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Tracy Morris added navy cabinets in this McLean kitchen.

# Out with All White

*Two-toned cabinetry spices up kitchen redesigns.*

By Megan Herr

**➔ TWO KITCHEN TRENDS** — white oak cabinetry and two-toned cabinetry — are starting to push out the traditional, clean all-white kitchen that took the design world by storm, designers say.

This shift started in 2019 and took off during the pandemic, hitting its stride in 2020.

“Honestly, people were just over white kitchens,” says Tracy Morris, designer and owner of Tracy

Morris Design in Great Falls. “They wanted a bit more vibrancy in their lives and wanted to start incorporating wood back into the mix.”

Morris says that for a while people mixed darker grays with white, but that wood adds an extra element of warmth to which they are attracted.

People also are looking for something that could be a bit more timeless overall, adds Tanya Smith-Shiflett, designer and founder of Unique Kitchens & Baths.

“Now that homeowners are investing so much money into their kitchens, they really want something that in 10 years, they’re still going to love,” Smith-Shiflett says. “Oak is not cheap by any means, but they are willing to make that investment because it’s timeless.”

### Two-Toned Texture

Two-toned cabinetry goes hand-in-hand with white oak in recent home renovations.

“White oak is like the blue jeans of the wood world because you can wear it with nearly any color,” says Morris.

“You can do navy. You can do charcoal. You can do green. You can really just play around with all kinds of colors,” she says.

And that’s been part of the appeal.

“People want to add a punch to their space, which is easy to do



PHOTO BY GREG POWERS



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with the two-toned cabinetry,” Morris says, but she advises her clients to choose a color that won’t date too much over time.

“Something like a navy, emerald green, or even a deep, beautiful gray would work,” she says. “Those types of tones with the white oak will last a bit longer and be a bit more timeless.”

### Melding Rich Navy and White Oak

Morris incorporated navy cabinets into a kitchen

remodel for a busy McLean family who loves to entertain and cook.

“The color scheme was really a matter of the family wanting to add some beautiful color into their home,” says Morris. “They had always sort of gravitated toward that deep navy.”

White oak turned out to be the perfect complement to the color choice.

“They wanted something a bit more forgiving and family-oriented that also added a little warmth,” Morris

Tanya Smith-Shiflett combined white oak and merlot-colored cabinets in this Oakton remodel.



says, adding that the family has four children.

For a more cohesive kitchen, Morris took the kitchen that had been divided into three sections and created just one.

“The hood area of this renovation is very special as it really grounds the space,” says Morris.

“It is made out of blackened steel with brass accents,” she adds. “And on either side of the hood, you will find niches that were

purposefully added to allow the client to have seamless spice storage next to the cooktop.”

Another highlight: a built-in homework station where the kids can work while the family cooks.

### Mixing in Merlot

An Oakton renovation Smith-Shiflett undertook combined the trends and added kitchen zones.

“For this renovation, the wife had wanted to incorporate the dark, moody merlot color and the husband wanted white oak, so we coupled the two together to create this beautiful contrast,” says Smith-Shiflett.

The designer squared off the kitchen from its original octagonal shape to add different zones. Those sectors include a storage area, an island where the family’s three children can do the dishes while the adults cook, and an area for the refrigerator and pantry.

Smith-Shiflett added a fun coffee bar area just off the kitchen.

Knobs, lighting, the faucet, and a pot filler with an unlacquered brass finish complete the renovation.

“It all just works really well together and helped to add some character to the room,” says Smith-Shiflett.

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