

# the kitchen spice up!

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What if you are not satisfied with your kitchen but you are not dissatisfied enough to tear it out and start over? Have you been in your house for several years but the kitchen never was exactly what you wanted? Would you prefer to renovate the whole kitchen but are not sure that you are going to be in the house more than five years? Are you just ready for a cosmetic change but the basic function of the kitchen works? Maybe you need a kitchen spice up!

A kitchen spice up is anything short of a complete kitchen renovation that improves the function and look of your kitchen. It could be as simple as a new floor, accent lighting or countertop. But it could include adding an island, cabinetry, or a decorative backsplash. Some choose a spice up because they don't need or want the disruption of a com-

plete renovation. Others do it to accommodate an appliance change they want to make.

In order to get a sampling of kitchen spice ups we interviewed two of our past clients about their projects. Emma and her husband contracted with Kitchen Design Specialists to add crown molding on their cabinets, remove existing laminate countertops, install granite countertops and a tile backsplash. Kitchen Design Specialists also installed a new sink and faucet. Emma decided to invest in this project because she wanted a change in her kitchen—something different. I was "tired of the same old, same old", she said.



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According to her, the best part of the project was seeing the granite countertops in her kitchen -- "The countertops are beautiful!" When asked how the changes she made added value to her home experience, Emma replied, "I love my home! Our experience of our home is a lot better."

Kim's project was a bit more extensive. She began with a desire for a new

kitchen floor. They met Kitchen Design Specialists at the PA Home Show in Harrisburg. Though they had some idea of what their kitchen would look like, they were looking for someone to offer suggestions and provide ideas. "We really didn't know what we wanted," she said. "Sometimes you don't know what to ask." Kim told us, "I remember Tim (a KDS designer) walking into the adjoining laundry room and said, 'You really need a nice cabinet there.' We did it and it is great!" Interacting with a professional designer helped her to determine that her vision for her future kitchen began with a tile floor, but also included stone countertops, a tile backsplash—and that cabinet in the laundry. She also decided to change the shape of the island countertop to accommodate more seating.

As the scope of the project grew, so did their budget for the work. "I had in mind what we wanted to spend but it was flexible to get what we wanted," Kim said. Through the design process, Tim kept them informed about where they were in relation to the budget so that they could make informed decisions. One other change occurred after the project began. They realized that the door from the laundry to the kitchen interfered with traffic flow and asked us about installing a pocket door. Our staff investigated and found that it would be structurally difficult to install a pocket door. So we suggested swinging the door in the opposite direction. Though a small change, this new door direction has greatly improved access to the kitchen from the laundry.

So, how did it turn out? Kim was concerned that the tile floor would be too cold, but it is not. "We love the floor," she said. But the best thing about the floor for Kim is that it does not show dirt like her old floor. The same is true of the countertop she chose. Kim told us, "I spend a lot of time in the kitchen. Now I have less maintenance on the countertops and floors, so not as much time cleaning—I can enjoy it more. And it's more pleasing to the eye! I cannot tell when the



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floor is dirty anymore," she told us enthusiastically. The worst part of the project for Kim was preparing meals through the project while the kitchen was under construction. But she said, "It wasn't that difficult. Everybody cleaned up after themselves." Kim said the best part of the project was finishing!

As for working with Kitchen Design Specialists, Kim said she was very satisfied. "Each person was great." Though Kim had one miscommunication with our staff, she felt that once the issue was known, there was a quick response to address her concerns. "We learned a lot through this project," she





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## do you need a kitchen spice up?

### take the test

Take the following unscientific test. Answer each question with a number 1-10. Answer with a 10 if you completely agree with the statement without reservation. Answer with a 1 if you completely disagree with the statement without reservation. Use numbers 2-9 to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

I am very happy with the work flow of my kitchen.

My cabinets will satisfy me for at least 10 more years.

All my cabinet drawers are intact and sliding as they should.

I have enough storage space in my kitchen.

My kitchen is well lit.

My countertops will satisfy me for at least 10 years.

I plan to live in my house for at least 5-10 more years.

My kitchen floor will satisfy me for at least 10 years.

I like my backsplash area and it functions well.

My countertop work areas have ground fault protected outlets.

My faucet and drain are working perfectly and my hot and cold water lines have shut off valves.

I do not plan a complete kitchen remodel sooner than 5 years.

told us. "We had never hired a company to work on our home before and now are better prepared for the next project we do." Since her project has been completed, several neighbors have come over to see what she did. We asked Emma, "How satisfied are you with Kitchen Design Specialists now that your project is complete?" She responded, "1,000% or higher! I can't tell you how much we enjoyed it. Very professional people."

After taking the test (left), total your answers.

If your answers total 93 to 120, congratulations! You are probably very happy with your kitchen. You might need a few refinements but overall you are satisfied with your kitchen. If you scored a 12 to 39 you probably need to call a remodeling professional right away! But consider if it would be best to invest in some smaller changes or wait to do the complete renovation.

If your answers total between 40 and 66 a kitchen spice up would probably significantly improve your enjoyment of your kitchen and the value of your house. If you are that discontented with your kitchen, probably anyone who might be interested in purchasing your home would be as well. So even if moving is in your future, the changes you make may help you sell your house. Additionally, you will be able to enjoy your kitchen in the meantime.

If your answers total between 66 and 92 you may benefit from some improvements that will give you an extra smile while you are in your kitchen. But you probably will not require a complete renovation. If you scored your kitchen in this range and sense that there is just something missing, you may want to consider some of the ideas on how to spice it up.

For those in these middle categories, consider the difference that a limited remodel might accomplish for you. What would

a new floor, countertops and/or a backsplash do for the appearance and function of your kitchen? How would you feel in a more attractive and better functioning space? Maybe like Kim, you would be happy to clean less and cook more. Perhaps you would entertain more, or your morning cup of coffee would taste a little bit better!

Consulting a design/remodeling professional could help you breathe new life into your kitchen experience. You should expect a professional designer to listen first and offer advice only after you have expressed your goals and desires for the space. After you have expressed your goals, a professional designer can help you gain a vision for what is possible in your existing space within your budget. You may want to add an island, but is there enough room? How will the textures, shapes, colors and lighting complement each other in order to produce a picture you will be pleased to look at every morning? How can your lighting be enhanced to make the kitchen more functional and feel more inviting? Your designer functions as a sounding board for your ideas and suggests new ideas you may not have considered. Consider the following options—flooring, countertops, under cabinet lighting, plumbing fixtures & sink, electrical upgrades, cabinetry additions, new door and drawer hardware, and paint.

Go ahead, add some spice to your kitchen!

R&A

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