

# new home + condo guide

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## The new kitchen

# Baked-in beauty and *function*



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**H**as the long-standing trend of the all-white kitchen finally fizzled out? I've recently seen some bolder trends bubbling up to the surface, as is the case in this dramatic kitchen design, which became a showpiece in a

brand-new build that I recently undertook with my team. The ask: A sophisticated space, anything but common white or neutral. Here's where we went with it.

We were starting from the ground up, and as a designer, that's an ideal scenario, giving us complete flexibility with our design direction. As with all our

projects, our clients – in this case a young professional couple with two young children – guided the concept for the space. They were big on entertaining and, like the thoughtful hosts they were, they wanted their space to make a big splash. At the same time, their busy lives demanded practicality and integrated ease.



## pro-tip

If you'll be sharing meals at the island or breakfast bar, allow 24 inches per person to accommodate each place setting with some wiggle room for elbows. If the island will also function as a prep area, factor in a four-foot-wide path around it for foot traffic.

We looked to high-contrast elements to make the statement our clients were hoping for. We maintained the light, contemporary colour palette of a gentle hint of grey, and dressed it up with high-contrast black elements. These included the dark-veined marble countertops and backsplash, and an amazing dark obsidian range with chrome inserts that echoed the hue of the central island – an instant focal point and natural gathering place within this open-concept kitchen and living area.

When planning your kitchen (and hopefully you're working with a professional designer), choose your focal point first. Then, plan everything else around it. In most kitchens, the main focus is the range hood and island, which anchor the entire composition, and are organic attractions from both a style and function perspective. Choose something that stands out, but still aligns with the overall esthetic of the space.

The kitchen island requires some special consideration, since it's a central element, physically and in terms of use. Determine what the primary purpose of your island will be in your kitchen, since it can serve many different functions, from food preparation, dining and entertaining, to storage. Not only will this inform



### tip:

If your island is dark, try to use a lighter floor tile to create contrast and make the island "pop."

the specs, but it will affect other aspects of your kitchen as well.

In this kitchen design, we maximized the island by satisfying all three.

Our clients requested a raised breakfast bar to visually conceal the cooking clutter at counter level when entertaining guests. This allows visitors to sit and still contribute to the conversation, removed from the mess.

While we're talking function, storage is a recurring theme in this kitchen design, and this was a high priority for us. The kitchen can get cluttered quickly with all the action it sees on a daily basis. To get ahead of the mess, we included features such as built-in spice racks, pull-out garbage bins, extra-deep pots-and-pans drawers tucked underneath the cooktop, and a Lazy Susan in corner cabinets that maximize every

inch while keeping kitchen essentials conveniently on hand.

Last, but not least, lighting was an important consideration – natural and artificial. Aside from functional necessity, lighting also creates ambience and highlights thoughtful features. Avoid blocking natural light that streams through windows and doorways, keeping sightlines open. Then, get creative with your lighting plan. Along with standard pot lights, add pendants, under- and in-cabinet lighting and even wall sconces, to add interest.

In this kitchen, we went against traditional upper cabinets window-side for that very reason, opting instead for a simple stone ledge.

A new kitchen is a big investment. Ensure you're working with a professional designer so all your wants and needs are "baked in" the design plan.



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