

WHAT'S COOKING?

Maybe our sourdough phase is behind us—but we've never stopped loving spending time in a gorgeous kitchen. And for 2021, kitchen design trends range from warm and woodsy to colourfully chic.

by THE EDITORS

Green House

In this Whistler kitchen renovation from designer Denise Ashmore of Project 22 Design, the greenhouse-style window over the sink was pre-existing, though the team updated the glass with black frames (left). "We find that black-frame windows disappear," says Ashmore. "They recede back and you focus on the outside." Next to the integrated refrigerators, Ashmore added one more shallow cabinet that goes from the ceiling to the counter, providing both counter space and more efficient storage. As a result, the team was able to eliminate the upper cabinets around the range.

Janis Nicolay

Elegant Details

To make the island feel more like a piece of furniture (right), Ashmore opted for recessed finger pulls rather than the matte black metal pulls seen on the perimeter cabinets, and included legs in the design.



Great Views

The dining table is designed by local makers Lock and Mortice; the Torii chairs are from Bensen, Vancouver designer Niels Bendtsen's line. The lighting overhead was ceiling-mounted so as not to interfere with the view.



INDOOR-OUTDOOR DESIGNS CALL FOR MATTE FINISHES

When designer **Denise Ashmore** of **Project 22 Design** was called in to renovate an early '90s-era home on Alta Lake in Whistler, two things were immediately clear: one, you could barely see that great view over the lake if you spent any time in the kitchen and, two, that view would be a great informer of the materials she'd bring into the space. Her team took out an awkward peninsula and opened up the kitchen to the rest of the main floor (and, after a bifold retractable glass wall system was installed on the opposite wall, out to the lake, too). And then they opted for natural, matte finishes on all of the materials they selected for the space: a brushed finish on the smoked walnut millwork, soft limestone tile behind the stove and a honed surface on the black engineered quartz counter. "Whistler is such a natural environment—shiny doesn't play well here," says Ashmore. "The environment is such a strong player."—*Anicka Quin*



MAKE THE ISLAND YOUR CANVAS

Conventional wisdom in West Coast modernism is that saturated hues—all “hey, look at me”—tend to be the antithesis of clean lines and low-key living. But Vancouver interior designer **Cara Hansen** of **Triple Dot Design Studio** says the use of colour freed her from the usual design playbook: “You don’t often get to use colour so it’s really exciting to flex those design muscles.” Kitchens in Vancouver Specials like this one tend to be boxy and small, so Hansen removed walls to create a large great room punctuated by an 11-foot island. The Caesarstone counters in Fresh Concrete and cabinets in Benjamin Moore’s low-sheen Wickham Grey both skew neutral, while the island moves the colour needle in Benjamin Moore’s Light Pistachio. The pale mint tone sets the stage for high drama on the barstool side: when no tile “sparked joy,” the homeowner pivoted to colourful Summer Garden wallpaper by Milton and King. Durability issues be damned: the front side was clad in acrylic to protect it from dirt and scuffs. “Pick one thing that’s your focal point and keep everything else subdued and clean,” says Hansen.—*Amanda Ross*

Over the Moon

With such a large island, the scale of the overhead lights needed to be appropriate. The client wanted something bold yet simple: these Luna cord pendants from Schoolhouse straddled that line between, with gold details that tie in with the cabinet hardware.

Tracey Ayton



Texture Time

The upper cabinets in this clean-lined kitchen have a v-groove panelling that brings extra depth to the dark oak. “The vertical texture added to the wood gives it a coastal feel,” says Martin.

BRING A LITTLE SOFTNESS TO STRAIGHT LINES

Jenny Martin, principal of Jenny Martin Design, focused on clean lines for a seamless look in this coastal Victoria home—minimalist black pulls and smoked glass on the upper cabinets blend in with the stained white oak millwork, and the built-up concrete countertop and island give it a monolithic feel. But to keep the kitchen from looking boxy, she added lighting and decor that had a little more whimsy. “We mixed different forms and shapes to soften an otherwise rectilinear effect,” says the designer. Spherical pendant lights from Hinkley, curved brass backless barstools from Restoration Hardware and round pottery and ceramics give the space an artistic touch.—*Alyssa Hirose*



PlatinumHDstudios



Shine Factor

The backsplash features a mottled hand-made tile installed vertically—rather than the classic subway pattern—bringing a little reflection and depth to the surface.

YOU CAN HAVE A WHITE KITCHEN—AND STILL LOVE COLOUR, TOO

The love for white kitchens stays strong—but even within this enduring trend, there are plenty of ways to customize. This light and bright room was once a galley kitchen in a '50s-era home in Calgary, and designers **Aly Velji** and **Alison Connor** from **Alykhan Velji Designs** were brought on board to create an open-concept layout for the main floor. The homeowner was keen to keep the original oak floors for the living area, so rather than try to colour-match them in the kitchen, the design team had a little fun with a playful black-and-white tile pattern. Consistent black accents throughout—the pendants, the hardware, the faucets—bring some grounding to the space, and while the perimeter Shaker cabinets are in classic white, the island has a little fun in a lovely sage green (Benjamin Moore's Cushing Green). “For us, having an island as a feature has always been a big thing when it comes to designing kitchens,” says Velji. “Some people are just a bit wary of painting the whole kitchen in colour—this way it doesn't feel overwhelming.”—*A.Q.*

Joel Klassen

Another Dimension

The team at Atmosphere brought in mirrored fronts for the upper cabinets for a little extra sparkle. The finish on the mirror contains a bit of dust and speckle, giving it extra depth and dimension—and making maintenance easier. The Shaker cabinets have a bevelled edge, which gives them a more elegant, defined look.

