

# DreamWork

K I T C H E N S

*and fine custom cabinetry*

## *The Kitchen Insider*®

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### Computers, Kitchens & Changes

Many years ago, when the earth was still young, I gave up the computer world and entered into the realm of kitchen remodeling. Although computing was the upcoming thing, I found that I didn't enjoy sitting in front of a machine every day, learning how to use new software that seemed to be revised daily! The decision seemed like a "no-brainer", wood doesn't change; cabinets are cabinets; and who needs a computer to sell a kitchen?

In hindsight, I didn't realize, that if done properly, each and every kitchen is unique, and each one contributes to a continuing learning experience. Every kitchen design not only is dependent on the layout of the room, but equally important, on the lifestyle of the family that will use it. Of course, there are certain "rules" that apply to basic design, (see [www.NKBA.com](http://www.NKBA.com) which publishes these guidelines), however it is the creativity of the designer that transforms a "basic design" into a "Dream Kitchen".

Computer technology has invaded the remodeling business, and there's no escaping it. Computer Aided Design (CAD) programs have become indispensable when creating floorplans and renderings for architects and designers. This type of software usually costs thousands of dollars, however, there are programs available for the homeowner at a much more reasonable cost. A company called Upperspace has a very simple kitchen design program for \$30 and DecoTeck has one starting at \$150. These, economical programs are great to get you started, but before you order any cabinets, have your design checked by a trained designer.

Unfortunately, some of the professional software has gotten so sophisticated, that it can design a kitchen automatically. I say unfortunately because there's much more to a good design than just filling up all the space with cabinets. A computer never prepared a meal; unloaded the dishwasher; put away the groceries; or did homework at the kitchen table. Until these machines are capable of artificial intelligence, they will be lacking in creative design resources and the capability of considering the kitchen's relationship to the other living areas in the house.

You'll find that these auto-programs are used primarily by the big home improvement chains, where they must sell hundreds of cabinets a week to meet their quota. They don't have the time or the inclination to look at each kitchen, and each family, individually and come up with a design that is both aesthetically pleasing and functional.

Technology has not only had an impact on the design aspect of remodeling, but on the materials used in construction as well. Many cabinets have "engineered wood" components and some are built of it entirely; countertop are now available in "engineered stone"; and home-automation is finding its way into both the home and in the appliances.

"Smart" kitchens are in their infancy, but eventually will become the norm. Integrating "smart" appliances, such as refrigerators that track the food you've consumed, and dishwashers that can decide how dirty your dishes are, are starting to be seen in high-end kitchens. Eventually, the prices will drop to a reasonable level, so that you and I can afford them.

These are just a few examples of what architects and designers must stay abreast of. Changes, that seem to happen almost daily. As I type this article *in* Microsoft Word, and not *on* a Smith Corona, I have had no choice, but to keep up with the times.