

## INTRODUCTION

There is little question that the kitchen is one of the most important rooms in anyone's home. Whether it's the social hub where family and friends gather or a work center where homework and other small building projects are completed—the kitchen is the nucleus of the modern family's home. In such an important area of the home, it's often the stimulus and focus of home renovations and new home construction. Playing such a key role in everyday living, the kitchen should be designed with care and precision. Knowing where to start, however, can be a daunting task. The kitchen should reflect your personality and lifestyle. In order to achieve this, let's look at two important areas: desired style and function and also planning and scheduling.

### Kitchen Styles

Leaf through any custom home magazine and you'll find a wide variety of styles: Art Deco, Asian, Classical, contemporary, Country, French Colonial, Lodge, Mission, Modern, Rustic, Shaker, Traditional, Transitional, Tudor, Tuscan, and Victorian—just to name a few. Some are classic, others are more traditional. Some will grab your eye and make you long to spend time there, others will do nothing for you and still others will make you want to spend time in the kitchen. Because there are so many different styles, it's important to narrow your choices so that you can choose a design that fits your preferences and lifestyle. So how do you know that style is right for you? The "Kitchen Style Questions" on this page can help get you moving in the right direction. Jot down the answers to these questions to identify what style of kitchen you really want.

Having a kitchen that looks great is nice. But your kitchen also needs to work well. That means it needs to be designed to fit your personality and lifestyle. The questions below will help you consider your desired kitchen's function and style.

#### Kitchen Style - things to consider

- What is my general sense of style?
- Do I gravitate toward contemporary things? Or do I prefer things that are traditional? Maybe country, rustic or Art Deco?
- What's the style in the rest of my home? If the rest of the house is traditional, do I want to carry that style over into the kitchen?
- Are there things I hate about my current kitchen?
- Is there an overall theme in the house that I want to bring into the kitchen?
- Are there particular colors or color combinations I like?
- How much natural versus artificial lighting do I want?
- What kind of fixtures have I always wanted?

#### Kitchen Function - things to consider

- What are the one or two things about my current kitchen that drive me crazy concerning placement, lighting, and function?
- How does my family use the kitchen? Is it a place for cooking? Is it a gathering place? Is it a homework haven? Do we do laundry here? Are bills paid here? Do we need to allow for a computer? Will we be eating some meals in the kitchen?
- How much storage space will we really need? Would a pantry be on your wish list?
- What appliances (and what kind) do we really want? Do we want/need any of the following: range, oven, cook-top, microwave, coffee/espresso machine, freezer, dishwasher, trash compactor, and washer/dryer? Which appliances fit well with the overall look of the kitchen?
- What kind of flooring do we want? What kind of traffic do we have in the kitchen? Are there pets or young children to consider?
- How do I want my workspace organized? Do I want an island? Do I need multiple sinks?
- What kind of cooking do we normally do? Do we need to accommodate "gourmet" style preparation?
- Do we entertain a lot? Will we need to make sure we allow room for "observers" in the kitchen?
- Is a separate wet bar something you could use?

*How does my family use the kitchen?  
Is it a place for cooking? Is it a gathering place? Is it a homework haven?*

## PLANNING and SCHEDULING

The actual plan when working with a professional—creating the blueprint—is relatively easy once you know what you want. Figuring out the exact dimensions and how everything fits together really cannot happen until you have defined the overall vision of what you want to see in your new kitchen.

Once you have the general concept in place, you should sit down with your builder and designer and begin talking about plans. Make sure they understand exactly what you want. They will be able to advise you and steer you away from both structural and financial problems. You can sketch out on paper how you want things to look and their relative placement. The professionals can then take your ideas and turn them into accurate drawings.

Once you have seen a draft of your blue print, you will likely ask what every homeowner wants to know (after "How much is this going to cost?"): "How long will this take?" The answer? "It all depends." No two projects are the same, and there can be many different variables. Your home remodeling experts at Midwest Stone Source and Design Studio will be able to provide you with an outline and specific expectations so that you will have an accurate idea of how long your project will take and investment needed. Creating the kitchen of your dreams can be a daunting, but exciting adventure!

*How much is this going to cost?  
How long will my project take?*