform until the project is completed. Therefore a lot of trust involved and you will want to work with someone worthy and qualified to take on such a responsibility.

Business Integrity

Simply put, professional kitchen firms do not promise more than they can deliver; often they deliver more than was expected. The proof is in the testimonials and referrals of their many satisfied clients, which serve as a precious asset to the growth of their business.

Professional firms are sensitive to the disruptions of normal routines that remodeling can impose on a household. They provide information in advance to help prepare your family, and afterward they send out evaluation forms to grade their performance and make sure you are satisfied.

Best Value

It is the design and a company's services that will have the greatest impact on the quality and value of your investment, rather than the size or choice of brand-name products. Brand-name products are only as good as the professionals who technically understand them, properly use them, accurately order them, properly handle and deliver them and correctly install them. This requires talent, experience, organization and diligence.

If there is a difference of price between a professional design firm and other sources, it will be largely due to the quality of staff, the organization of the company, the breadth of services performed and the management systems utilized to control the number of details that go into even the smallest project.

When you are making an investment in your home that will be with you for years to come and make a difference in the value of your home, it is always

beneficial to get the job done right. Choosing a professional kitchen design firm will help you save you money in the long run and may end up being the best insurance policy you have ever purchased.

What's New?

Appliance Associates of Buffalo is proud to announce the opening of Artisan Kitchens and Baths. Our new 2nd floor loft showroom is just the beginning of our extensive remodeling project that will bring New York City designs and products to Buffalo. And it brings savings to you, as most of our original showroom displays are available at tremendous savings.

Artisan Kitchens and Baths is now the EXCLUSIVE supplier for WELLBORN cabinets. In addition, you can now find the BERTCH Bath cabinet line, to complement the BERTCH Custom, Legacy and Marketplace cabinetry currently on display.

Artisan Kitchens and Baths, along with SILESTONE, the world's leading quartz surface, is running a limited time promotion offering a FREE, Italian made sink, facet and soap dispenser with the purchase of 35 sq. ft. of SILESTONE countertops.

Kitchen Cabinets Go Everywhere!



Kitchen cabinets are not just for the kitchen anymore. You can now find them running down hallways, surrounding libraries, in media rooms, stocking the pantries and even in bedrooms storing clothing and other items. Home offices are also becoming more efficient and attractive with the addition of new cabinetry placement.

Early designers of the 1960's often used the same cabinets in the kitchen and baths with a matching false front on hall linen closets to cut costs for the builder.

This lack of diversity became a trend for many designers and has stayed that way until recently. Today, however, designers are using their knowledge and skills to coordinate the entire house, using a variety of woods and styles to visually divide the space. By using cabinets that remain similar to the kitchen cabinets, cabinetry in the family room and other rooms can compliment one another and enhance the flow of the entire house.

Cameron Snyder, owner of kitchen Concepts in Norwell, MA feels so strongly about this new direction of cabinet designs that he has developed

an additional focus for his firm. Roomscapes allows Snyder to maintain the close relationships he has developed with clients by also designing bedroom suites, entertainment rooms and home offices, while keeping cabinetry a top priority.

To tie in the kitchen, many companies are offering specially crafted pieces that blend from room to room. "Keeping up with the fast changing technology field is vital for a designer," says Ralph Lackner, President of Jay Rambo Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His company offers a separate line of home entertainment units available in many of the styles and finishes contained in their vast semi-custom cabinet line. He is updated monthly on new designs in audio and video equipment so that he can help bridge accommodation changes throughout the home.

Other cabinet companies, such as Craftmaid in Reading, PA, now manufacture high quality pieces that can be designed easily into all rooms of the home. Craftmaid carries a selection of exotic woods and finishes and also offers beautiful hand carvings for those that desire cabinetry custom made to their liking.

Even more cost effective cabinets can be designed for a variety of rooms by choosing a designer who has experience using stock cabinets in such a manner. He or she can help you make a distinct difference in the look of your cabinets. Your designer can also coordinate your favorite finish to match the moldings with your new cabinets' finish.

