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White Done Right

Think tiles, appliances, and accessories to make a kitchen pop.

By SHERRY MOELLER

A KITCHEN RENOVATION INVITES dozens of decisions, but none is more crucial than cabinet color: Go bold? Or keep it classic with white?

For enduring appeal, white cabinets are hard to beat. But adding saturated color in strategic locations can personalize the space and make a white kitchen sizzle with visual interest. We asked designers around Northern Virginia what's new in cabinet colors and how to make a white kitchen anything but vanilla.

Nadia Wall, studio manager for Braemar Cabinetry in Alexandria, suggests considering deep blues and reds on island cabinets, tiles, accessories—even colored appliances—all of which can bring playful elements to a classic white space.

Also trending, entire kitchens with cabinets in a deep color. “We’re currently working on a hunter green kitchen with all the cabinets finished in Benjamin Moore Salamander,” says Danielle Steele, lead interior designer at Marks-Woods Construction Services in Alexandria. The dark green has blue-black undertones and makes a strong statement.

David Facey, interior designer at Winn Design + Build in Falls Church, says he’s seeing some momentum for green in the kitchen, as well as shades of blue for accents to the island. “Clients are increasingly wanting to experiment with white colors that have a touch of colored pigment in them, too, such as Farrow & Ball Ammonite or Benjamin Moore Blue Lace,” Facey says. Overall, he recommends not following trends, but instead selecting a color that brings you happiness.

If you’re using white as the main cabinet color, Tracy Morris, president of McLean-based Tracy Morris Design, suggests selecting a tone that has more warmth to it. “If you choose a color that is too white, the space could end up feeling like a surgery center,” Morris says warm woods are gaining a lot of traction in the kitchen, too. “For years wood cabinets took a back seat to their painted cousins. Now we’re seeing wood cabinets in a different and much lighter way,” she says.

When selecting the cabinet colors, Wall keys in on what a client responds to. “A lot of it depends on the direction the kitchen is going in,” adds Steele, who makes sure the tones of the cabinets, counters, and backsplashes are unified. Wall and Steele often collaborate and are currently working on a kitchen with white upper cabinets and Benjamin Moore Dollar Bill Green base cabinets with a pantry painted in Benjamin Moore Baked Terra Cotta. “We often color block kitchens to denote



Stainless steel appliances, contrasting knobs and drawer pulls, and a dark island offer subtle contrasts in this mostly white kitchen by Marks-Woods Construction Services with architecture by Kim Beasley of Beasley Architectural Group. White zellige tiles by Cle are used for the backsplash. The range hood is also custom.

Open shelving stocked with colorful Le Creuset or Staub Dutch ovens and braisers elevates pot storage to an art form.



Colorful cookware serves as a functional design element in the Northern Virginia kitchen of Anina Belle (of *Le Chef's Wife* fame).

zones,” adds Wall. “This can give some cabinets within the space the look of furniture.”

Elena Eskandari, director of project development at Case Architects & Remodelers, with design studios in Falls Church and Alexandria, says using a different color, usually in a darker tone, for the base cabinets is popular now. Taller items, such as pantry cabinets, can be painted to match either the base or wall cabinets.

Colorful Accents: Backsplashes

Facey suggests muted tones for backsplash tiles or, if you want more movement, consider continuing the counter material up the wall.

“I shy away from trendy backsplashes,” says Eskandari, noting that they can be overpowering and go out of style quickly. Instead, try using a favorite tile over a range or sink. “Everyone likes subway tile, which comes in all types of finishes and colors,” she adds.



Colorful backsplash tiles, a blue island, and coordinating glass pendants add just the right amount of color to this kitchen designed by Elena Eskandari of Case Architects & Remodelers.

Appliances: Custom Colors

Wall says some homeowners are adding color via Ilve ranges, an Italian brand that offers custom colors. If you don't want to splurge on a colorful range, you can opt for a different metal on knobs, such as brass knobs on a stainless steel range.

"I like adding color through appliances," Eskandari says. "Colorful appliances bring in a unique look while making a statement that is not as permanent as a colored cabinet." She loves Blue Star appliances for their wide range of colors, but also notes that KitchenAid has just introduced colorful, less expensive appliance options. Matte black ranges with matte brass accents are also popular.

Hardware & Hoods

Steele says by varying the metal finishes, such as using brass faucets and cabinet pulls, you can elevate a mostly white kitchen. For an industrial vibe, consider an off-the-shelf stainless steel chimney-style hood from Vent-A-Hood, a less expensive option than a custom hood. Hoodly also offers semi-custom wood hoods with details like metal strapping, shiplap, reclaimed wood, arches, and corbels as options.

"The range hood is the number one requested design feature," adds Facey, whether it's a custom wood hood or mixed metal creation from Modern-Aire, one of the country's leading manufacturers of custom-built wall and island hoods.

Walls & Furniture

If your preference is to keep cabinets white, you can still incorporate color on the walls and upholstery, says Facey. Morris suggests adding color to the back of glass cabinets or open shelves as a fun way to introduce a new hue without a huge commitment. She also likes to use durable, easy-to-clean leather for bar stools. "We love Moore & Giles leathers for the textures and tones," she says.

Custom cushions and pillows can dress up breakfast benches and banquettes and are also great ways to inject color into a kitchen landscape.

Lighting

Light fixtures are another way to add interest to a kitchen. "I tend to keep the lighting calm," Morris says, especially if there are other areas that have color. Depending on the size of the island, try one linear or two larger pendants. "Go-to sources are Circa Lighting and The Urban Electric Co.," she says. Steele suggests the Richmond-based Shades of Light for an affordable online lighting source. For those looking for just the right fixture, Shades of Light's catalog is eye candy on a budget.

Accessories

If you're looking for other accessories, try using cookware, storage containers, and small countertop appliances in a variety of colors, says

Eskandari. Open shelving stocked with colorful Le Creuset or Staub Dutch ovens and braisers elevates pot storage to an art form. Eskandari also suggests using Spoonflower's peel-and-stick wallpaper for a whimsical accent. In addition, Phillip Jeffries vinyl wallpapers can provide texture and color, plus they're easy maintenance, Morris adds.

As kitchens continue to be gathering places, design trends reflect that shifting function. "The kitchen is absolutely a key place for color," says Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, one of the premier color forecasters in the country. Even with white cabinets, Eiseman adds, "it's apt to have some mixing and matching of colors to create high energy." **VL**

A D.C. native, Sherry Moeller has served as Editor in Chief of Capitol File magazine and Editorial Director for Washington Spaces. She earned a journalism degree from the University of Maryland.

DESIGNERS' FAVORITE KITCHEN CABINET COLORS

Whites



White Dove
Benjamin Moore



Winter White
Benjamin Moore



Decorator's White
Benjamin Moore



Ammonite
Farrow & Ball

Colors



Card Room Green
Farrow & Ball



De Nimes
Farrow & Ball



Cobblestone Path
Benjamin Moore



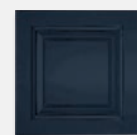
Salamander
Benjamin Moore



Dollar Bill Green
Benjamin Moore



Blue Lace
Benjamin Moore



Naval
Sherwin-Williams



Studio Green
Farrow & Ball