

12 COMMON STORAGE PROBLEMS SOLVED

KITCHENS

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78+

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What's Not,
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Spotlight on Design

Los Angeles interior designer Felicia Bushman shares her secrets for creating warm and inviting spaces, while still maintaining function and efficiency

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL BEZJIAN



Cosmetic Makeover

Type of home: Mediterranean, c. 1927

Primary goal: Open up the dark, closed-in space

Extent of redesign: Cosmetic upgrade

Designer notes: "My clients liked the way the kitchen functioned, but the finishes and appliances were old and out of date."



"The walls were covered in overly patterned wallpaper, which just clashed with the patterned tile. We removed that and kept the walls clean to showcase the lovely tile."

"The countertops and tile were in good condition and quite sweet," says Felicia. Rather than replace the tile, Felicia refreshed the look of the kitchen to complement it.

"The cabinetry was good; it just needed a few repairs and a new finish. The cabinets were dark oak. People are often afraid to cover up wood, but in this kitchen the dark wood just made it feel closed in rather than open, light and airy."

Before



21st-century Redesign

Type of home: Mediterranean, c. 1927

Primary goal: Redesign galley kitchen into open area

Extent of redesign: Complete redesign

Designer notes: "We enlarged the kitchen by taking a large closet from the dining room. This gave us enough space to make the kitchen more square, rather than a long rectangle, and it allowed us the space for a center island."



"Lighting is very important. We kept the upper cabinets from touching the ceiling so we had space for up-lighting, along with under-cabinet lighting, ceiling lighting and a chandelier."

"My clients went to the slab yard to select their own countertops and fell in love with the warmth of this granite. That set the tone for our color scheme, so we selected the tile around that."



"We custom designed the cabinetry to incorporate different styles all in one, including inset doors for a more traditional look, hidden hinges for a cleaner look and leaded glass in the upper cabinets."

"Hardwood floors add warmth. Many people fear hardwood floors, thinking they aren't as hardy as tile or stone. But these days, there are amazing protective finishes."



Before



Total Transformation

Type of home: Cape Cod style, c. 1934

Primary goal: Open up the space and correct the unworkable layout

Extent of redesign: Complete redesign

Designer notes: "We had to enlarge the space. We consulted an architect and ultimately decided to push out the exterior wall and increase the home's square footage."

"We used real carrera marble tiles on the walls to bring in the beauty and movement of the natural stone. There was not a lot of space for the wall tile, so I raised the height of the backsplash and wrapped it around the room. This also brought the room together."

"Starting from scratch, we were able to custom design our cabinetry...so we built them specifically to house each item: cooking utensils, spice drawers, linen drawers, etc."

"Instead of carrera marble, we opted for "carrera style" Caesarstone for the countertops because my clients have a young son. Caesarstone is indestructible, so you can bring on the spills without worry."

These clients zoned out every inch of space to meet a specific need or function, including a special coffee station.

"Hardwood floors add warmth to the room, along with the pendant fixtures over the island and dark-wood island chairs."

Kitchen Design 101

Felicia Bushman discusses what's hot, what's not & what's here to stay in kitchen design

WHAT'S HOT...

- **Eat-in Islands and Built-in Banquettes** – "The kitchen is always the place where people gather," says Felicia, noting that an island is practically mandatory in today's kitchen, as it's where the bulk of family meals and social interactions take place.
- **Energy-efficient Appliances** – "All appliances are energy-efficient—it's hard to go wrong," Felicia says. Plus, they'll save you money on your electric bill.
- **Recycling Bins** – Every kitchen should have designated recycling bins. "All of my kitchen designs have a pull-out drawer with trash and recycle bins set inside," says Felicia.

WHAT'S NOT...

- **Trash Compactors** – "I always said that trash compactors were out because they had some issues with cleanliness," says Felicia. "Personally, I don't want to leave trash in my house, so I don't want to compact it to make room for more trash. I don't use trash compactors in design anymore."
- **Tile Countertops** – Although tile is aesthetically beautiful, it can be difficult to keep clean, especially in the grout lines. For maximum efficiency, and minimal staining and damage, incorporating both natural and engineered stone countertops into a design can be a

winning combination. For those who do want tile, ensuring the grout lines are properly sealed can help keep them clean.

WHAT'S HERE TO STAY...

- **Simplicity** – "People are tired of excess and want to simplify their lives," says Felicia. "We are spending more time putting detail into things so they function better. We need clean lines, less mess, less work, more convenience."
- **Function** – According to Felicia, simplicity and function go hand in hand. "Everything has its place," she says. "If you spend some time beforehand in the design stage, then you really get everything where you want it, and it functions really well." Cabinet organizers, refrigerator cooling drawers, under-counter beverage refrigerators and double dishwashers for bigger families all add to the function and efficiency of a kitchen.
- **Timelessness** – When planning a redesign—especially in the kitchen—it's important to think about what will stand the test of time, as well as consider the structure of the home. "It's not like a throw pillow or an accessory," says Felicia. "When people remodel a kitchen, they don't want to re-do it for another 15 to 20 years. You can play with the things that are freestanding, but if something is built in, you do want to stick to the style and structure of the home, which helps keep the design timeless."

Fun-Loving Design

Type of home: Mediterranean, c. 2008

Primary goal: Create more warmth, and add color and personality to the space

Extent of redesign: Minor remodel

Designer notes: "Although the house was new, the clients felt the kitchen was cold, with the exception of the gorgeous hardwood floors."



"We added window treatments for color, although they were not needed for privacy or light."

"We had some fun with the breakfast area furniture—we got young and playful for this young and playful family."



Pendant lighting, large bell jars over the island and a glass pendant over the sink complement the design scheme.

"To add color, we hung plates over the stovetop archway."

"To help remove the cold feeling, we changed the granite countertop on the island to a wood top, which centered the room and warmed it right up."

5 Tips to Working with a Pro

Thinking of hiring an interior designer? Follow these tips from a seasoned professional.

- **Get a Referral.** "It's important to feel comfortable with your designer," says Los Angeles interior designer Felicia Bushman. Because "it's a relationship of trust," Felicia recommends going with a designer who has been referred to you by a reliable source.
- **Ask to See a Portfolio.** "Some designers have a certain style," Felicia says. "You should know that you like their work before you hire them."
- **Schedule a Meeting.** According to Felicia, the relationship between interior designer and client is similar to dating. "It's important to spend some time going over your home and picking the designer's brain," she says. "If you feel comfortable, go on another date. But if you didn't feel like the designer understood you or listened, there is no point in continuing. If you can't have a conversation with somebody on the first date, you certainly don't go back again."
- **Prepare to be Involved.** "It's one of the most difficult things a homeowner can go through," says Felicia of the renovation/remodeling process. "There are a lot of decisions, and the more the homeowner is involved, the better the outcome."
- **Work in Stages, if necessary.** It is not uncommon to work in stages, especially if it's not in your budget to do everything you want to do at one time. Think about your needs and priorities; then plan from there. "A lot of my clients work in pieces to save money," says Felicia.