

# FOCUS ON KITCHENS

The House Review design team presents six creative concepts in kitchen design

By Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD, House Review Lead Designer

If there's one lesson we've all learned by now, it's the fact that the kitchen functions as the hub of the home. From spacious luxury designs to compact starter plans, this area becomes the focal point of every house. If you still question the necessity of a large, open kitchen, just observe what happens the next time you have a group of people at your home. Invariably, everyone insists on gathering in the kitchen. In fact, as more homeowners decide to eliminate the formal living room and dining room, the kitchen truly becomes the center for entertaining.

Our team of architects and designers offers six designs that emphasize the value of proper kitchen layout and location. Ranging from an award-winning luxury home to sketches for smaller-size designs, each concept confirms that the kitchen has become the "command center" and focal point of virtually every new home.

For more House Review concepts, visit [www.HousingZone.com/HouseReview](http://www.HousingZone.com/HouseReview).

## 2011 HOUSE REVIEW THEMES

MAY Townhomes/urban homes

JULY Single-family detached housing

AUGUST Duplex/triplex

SEPTEMBER Green homes

OCTOBER Cottage homes

NOVEMBER Live/work houses

### DESIGNER'S ESSAY

Traffic flow throughout a home always proves important in the placement of furniture and the overall feeling of spaciousness. This consideration becomes even more critical with the location and layout of the kitchen. While this 2,400-square-foot design utilizes an open concept for the kitchen, dining, and family areas, note that the kitchen is actually recessed into an alcove. Thickened walls and headers create cased openings that define each of these areas while maintaining the open feeling. Directing traffic "by" the kitchen and not "through" the area provides a secluded cooking and work space while still allowing guests to feel as though they're in the kitchen. The island provides additional room for food preparation and serves as an informal dining table.

Although the windows in the dining and family areas allow views toward the side and rear yard, it's the triple windows over the sink that fill the kitchen with natural light. Conveniently located adjacent to the kitchen is the laundry area and a pantry.

In many homes, the kitchen also doubles as the place to sort mail, pay bills, and store cookbooks and recipes. This design incorporates a "resource center" where these daily tasks can be organized. With windows overlooking the backyard, this space becomes an ideal spot to organize the household while watching the children play. It's easily accessible, yet secluded from the open view of guests.

DESIGN 56504

### DESIGNER

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### PLAN SIZE

First floor: 1,235 sf  
Second floor: 1,170 sf  
Width: 49 feet, 6 inches  
Depth: 58 feet

DESIGN 56531

### DESIGNER

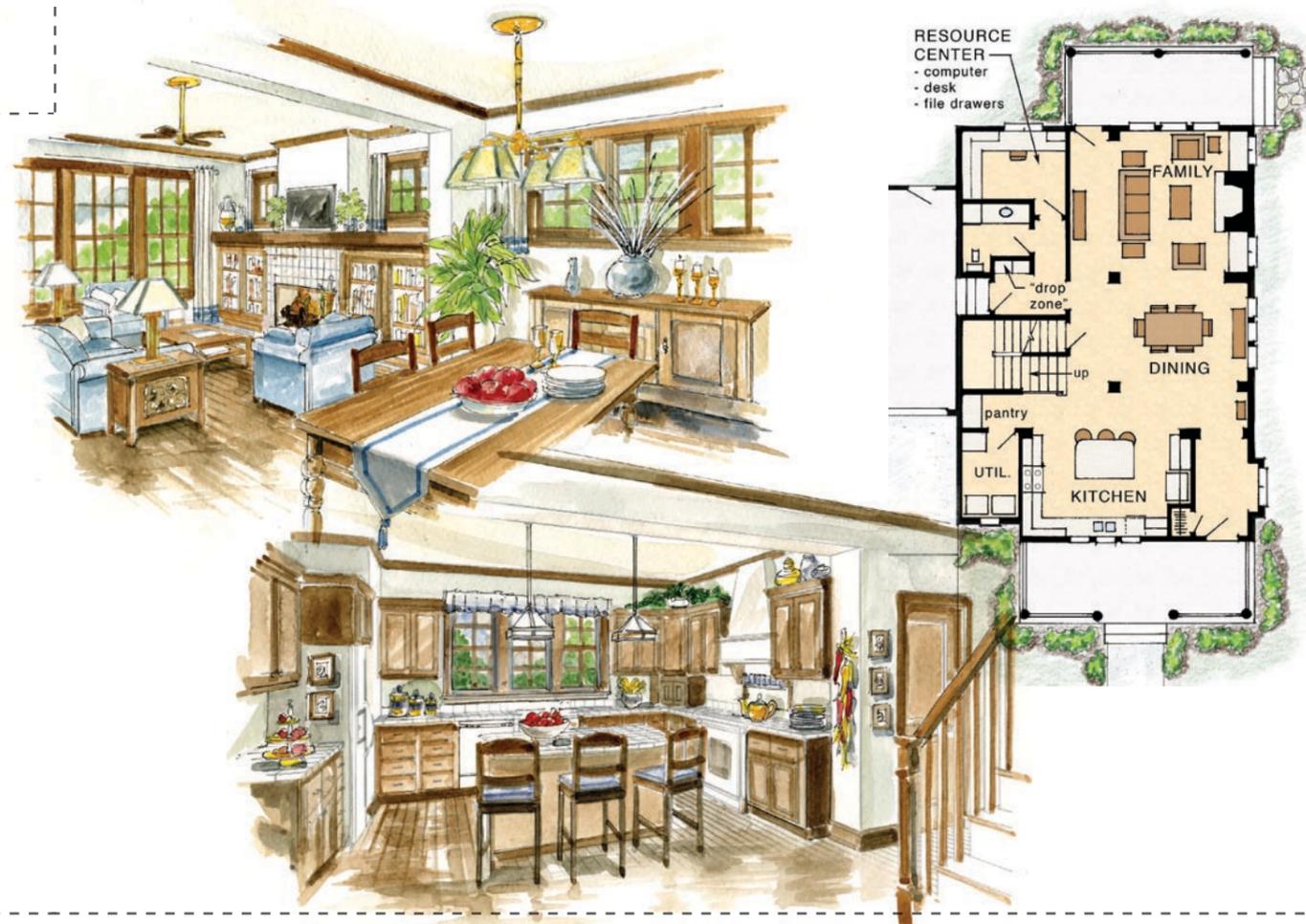
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### PLAN SIZE

