

Bath and Kitchen Trends

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

Many real estate agents will tell you that kitchens and bathrooms sell houses. If you're making renovations, these rooms will give you more bang for your buck when it comes to resale value.

Here are some bathroom and kitchen trends that are hot right now.

GRAYS

Gray is showing up in every room of the house, and kitchens and bathroom are a great place to employ this color palette. Instead of brightening up your dark cabinets with a coat of white paint, consider choosing a shade of light gray. Pair it with wood grains for a more traditional look, or go with grays, blues and metals for a more modern aesthetic.

STATEMENT LIGHTING

Lighting in the kitchen can be far more than functional. Gone are the days of the fluorescent bar light in the middle of the room. A large metal pendant or a statement chandelier above the island can take a kitchen from boring to bold. Go oversized with extra-large fabric shades. Contrast can add interest to lighting pieces, as well. A fancy crystal chandelier inside a weathered metal cage is a daring choice that will draw the eye. Swap a simple flush-mount fixture for a semi-flush light with metal scroll



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A new trend in kitchen decor is statement lighting. If you're remodeling your kitchen, consider bold lighting pieces that draw the eye.

detail for an inexpensive update.

Fancy lighting also can find a home in the bathroom. Hang a chandelier above a free-standing bathtub or a pair of eye-catching pendants over separate vanities.

STORAGE

Pull-out drawers with built-in organizers, utensil crocks nestled inside cabinetry, built-in onion and potato bins — today's homeowners are looking for touches that make life in the kitchen more conve-

nient. If you're replacing cabinets, look for special features your cabinetmaker can build in. Even some do-it-yourself cabinet systems have been updated with storage components, such as pull-out shelves, pot-and-pan organizers and appliance garages. These features add value to your home that buyers will appreciate.

As in the kitchen, adding storage is a trend in bathrooms. If you have room, add a linen cabinet that matches your vanities. Or consider adding a large, eye-catching antique armoire or sideboard

to combine style and storage.

SHOWER IDEAS

A shower without a door opens up a bathroom. Glass panels uninterrupted by metal components allows for flowing open space. Another trend that will draw a buyer's interest is a shower large enough for two, or even making room for a wet-room by tearing out the builder-installed garden tub and shower.

These shower layouts also may make it easier for buyers to age in place by eliminating barriers to showering.

REAL ESTATE 101

Got Efficiency?

Energy-saving updates are sure to draw buyers' interest and make your home attractive for the cost savings. To get energy-saving recommendations for your home, visit the Energy Star website at www.energystar.gov/campaign/home.

TECHNOLOGY

Like all areas of our homes, bathrooms and kitchens are getting smarter. Smart homes are no longer the things of science fiction, and buyers will be looking for features that keep their homes connected. Give yourself the edge by making "smart" choices when you upgrade appliances and fixtures.

Some great options include faucets that come on with the wave of a hand, wireless speakers built in to the shower head, ovens that pre-heat themselves with the touch of a smartphone button, and refrigerators that tell you when the water filter needs to be replaced.

A smart thermostat can help save energy, which will mean savings for you and future owners.



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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Effective rate/cost: total cost of a loan on a yearly basis expressed as a percentage. Includes up front costs paid to obtain the loan.

Escrow analysis: the periodic examination of escrow accounts to determine if current monthly deposits will provide sufficient funds to pay tax, insurance, and other bills when due.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions

AD SPACE