A BRIGHT KITCHEN ISN'T ALWAYS WHITE

“Even though white kitchens are really popular and they always will be, we look for opportunities to deliver that light aesthetic people are looking for in a different way,” says **Curtis Elmy** of Saskatoon’s **Atmosphere Interior Design**. In this kitchen (part of a house they designed for the Saskatoon Hospital Home Lottery), the team at Atmosphere opted for a pale grey on the cabinets—Benjamin Moore’s Gray Owl above; a little darker on the lowers with Benjamin Moore’s Rainstorm—and injected white throughout with the marble backsplash, the Caesarstone counters and a pair of great oversized pendants from Visual Comfort. It’s a light and bright space full of interesting details, including that showstopper of a range hood custom made by Hammersmith in Calgary. The slightly curved shape provides great contrast to the square lines of the Shaker cabinets, and its two-tone design—natural stainless with antique brass strapping and rivets—provides a visual anchor to pair with the Colonial Bronze handles on the cabinets and the antique brass interiors of the pendant lights.

—A.Q.



THE CEILING CAN HOST A DESIGN ELEMENT, TOO

Designers **Aly Velji** and **Katie Nelson** of **Alykhan Velji Design** worked with Alloy Homes on this roomy Calgary kitchen, which feels all the airier thanks to the open-plan design overlooking the sunken living room adjacent. Open display shelving, built from the same rift-cut oak that's used for the cabinetry, separates the two rooms without feeling heavy. "It's a nod to that mid-century vibe that I love so much," says Velji, "and it's a great space to house books and decorative accessories." The team also kept the room's sightlines open by foregoing pendant lights over the island. "We wanted to keep the views into the kitchen unobstructed," says Velji. "Adding in the slatted detail above the island in the same wood tone helps to draw the eye without being overwhelming."—A.Q.

Counter Offer

Instead of a tiled backsplash, the design team carried the Nova Grey granite countertop up behind the rangetop for a seamless look. Part of the pantry was designed to feel more like a built-in sideboard, opening up an opportunity for art above it.



Cozy Corner

Ast included the walnut on the island as a ribbed accent to bring in visual texture to the space. The counter is a natural stone quartzite called Renaissance; the stools are from Trica. The Crescent chairs from West Elm offer a perfect spot to grab a morning coffee or an evening glass of wine, and swivel to enjoy the view, too.

CREATE A DEDICATED DRINKS STATION TO KEEP THE ISLAND TIDY

This mid-century modern 1961 home in Calgary's Bel-Aire neighbourhood had undergone all the wrong renovations—a country kitchen, drywall disguising a gorgeous barrel ceiling—until designer **Martine Ast** of **Martine Ast Interiors** came on board. She opened up a warren of tiny rooms and brought back the mid-century influence of its original design, creating a sense of airiness in the kitchen and opening up the living space to the pool in the backyard. The vintage vibe is enhanced with flat-cut walnut millwork in a rich, warm stain, paired with brushed-gold pulls from Banbury Lane. And Ast brought one of her signature kitchen treatments into the design itself: a dedicated beverage zone, which includes refrigerator and freezer drawers, a dishwasher drawer, plenty of storage for glassware—and, of course, a coffee station. “I always try to create this for clients,” she says. “There’s nothing worse than a mountain of glasses on your island.” This tidy little area keeps the mess hidden away, but there’s one more disguise here: that “cabinet” door to the right of the wine fridge is actually a secret passage to the mudroom, perfect for easy access to load in the groceries.—A.Q.

Joel Klassen



WHEN IT'S A KITCHEN FOR A BIG FAMILY, MATERIALS MATTER

A half-dozen kids still live at home in this west-side Vancouver house, ranging in age from 10 to 19—so everyone chips in with the prep at dinnertime. That meant designer **Juli Hodgson** of **Hodgson Design Associates** was tasked with both smart space planning—lots of room for cooks of all ages to do work around the counter and island—and with finding durable materials to outfit the kitchen. The cabinets and counters are Kerlite porcelain in a black “Fossil” shade from Italian brand Modulnova—“they’re bullet-proof,” says Hodgson. Miunn stools from Lapalma wrap around the white oak eating bar at the island, and the nearby roomy Artisan collection table from SwitzerCultCreative is outfitted with a lazy Susan to help serve the crowd. Both fridges are integrated behind white oak millwork, and the space feels clean and modern thanks to plenty of organized storage, including an appliance garage at the end of the perimeter counter.—A.Q. *JHL*

Ground Central

Drawers at the end of the island provide balance to the overall design: a visual anchor to keep it from feeling like it’s floating, says Hodgson.



Erna Peter