



J.L. TIPPETT
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MAJOR KITCHEN REMODEL

If the three most important words in real estate are "location, location, location," the next most important must be "kitchens sell houses." While front porches and living rooms age gracefully, kitchens get old. Combine the charm of an older home with the style and efficiency of a new kitchen, and you have an instant winner on the market.

"As time demands become greater in all our lives and the buying public seems to have more disposable income, many buyers have little time or patience to deal with buying a house in need of updating," says Steve Anderson, a Portland, Ore. real estate agent. "Kitchens are extremely important to buyers looking in today's market."

Sales agents predict that a major kitchen remodel, with an average cost of \$29,791, will return \$25,918 at resale - an 87 percent payback.

Tracking Kitchen Trends

Back to basic family values, a phrase tossed around by politicians, is creeping into kitchen remodeling. As a result, many people are returning to simpler, more comfortable kitchen designs. "The last environment we can control is our own homes," says Kathleen Donohue, author of "Kitchen and Bath Theme Design: An Architectural Styling Guide." The demand (for kitchen remodels) is high and people want space that suits them exactly. Instead of a room limited to meal preparation, the kitchen is a room for congregating. "The kitchen is becoming the new living room," Donohue says, "a room filled with furniture, not lined with cabinets."

In addition, time is a valued commodity to many homeowners. "The time we spend on something so mundane as fixing meals is turned into quality time." Donohue says. Design elements, appliances and other amenities that can achieve this have surged in popularity. She predicts hearth-like stoves and hoods that families can gather around will begin appearing in more kitchens.

While some kitchens feature appliances as focal points, other consumers are looking for completely integrated kitchens. Stainless steel continues to be a popular choice, according to Donohue.

Even cabinets - a kitchen necessity - are getting a makeover, and these new options aren't limited to high-end kitchens. "People are starting to value furniture-like cabinetry at all price points," Donohue says, "The day of the cookie cutter kitchen is over with."

Kitchen Design Trends:

- Convenient pot fillers at the cooktop and range
- Refrigerator, freezer and warming drawers
- Ceramic tile used to frame windows and mirrors
- Paneling on the sides of islands
- Hand-painted and decorative tiles as accents