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one kitchen 20 great ideas

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BEFORE BECOMING TOO CONSUMED WITH LEFT-BRAIN DETAILS, INDULGE YOUR RIGHT BRAIN. ASK YOURSELF JUST **HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR KITCHEN TO FEEL?**

Ever walk into a kitchen and it just feels good? That's no accident. That's great design: a thoughtful combination of materials, lighting, colors, scale, and countless details.

Chicago-based designer Mick De Giulio has been creating functional, feel-good kitchens around the country for more than 30 years. So we asked him to walk us through one of his recent renovations, in St. Louis, highlighting elements that make it sing.

"It's as much about putting feeling into a space as it is about good function and beautiful materials," Mick says. "Proportion is one of the most important elements. If you can get proportion right, then the space feels right."

This classic 1920s Tudor-style house called for a kitchen with grand proportions, but Mick didn't want it to be intimidating. "The house in general has a beautiful, stately feel, but it is still

1

silver-nickel countertops flanking the range provide heat-and-stain-resistant work surfaces with a period-appropriate patina.

2

flip-up door offers a quick getaway for a countertop flat-panel TV.

3

restaurant-style faucet introduces a modern silhouette and ensures fast cleanups.

4

hidden outlets make the work-zone island look like fine furniture.

5

up lighting on the refrigerator armoire creates the illusion of higher ceilings.

6

watery mirrors in an ebonized walnut cabinet turn the refrigerator and freezer into a beautiful armoire.

warm and inviting," says the kitchen designer. "What we tried to do was build and design with the same sensibility we saw in the details around the rest of the house."

Ebonized walnut cabinets and white plaster panels on the range hood, for example, echo the home's timber-and-plaster construction. Windows and doors are inset into deep plaster jambs rather than wood casings in order to be true to the original building style.

Another nod to the home's Gothic styling: A De Giulio-designed walnut armoire that houses a full refrigerator (on the right) and freezer (on the left) has watery mirrors with decorative steel arches on the doors. The 8x4-foot island is set on legs and topped with white marble. "Everything has a feeling of mass and a little more dimension," Mick says. "We're putting architecture into kitchen spaces."

Arched French doors open from the dining room to the bar, which is dressed up with a handmade Italian floor panel. The cotto pesto terra-cotta panel, inset into the wood floor,

11

sliding panels on each side of the range keep spices and oils handy. The panels close to create a sleek tile backsplash.

12

backsplash tiles set in a simple running-bond pattern give the kitchen a utilitarian, vintage feel.

7

outdoor access is easy via French doors.

8

la mattina, or morning zone, keeps breakfast foods and supplies in one area.

9

more flip-ups hide small appliances on countertops.

10

faux drawers front a convenient undercounter refrigerator.

13

nickel banding creates a clean line across the front of the work area.

14

crystal knobs, half-inch-thick beveled glass doors, and lighted cabinets make the butler's pantry sparkle.

15

maple counters are gentle on fine china and crystal.

16

sliding colander and cutting board simplify prep chores at a stone sink.



is made by working colored clays into an intricate design, Mick explains. Because colors permeate the panel, the floor is as durable as it is beautiful.

The kitchen was previously remodeled in the 1980s and had been divided into several rooms—a working kitchen, a breakfast room, a sitting room, an office, and a mudroom. Staying within the footprint, several walls were removed and rooms gutted to clear the way for the new kitchen with its breakfast room, a butler's pantry, a wine room/bar, and a wine cellar.

While there was plenty of square footage to work with, the kitchen ceilings topped out at just 8½ feet due to structural and mechanical systems. Mick employed some visual >

17

mirrored
backsplashes
reflect silver and
crystal in the bar.

18

lighting
under the cabinets
glistens on the red
granite countertops.

19

cotto pesto
panel is made by
working colored clays
into a design.



17

18

20

19

corner sink
allows for more storage
and work space.

20

magic—installing wall cabinets several inches shy of the ceiling to create the illusion of more height.

Square sinks, restaurant-style pull-down faucets, and square recessed ceiling lights introduce modern shapes and silhouettes, nudging the styling out of the stodgy. “I wanted to have a touch of modern. We did not want every detail to be a reenactment of those from the ’20s,” Mick says. “I like interpretation more than reproduction.

“We’re doing a lot of mixing,” he adds, “putting a beautiful spin on the functional. That’s what it’s all about.”

Now doesn’t that feel good? ■

Kitchen designer: Mick De Giulio **For more information, see sources on page 156**

