

The Anatomy of a Dream Kitchen

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From the floor to the ceiling, every detail in your kitchen counts. Custom build your own fairytale kitchen with these tips from the owner of The Hemel Group.



Step into this kitchen and let it keep you there all night. Home entertaining has become as intimate as open-concept restaurants, where you can see the chef preparing your delectable meal. The kitchen is the new living room, and thanks to Garrett Hardy of Hemel Group, a family of five living in Sarnia, Ont., understand the meaning of that.

Hardy and his team designed a brand new luxury kitchen for the homeowners with the clients' lifestyle in mind. "The fundamental point is to learn as much as I can about our new client, their lifestyle, how they entertain, and the side of their extended family for larger gatherings," says Hardy.

The owners wanted to accent their already magnificent 9,000 sq. ft. home with a kitchen where they could entertain guests, so Hemel Group created a kitchen that was easily accessible, held a maximum amount of people for when the owners would entertain family and friends, and had every kitchen essential. Before beginning the project, Hardy laid out the design on paper to maximize counter space, seating area and cupboard room. To accommodate the owner's desire for plenty cabinet space, The Hemel Group customized the cabinetry throughout the house.

As a fairly large family, they wanted a design that would work with their everyday needs and entertaining style, while still remaining private.

"Time is at a premium, and everyone meets in the kitchen. It all starts with site lines and traffic patters. Once the basic footprint and appliance locations were determined, I started layering materials and textures starting with the floor," says Hardy. The kitchen floors are a rich limestone, with contrasting cabinetry, which are stained bordeaux on maple. The main counters are topped with granite, while the bar and raised counter on the island are labradorite with a translucent flecks finish. The appliances are a modern stainless steel, while the plasterwork has golden detailing that ties the kitchen into the rest of the house, which has white baseboards and white crown mouldings – both detailed with gold.

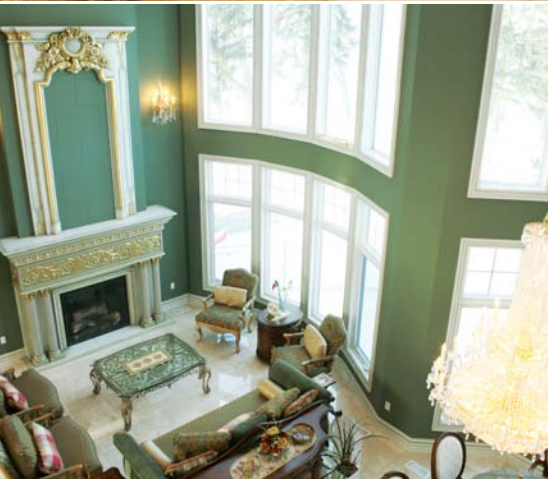
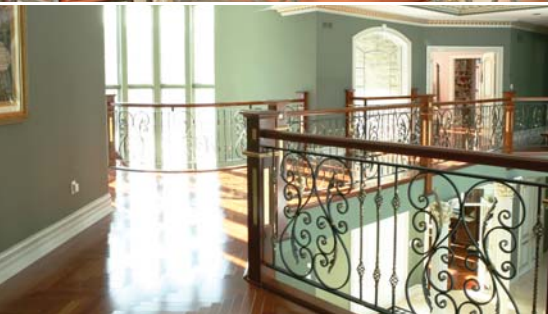
"Placement is key, as you want people who are seated at an island to have sightlines of windows, the TV, the chef, and not have their back to an entrance," says Hardy.

As well as designing the kitchen for the homeowners, Hemel Group also designed a master bath where all of the walls were reworked to accommodate the new bathroom. The final product was impeccable, and the clients were more than happy with their newly designed kitchen and master bath. "I was surprised when our client commented that going to a five-star hotel was not nearly as nice as our master bath. But then we did design a nine-foot-long shower with his and hers entrances and a curved back wall of honey onyx," says Hardy.



10 THINGS every dream kitchen should have:

1. Large pull-out waste organizer that incorporates recycling
2. Dimmable lighting with programmable day and night settings
3. A top-of-the-line fan / ventilation system
4. A small appliance centre for dedicated storage
5. A custom spice organizer that sits on your counter, designed to fit your favourite bottles perfectly
6. A secondary sink that is dedicated to preparation
7. A microwave drawer
8. A second drain for plumbing in your dishwasher to eliminate the gurgling noise from the sink
9. Plate caddies for carrying a stack of plates to the table
10. Interior drawer lights



Recently, Hardy has noticed that his clients are developing their own style, which makes for a unique final product. “Many of our clients have a diverse cultural background to draw from. It’s a real joy to work with such rich backgrounds because they’re used to bright colour. It seems the older the culture, the less fear they have of colour,” explains Hardy.

The trends this year seem to prove that bold, vibrant colours will be gracing the walls of the most fashionable homeowners. Similar to the green on the walls of the kitchen in the photographs, colours that stimulate your appetite will attract guests and invite them into your kitchen. Large open spaces, lots of seating area and plenty more surface area will allow for guests to get comfortable and still have room to keep their hors d’oeuvres and cocktails nearby.

The highest quality materials will increase the visual appeal of your kitchen. Price is not an option, and the Hemel Group uses only the finest products. “A mixing of rich materials is a growing trend. We are mixing and integrating them into the cabinetry in more ways than ever before. Onyx, copper, steel, glass and exotic woods,” lists Hardy. “A kitchen should be a happy place. Think light and fun.”

In 2008, Hardy hopes to see an increase in environmentally conscious kitchen designs. “I’m hoping this year that mainstream kitchen manufacturers embrace green design. We have been doing it for quite some time, thanks to our clients’ requests,” says Hardy.

Hardy has been noticing other trends, such as the growing eat healthy, live healthy culture. “Less people are requesting microwaves, and those that do are putting them in secondary places and asking for more vegetable storage,” Hardy says. Creating microwave drawers is the new way to hide the appliances that are not used as frequently.

Unconventional pieces are also making their way into the kitchen, which include sofas, harvest tables and large televisions. Because of technological advances, Hardy explains that there is no longer a need for a desk in the kitchen, and the extra space is being used to create a place for the family to relax and indulge in.

For more information on Garrett Hardy and the Hemel Group, visit www.hemelgroup.ca.