Some professionals, such as Chuck Johnson of Vanity Flair in Canton, GA, go to even further lengths to make

your cabinetry stand out. As an experience furniture maker, he watched for years as designers tried to use furniture pieces as cabinets, often producing what he felt was an awkward and ill-proportioned look. He began designing and building vanities and kitchen islands to "bring the furniture into the kitchen and bath" and help resolve such problems. "Today," he says, "the uniqueness of our pieces still makes a statement in a room!"

New ideas and advancements in cabinetry design are opening doors for all rooms, centering around the kitchen and creatively extending the look throughout the rest of the home. The kitchen will always be a main part of each house—a place for conversation, relaxation, entertainment, and more. With new directions in cabinetry design and matching cabinetry that blends modern ideas with traditional quality, the charm and beauty of the kitchen can now spread endlessly throughout every aspect of the home.

The Latest Trends

The newest styles and trends in cabinet design will help give your home a modern look by combining quality features with the latest innovations and ideas.

One of the hottest up-and-comers in cabinet door styles is a warm, clean, uncluttered look that combines elements of contemporary, Asian-influence with Arts and Crafts.

Glazes have gone mainstream, but contemporary doors more frequently feature a natural finish, such as a high-gloss varnish.

Maple remains the top wood species for higher-end cabinetry, but the richness of cherry is coming on strong. Red birch also reflects the consumers' desire for warmer, darker woods.

Overall, darker colors are the trend, with new glazes and stains in grey tones such as pewter and charcoal providing a fresh new choice that works particularly well with stainless steel.

With painted doors, white is still the most popular choice, though adventure picks in colors such as green and yellow occur on the high end. Black is increasingly popular as an accent color.

The furniture look, with such details as appliqués, corbels and arch valances, is still a steady seller.

Metallic onlays on cabinet doors provide an adventure pick in the high end.

Physical distressing such as cracking, wormholes, bird pecking, rub-throughs and sand-overs is another hot trend on the high end.

In the mass market, thermafoil laminates in warm and earth tones and wood grains are a popular alternative to white.

Micro wood fiber veneers over thermafoil are a new mass market item, providing the look of real wood at a much lower price point.



Finding Firms Providing The Greatest Customer Value

Few people have the time or money to take on a kitchen remodeling job themselves. So, the first step is to hire a professional- but where does one begin and which firm represents the best value?

Kitchens do not come ready to test and mass manufacture. Each one is individual, complicated to design and demand countless product decisions. The key to the perfect kitchen is to select just the right element from the vast assortment of materials available, and to put it in just the right place.

Because your time and money are valuable, consider these basic criteria to help you evaluate each firm you are considering—before making your decision.

Appearance of Showroom or Studio

The company's showroom is a good start in discovering what the company's products and design capabilities are all about. You'll notice the presence or absence of unique designs and whether there is a wide or narrow range of styles.

Sales Pitch vs. Educational Approach

A company that puts your needs first will ultimately do the best job. Are they listening to you before recommending products, or are they pushing a certain product before even knowing what you want? A good company provides you with enough information to allow you to make your own intelligent decision, acting more like a facilitator that helps you weigh the advantages of products, services and design concepts.

Range of Qualities

The cheapest product may not be the best value, and the most expensive might not either. The best companies will offer a choice so that their customers can find the best value in a specific quality grade.

Personnel

Products are only as good as the people behind them, so a knowledgeable staff is key. Find out how long the designers and installers have been with the company and what they do to stay up-to-date. Making sure that a professional has attended a class or seminar in the last year is not too much to demand.

Documentation

Paperwork must be complete and accurate, including documents like floorplan and elevations, product specification, details of service and an agreement of details, terms and conditions. Making sure that all documentation is in order reduces the risk of error; oversight, misunderstanding and extra costs.