Living area: 1,402 sf  
Width: 30 feet  
Depth: 74 feet, 8 inches

### DESIGNER'S ESSAY

The design of smaller kitchens involves the challenge of creating an open layout while maintaining adequate counter workspace and ample upper cabinet storage. One of the key elements involves a plan that directs the traffic flow around the kitchen and not through it. In addition to the kitchen being the focal point of every home, it also often doubles as the "command center." With this 1,400-square-foot design, the daily routines of paying bills and organizing activities take place in the adjacent "resource center," with dedicated space for a desk, computer, and file drawers. The conveniently located "drop zone" provides special cubbies for mail, keys, cell phones, and all of the other items that are typically dropped on the kitchen counter, creating clutter and taking up valuable space. Adding to the efficiency is a space-saving pantry wall with a combination of open and closed shelves.



[KITCHEN DESIGN]

FRICKS RESIDENCE

ARCHITECT

RPGA Design Group, Inc.  
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PLAN SIZE

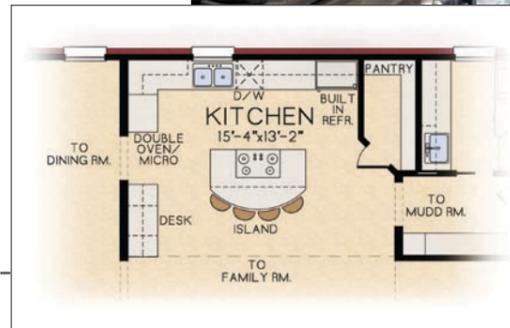
First floor: 3,671 sf  
Second floor: 1,176 sf  
Basement: 220 sf  
Total living: 4,847 sf  
Covered porches: 721 sf  
Garages/storage: 1,837 sf  
Terrace: 980 sf

ARCHITECT'S ESSAY

Over the years, different elements and functions in a home's design have evolved in terms of priority and usability. One of the most important functions in the design of a home today (and for the foreseeable future) has to do with the "hearth" of the home: the kitchen. If you were to travel back in time to the early 1900's, you would notice that in most homes the kitchen was tucked away from the major public spaces. Today, it is quite the opposite. The kitchen is the central congregation hub of the home and is very interactive with the other public spaces, such as the family room, breakfast area, and dining room. Whether the kitchen is designed to be completely open to the other public spaces or somewhat compartmentalized, it is still very much interactive with the other spaces of the home.

