

SHOWCASING BC & ALBERTA'S ARCHITECTS AND INTERIOR DESIGNERS

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DESIGN

Q U A R T E R L Y

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VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN VISITOR CENTRE
ARCHITECT WALTER FRANCL | KITCHEN & BATH | FURNITURE | FLOORING
2012 WOOD WORKS! BC AWARDS

kitchen hardware

BY GLEN PELOSO



I'm always surprised that clients think of the kitchen in terms of the aesthetics only with no real thought to the functions of the space. I often find myself repeating the same phrase: "Form follows function." The kitchen is first and foremost a place to be able to prepare meals. In working with a series of professional chefs, you quickly realize that "the look" of the kitchen rarely comes into the discussion at all; it is just the function and the flow of the kitchen.

There have been huge innovations in the kitchen, largely because the kitchen is turning into the hub of the home and the requirements are more demanding. At Interzum in Europe, there were several new materials for drawer fronts, including stone both natural and manmade to create a seeming "block" that could be both a functioning kitchen and a furniture piece. There was a concept kitchen that was presented originally just at the idea stage but was later turned into reality. In a few words, it could best be described as a kitchen intersecting with an iPad. (If you're

really interested search concept kitchen 2015 on Youtube and see it in action).

So much has changed about the way the kitchen is used and as a result the technology adjusts to the way that we live. We now shop differently than in the past and buy much more in bulk. The weight that we now require our drawers and slide out shelves to hold has increased significantly. At the Interior Design show in Toronto, Hettich introduced a slide called Arci tech which is capable of handling up to 200lbs of weight on a full extension sliders, while still maintaining the soft close. With kitchens that are coming out of Europe made sometime with stone drawer fronts, the ability of the slides to deal with that amount of weight will become more important. All of the slides Hettich makes also have a self clean feature and metal bearings.

The kitchen can be a dirty dusty place, particularly if you are a baker with the flour and sprays that get used. Over the life of the kitchen, slides of a lesser quality will start to

fail. Naturally there are other suppliers of slides, some that you can find sold at big box stores but none will have the engineering and the precision the Germans have come to be known for.

It has now become unusual to see stationary shelves on kitchens of any quality anymore. The full extension slides allows you to see what you have stored in the kitchen from last week's shopping trip, when you are about to prepare a meal. Naturally the soft close has become a standard with any good quality manufacturer as well. The depth of drawers has also changed as has the widths. The suppliers that offer prefabricated and integrated systems allow manufacturers to keep costs down. Without having to customize each drawer, driving up the cost to the consumer, the integrated systems allow the same drawer box to be adjusted to suit. Another great addition to the drawers and shelves is a system to organize the interiors and the adjustability of those organizers as your needs change over time. When

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you consider the quantities and variety of foods that a young family may purchase as opposed to the requirements of a household full of adults, the adjustability factor is vital to the longevity of the kitchen. Inserts which may or may not fit the drawers you have were available in the past as well as customized systems which added significantly to the cost, so the combination of adjustability and custom fit is very helpful to the cook. Combine that with LED interior cabinet lights and you are one happy chef.

Another prominent option is automated drawer opening and closing systems. The need for this feature as our population ages is increasing significantly. It is also something that makes sense so that you don't have to try to open doors and drawers while your hands are covered in "cooking." In the concept kitchen the cupboard shelves ascend into a



box above along with the oven, therefore using the space that would normally be difficult for us to reach, leaving the lower spaces available for accessible storage.

To think that it wasn't all that long ago that our grandmothers were shocked by the idea of a "dishwasher" and were exclaiming "what will they think of next". With all of the incred-

ible advances in the last few years, you have to wonder what they will think of next! ☐

Glen Peloso has been designing spaces for commercial, corporate and residential clients for two decades. He makes regular appearances on various magazine styled TV & radio shows across Canada.

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