

# **The Kitchen Is Dead! Long Live The Kitchen!**

KEITH'S PHOTO

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A kitchen is no longer a kitchen.

Over the past six decades the American family and lifestyle has completely deconstructed – and revolutionized – the purpose and function of the kitchen.

The kitchen has morphed into “Home Central,” the hub and nerve center (digital or otherwise) in which, and from which, all domestic (including home business) activity originates.

Not only do Americans cook and eat in the kitchen – preparing and consuming five or more meals a week there, according to many surveys.

They also socialize and game there.

They manage the “household business” there – paying bills, scheduling, meeting and making phone calls.

They entertain guests there – parties and extended family gatherings always seem to begin and end there.

And the kids do their homework and watch T.V. there.

## **Give ‘em what they want**

Abraham Lincoln said you can't please all the people all the time.

Well, it's a good thing he's not designing today's kitchens.

Since the kitchen has evolved into a multi-tasking environment – its design should be compatible with its function(s) and the myriad of personalities that use it.

But that's no easy task.

## **In with the old, out with the new**

“Modern” or “Contemporary” kitchen cabinetry design was first introduced in the 1950’s. It had a clean, flat, upbeat and energetic look. Relying primarily on laminates and solid colors, it was perfectly suited to the post world war period of optimism and progress.

Like a blank canvass, its minimalist look and design, was easily adapted to nearly every personality and function.

And, as the style grew in popularity, it was eventually exported to Europe (when Europe still loved everything American).

But then Americans got bored with the sterility and artificiality of “contemporary” kitchen design – in particular, the fake wood grain finishes.

So American designers went to “Old World” Europe for inspiration and satisfaction.

The most recent manifestation is the popular Tuscan look – the current kitchen design du jour.

Using heavy, dark woods like mahogany, cherry and walnut, with intricately carved moldings, panels, corbels and columns the Tuscan look lends a warm, solid, yet exotic, ambiance to the kitchen – rescuing it from the excesses of flat, square-edged, laminate “modern” design.

### **It’s déjà vu all over again!**

Recently though, the grass is growing greener in Europe, again. The Tuscan look has peaked, and our design tastes have...come full circle.

We’re going back to the future.

The Europeans, and the Italians in particular, took our abandoned “contemporary” style of design...internalized...and refined it.

And now – we want it back!

Contemporary kitchen designs have a new and exciting look and feel!

They still have the clean, sleek lines of the “old” contemporary kitchen designs, but they now use real wood, with contours and finishes that give it a distinctly Italian (shall we say Armani and Versace) flair.

### **But it’s expensive!**

And that’s a problem of course for those who...well, can’t afford high-end designs and finishes.

Nevertheless, the demand for authentic, contemporary, real wood, European designed kitchens is growing – especially among the affluent transplants to the Gold Coast from Latin America, Dade and Broward County.

### **Thermofoil tries to help**

With the advent of thermofiling in the early 1990’s, “edges” became rounded, eliminating the telltale black lines on “old contemporary” cabinet doors and drawers (where laminate met laminate.)

But those first generation thermofils basically came in only two colors: white, and...white. And, the quality of the foil and the thermofiling process was...less than desirable.

## **Next generation thermofoil to the rescue**

Now that the next generation of thermofoil products has arrived – high-end contemporary European kitchen designs are accessible to practically everyone.

Because of these new, thicker thermofoils, and superior heating, vacuuming and sealing techniques, among other advancements – an unprecedented array of simulated wood grains, textures, increased contouring capabilities and gloss variations are available.

So, if you want bird's-eye maple cabinetry with a high-gloss veneer (currently the most popular), or a high-gloss cherry veneer – you can have it – using thermofoil (see picture)!

These new thermofoils have the look and feel of the high-end real woods and finishes – making them truly indistinguishable from “the real thing.”

**Best of all – their cost is nearly half of “the real thing” – putting European contemporary kitchen designs in affordable reach of nearly everyone!**

**Welcome back to the future!**

Ed. Note: Schrappert's Fine Cabinetry and Design, Inc. recently won the Gold Coast Builders Association's Prism Gold Awards for “Best of Show” in the Custom Family Home Kitchen Design category, and for [www.schrappers.com](http://www.schrappers.com) in the Website category.