

Globe style

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Counter culture

Five Canadian homeowners with a
taste for modern design turn their
cramped kitchens into the ultimate
modern retreat **PAGE 10**



Custom whiteash cabinet doors conceal a stainlesssteel Energy Star refrigerator from view to bolster the kitchen's predominantly white palette.

(Kristin Sjaarda for The Globe and Mail)



When John and Patsy Bell designed their kitchen, environmental sensitivity and their young family were top of mind.

(Kristin Sjaarda for The Globe and Mail)



The Nguni chairs, handcrafted in Africa from Kiaat wood and woven cord seats and purchased at Snob in Toronto, add depth and visual drama to the monochromatic room.

(Kristin Sjaarda for The Globe and Mail)

That's over 425 Peruvian Nuevo Soles

THE GLOBE AND MAIL 

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Modern kitchens serve up a lot of style

By Deirdre Kelly
From Saturday's Globe and Mail

Between breakfast, lunch and dinner, kitchens can be chaos. But, as the owners of these Canadian kitchens reveal, clever design (and loads of hidden storage) can turn the hardest-working room in the house into a tranquil modern retreat

Between breakfast, lunch and dinner, kitchens can be chaos. But, as the owners of these Canadian kitchens reveal, clever design (and loads of hidden storage) can turn the hardest-working room in the house into a tranquil modern retreat.

A chef's haven

When Matthew Carmichael, the executive chef of Ottawa's acclaimed Restaurant Eighteen, first purchased his 105-year-old row house in The Glebe four years ago, the first room he renovated, not surprisingly, was the kitchen. Working with architect Andrew Reeves from Linebox Studios, Carmichael opted for a contemporary aesthetic inspired by the professional kitchens where he has worked. For the flooring, for instance, he chose grey sheet marmoleum to echo the poured-concrete floors in the dining room at Eighteen, at a small fraction of the cost. In other details, however, he built in some visual and psychological distance between the kitchen at home and the one at work.

"I didn't always want to be looking at a stainlesssteel fridge and a big exposed hood," Carmichael explains. So he retained vintage elements from the original home, among them the 10-foot-high ceilings in the kitchen, cracked plaster and all. Nevertheless, functionality was key, and so was the desire for tranquillity. "That's why everything in the room is hidden," he says.

What little has been left out in the open is eye-catching: the Castor Tube Light located over the island, a striking piece of art picked up on a trip to Melbourne, Australia, and a handsome walnut-wrapped island that's the perfect height for eating and entertaining. "When I go out, I usually eat at the bar; it's typically where all the action is," he says. "I wanted to create that same feeling at home, counter service if you will, with a casual kind of style. This is definitely my favourite room in the house."

An open-air galley

An open-air kitchen facing a courtyard shared by neighbours: That was the idea that homeowners Jacques Boily and H el ene Deneault pinned their hopes on when they commenced a year of renovations that would turn their 1896 red-brick duplex in Montreal's Plateau Mont-Royal neighbourhood into a single-family home. It was architect Yannick Laurin who suggested replacing part of the back wall with a garage door that, when opened, seamlessly connects the kitchen to the circular courtyard.

The couple couldn't be happier with the outcome. The open-air effect is carried over to the kitchen's galley, where a bank of large windows allows for unobstructed views of the herb and flower garden out back and brings plenty of natural light into the area where all of the cooking and cleanup happens. The look is both expansive and spare, thanks to a minimalist interior design that includes two long countertops made of sleek black granite: One runs the

length of the exterior windows and contains the kitchen sink and a compact breakfast nook; the other is concealed in a niche built into the walnut wall that houses the oven and cooktop. These hidden charms are what the homeowners love the most about their kitchen: "The fridge is hidden in the wood wall, which also has a giant pantry where we store food and even the microwave," Boily says. "It is functional and smart but, most of all, beautiful."

An eco-inspired eat-in

As host of HGTV's *The World's Greenest Homes*, John Bell specializes in building sustainable houses; his wife, Patsy, is a stylist with an obvious knack for decor. When, last year, they purchased a 1970s property on a leafy cul-de-sac in North Toronto, the intention was to renovate it, top to bottom, to create a green home for their young family.

The home's hub is its minimalist kitchen, located up a flight of stairs on the second floor, where it perches over the backyard like a glass treehouse. Framing the room with floor-to-ceiling windows was architect Lynn Appleby's idea. The couple love the way it makes the kitchen feel airy and much bigger than it actually is and reduces the need for putting lights on during the day. Bell renovated the house himself, and his wife steered the interior design, opting for a cool all-white palette that is offset by the warmth of natural walnut in the lower cabinetry. While the overall look is sophisticated and polished, a respect for sustainability underpins most of the material decisions the couple made: The streamlined countertops are Caesarstone, a reclaimed quartz product; the backsplash is an ecological porcelain that has been made to look like Carrara marble; and the paint is free of volatile organic compounds. Balancing their beliefs with the aesthetics appears to have paid off: As Bell puts it, "It's exactly the kind of home we've always wanted to live in."

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