

# T KITCHEN TRENDS

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section focus: heart of the home





# Sense of place

The kitchen has long been a gathering place for family and friends – and that's something that hasn't changed for centuries. No matter how high-tech your home or appliances, the social factor is all important, as these kitchens illustrate



# Country values

Inspired by the look of traditional American farmhouses, this open-plan kitchen cleverly conceals its more practical elements

**W**hen is a kitchen not a kitchen? When it is designed to be a library. That was the philosophy behind the design of this family living area, which incorporates kitchen facilities, but plays them down visually.

Integrated appliances and cabinetry designed as pieces of furniture help ensure the kitchen is seen as part of a large family living space, rather than a purely

functional area for food preparation.

Architect Jacob Albert of Albert, Richter & Tittmann Architects says the house is modeled on the traditional stone farmhouses seen in Pennsylvania – combined with some of the more refined elements of a country house.

"Some aspects of the house, such as the curving bay window in the family room, are more generous and grand than

would have been the case with an old farmhouse," he says. "But we have taken some of the spirit of those old homesteads – locating the kitchen-family room in the center of the house, for example."

Albert says the kitchen was always the heart of the home, the place where the family spent most of its time. For the owners of this house, that is still the case. With its comfortable seating,

*Preceding pages:* This kitchen, at one end of a large living area, is the center of family activity.

*Above:* Painted cabinets and country-style accessories enhance the farmhouse feel.

*Facing page:* The kitchen incorporates two ovens, and a decorative, cast-iron ventilation unit.





**Above:** With its antique furniture, comfortable seating and built-in book shelves, the family living area, or library, is a welcome retreat for the owners. The large mantel was salvaged and restored to enhance the country ambiance. To provide a visual connection with the rest of the house, architect Jacob Albert lined up a series of openings through the pantry, formal dining and formal living rooms.

**Facing page:** French doors provide an easy flow to the outdoors. To maximize the country outlook, the double-hung windows are 8ft tall. They also feature delicate mullions that replicate the look of a traditional country house.

built-in bookcases and large fireplace, the kitchen-living space is a room for all seasons.

In keeping with the concept of a large family gathering area, the kitchen is well equipped for entertaining – there are two ovens and a separate walk-in pantry. An island provides extra countertop space.

"The compact nature of the kitchen area makes it very easy to work in," says Albert. "Everything is right at hand."

Honed Absolute Black granite countertops are paired with white painted

cabinets. These feature flat drawers at counter height, with paneled doors and drawers at lower levels. Several overhead cupboards are designed to resemble antique display cabinets.

"As we wanted the kitchen to fit with the overall look, we also avoided using a hood," says Albert. "A decorative, cast-iron grille on the backsplash doubles as a ventilation unit."

The height of the cabinets was customized to suit the owners' preferences – the countertop with the cooktop is slightly



higher than the sink and island units.

To reinforce the sense of the kitchen in the heart of the home, the architect provided a strong visual connection with the rest of the house. Doors to other rooms are positioned in a line, creating a long axial view right through the house and out a window at the far end.

"The green of the surrounding fields can be glimpsed through this window, providing a further connection with the more immediate landscape," says Albert.

Soft green walls in the living room also provide a link with the outdoors.

**Architect:** Jacob Albert AIA, Craig Gibson and Jim Righter, Albert Righter & Tittmann Architects (Boston)

**Interior designer:** Ellen White, Boxwood Interiors

**Builder:** Robert A Lawrence, Jr

**Windows and doors:** The Woodstone Company

**Flooring:** White oak

**Cabinetry:** Painted wood custom cabinetry by Northbridge Woodworking

**Cabinetry hardware:** Baldwin

**Countertops and backsplash:** Honed Absolute Black granite

**Sink:** Elkay

**Ovens:** Thermador

**Lighting:** Rejuvenation Lamp Co; Brass Light Gallery

**Fireplace:** Rumford Design Fireplace

**Drapes:** Osborne & Little

**Coffee table:** Mill House Antiques

**Photography by Greg Premru**