Specialized Services

Attention to detail during all phases is vital and, again, the independent kitchen design firms outdo the home

centers. There are several factors to help you gauge specialized services, including:

- **A thorough needs analysis in your home**
- **An interactive budgeting system that can speedily generate a cost estimate**
- **A routine schedule of cost options that give you flexibility in the final details**
- **A thorough technical check of plans and specifications prior to ordering**
- **Communication, including written notification of selections to be made, orders, and the start date**
- **Free publications to guide you through the inevitable disruption of normal activities during the project**
- **Pre-job conference where the staff reviews details and scheduling**
- **Plastic coverings and rug runners placed for protection before job begins**
- **Meeting with you toward end of project to tie up all loose ends**
- **Job performance evaluation for your comments, assessments and recommendations after project completion**

Business Integrity

When making such an investment in your home, you want to know that the firm you choose will actually do what they promise, and deal with unforeseen events in a responsible manner. Look for companies that have solid reputations, appealing warranties and written endorsements.

Personal Connection

It is only natural that you will enjoy the project more if you like the people you are working with. Do your homework and use the criteria listed above to fully evaluate the companies you are considering, but don't overlook personal relations as well. If you have design tastes in common with a specific designer or have a friend in the business, it may ease the process and help make it a more enjoyable for everyone involved. Be sure, however, to base your final decision on value, not necessarily price.

Make sure that the firm you end up choosing has an overall high rating in these eight criteria, weighing more strongly on those that are most important to you and your family. Any extra investments you make will no doubt pay off in family enjoyment, quality, and overall value of your home for years to come.



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See what

ARTISAN
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can do for you

INSIDE!

A Range for Every Home

Ranges have come a long way over the years. What started as open fires and gathering places for food and family have become a modern luxury for many homes. Professional-quality ranges are in high demand for many kitchens, but not all of them are of enormous size or standard colors. Ranges can now fit in even smaller kitchens and can come in colors as bright as red, yellow and turquoise. There is so much variety that ranges can literally be matched to your personal cooking style and preferred features.

Today's ranges can do almost anything. Viking Range Corporation's 36-inch self-cleaning gas range can evenly brown cookies and breads with its convection baking. It also contains a 1500-degree infrared broiler that allows one to sear a steak to perfection, while still containing a VariSimmer™ setting for the lowest and most delicate cooking. And the stylistic choices are endless. From the number of burners and features to a color that matches each kitchen and personality, this range has a little of everything.

Wolf Appliance, recently purchased by Sub-Zero, is known for its signature ranges. Marked by red knobs and equipped with infrared technology, these professional-quality ranges come in an array of configurations. After choosing between stainless-steel and black, the range can be customized to 30, 36, 48 or 60 inches, depending on the size and space of the individual kitchen design. Yet small or big, each of these ranges comes standard with both inner and outer

flames and produce from 5,000 to 16,000 BTUs of heat for an extremely grand cooking spectrum. They even re-ignite automatically.

Kitchen Aid's Architect™ Series of stylish appliances has expanded to include a Pro Line™ selection of cooking products offering professional quality and performance. These include dual fuel ranges in 30 and 36 inches that provide cast-iron, full surface grates and sealed burners. With BTUs from 600 to 15,000 and a precise, balanced combination of gas and electric cooking, these ranges will get any job done.

There is even an option for those who do not necessarily wish to have a range inside the kitchen. Viking outdoor grills make it possible to have a commercial-style range on your patio! Featuring 25,000 BTU stainless-steel burners and a lifetime warranty, these ranges come in 30, 41 and 53-inch widths. They can be built into a custom enclosure or you can use the optional Viking stainless-steel cart.

With the endless features and technology to choose from, adding a new professional-quality range to your home has never been easier. And with the variety colors and sizes, there is no longer any need to compromise the style and charisma of your kitchen or home. Review your cooking habits and personalized needs, and talk to a professional before choosing the range that will add not only value, but years of satisfaction to your home.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROYAL CABINET COMPANY