Because the kitchen plays such a vital role in the home, it is important to keep some primary objectives in mind when designing these spaces:

- 1. Flow.** It is critical to provide for good flow in and out and about the kitchen. With this in mind, the kitchen should have a minimum of two (and ideally three) points of entry.
- 2. Guest space.** Whether it's an island with an extended bar-top or a separate area with seating, it is necessary to have a place where guests can come in and be part of the activity happening in the kitchen.
- 3. Connectivity.** It's important to create a connection with the family room, den, dining room, mud room, living room, and other key spaces so that traffic moves with ease.
- 4. Functionality.** While the kitchen is still predominantly a working area, it must look good and function with all the necessary elements to allow the users to get the cooking and prep work done with ease. Depending on whether the homeowners are amateur chefs or just good cooks, it's important to allow for the proper triangular uses of the kitchen for the sink, stove, ovens, and refrigerator. Ample counter and storage space are also necessary.
- 5. Aesthetic.** Simply said, the kitchen should not only function well, but it has to look dynamite. From the appliances and lighting to the windows, countertops, and flooring, these are all parts of the total package that makes for a stunning kitchen environment.



KAUTSCH RESIDENCE

ARCHITECT

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PLAN SIZE

Total living: 2,412 sf  
Covered porches: 163 sf  
Garage: 526 sf  
Patio/terrace: 655 sf

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TNH-SC-44A

DESIGNER

Eric Moser  
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PLAN SIZE

First floor: 1,327 sf  
Second floor: 589 sf  
Total living: 1,916 sf  
Width: 32 feet  
Depth: 70 feet

DESIGNER'S ESSAY

The role of the kitchen has evolved over the years. Most recently, it has become the prep center for the "farm-to-table" philosophy of urban agriculture. For a neighborhood — and the homes in it — to be truly sustainable, the land must be able to nourish its residents. This idea is about not only food, but the health of the residents and cost savings to the homeowners. The outdated concept of centering neighborhoods around golf courses has given way to community gardens, rainwater collection ponds, and the occasional chicken coop.

The side kitchen of the TNH-SC-44A plan lends itself well to being the hub of the home and also flows into outdoor food processing and prep areas. The rear porch serves as a "shucking station" and pantry for harvested produce. The attached screened porch becomes an area for growing seedlings and could easily be glassed in for a true greenhouse, depending on the climate. These processing and prep areas extend the indoor kitchen to the outside. The courtyard includes boxes for growing herbs and connects to the shed and garden areas. The presentation kitchen houses a large working island where the cleaned produce can be prepared. It also opens directly into the dining area where the food is consumed.

By adapting ideas from the ways in which communities historically sourced and consumed food, the farm-to-table philosophy provides a sustainable model for the way we grow and prepare our food. This in turn shapes the way that we design and utilize our land and buildings.  
— Mariam Phillips,  
Moser Design Group



## [KITCHEN DESIGN]

## house review

### THE SOMERSET

#### ARCHITECT

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#### PLAN SIZE

First floor: 2,599 sf  
Second floor: 2,953 sf  
Total living: 5,517 sf  
Width: 107 feet  
Depth: 50 feet, 2 inches  
Height: 37 feet, 3 inches  
Exterior style: English eclectic



#### ARCHITECT'S ESSAY

The Somerset's design involved creating a cutting-edge luxury home, offering energy-efficient and sustainable solutions, all while blending its exterior with the existing neighborhood. While the exterior has many historical details, the interior is far from an old-world style. The interior of the home is innovative, sustainable, and transitions perfectly to the lifestyles of the modern family.

As designers and builders, it is important to put focus on the heart of the home, the kitchen. Today, families spend the majority of their time in the kitchen. Part of the concept for this kitchen was to create a very comfortable atmosphere. Typically, a breakfast area would be placed next to the kitchen space, but we decided instead to place a hearth room adjacent to the kitchen, with an elegant fireplace surrounded by built-ins. This creates a warm, comfortable environment where a family can come together during any part of the day.

The brushed-nickel finishes in the kitchen contrast perfectly with the dark-finished, solid-wood built-ins. The built-ins not only offer beauty but also ample storage space with pull-out drawers, a pull-out pantry, and a built-in area for a coffee/espresso machine. Just off the main mud room, a large walk-in pantry provides extra storage space. This kitchen also offers a large range, an oversized kitchen sink,



and a space-saving, faucet-less prep sink that is perfect for chilling champagne and other beverages.

The kitchen, as well as the construction of this entire house, was done in a sustainable fashion. The majority of the materials were manufactured locally; waste was re-used; the built-ins were made of solid wood with no formaldehyde; and all plumbing fixtures, lighting fixtures, and appliances are energy efficient. Somerset proves that even a luxury home can be sustainable.

#### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

If you have a design concept for an upcoming House Review theme, please submit it to Lead Designer Larry Garnett at [larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com](mailto:larrygarnett@larrygarnettdesigns.com). Preliminary sketches need to be received six weeks prior to issue date.