

A neutral kitchen? Add a

splash of joy

Color sparks smiles, whether you go for 'Wow!' or something a little more subtle

BY LARA EWEN
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White might be the most common kitchen color, but it's certainly not the most exciting. Fortunately, trendsetters in the design industry have been suggesting it might be time for a change. "White kitchens have been done," says Meg Braff, of Meg Braff Interior Designs in Locust Valley. "I think people are thinking of trying something new. And in a kitchen, color makes it more like a room. It makes it feel less utilitarian."

Keith Baltimore, owner of Baltimore Design Group, with offices in Port Washington and Boca Raton, Florida, agrees. "We've been through a design season of gray and neutral," he says. "It's time to change it up. Color makes you smile, and it makes you happy and upbeat, and ready to cook and entertain."

Baltimore says that since the kitchen is so important, having one that's full of color can make your house feel more upbeat. "A kitchen is the heart of the house," says Baltimore. "And if it's a colorful kitchen, it's a happy home."



ON THE COVER The hues of this butler's pantry make it "conducive for entertaining," says its designer, Meg Braff.



2 The breakfast room and kitchen of this Roslyn Estates home play boldly with color. "Just go for it," advises owner Alyson Irom.

Here, designers offer tips on how to add color to a kitchen, and they showcase some of their favorite colorful kitchens, from bold and bright to soft and subtle.

1. THE BOLD ONE

The striking green hue (Benjamin Moore Forest Moss 2146-20) was chosen to create an intentional jolt in this Locust Valley butler's pantry, designed by Meg Braff of Meg Braff Interior Designs, also in Locust Valley. "I love the mood it creates," says Braff. "We wanted to create an atmosphere that was conducive for entertaining and mixing cocktails."

She says the rich mossy green was chosen to complement the rich green velvet covering the walls of the home's adjacent dining room. "We wanted a continuation of that color from the dining room," says Braff, who then chose a custom-sourced

unlacquered brass sink, matching unlacquered brass cabinet hardware and mahogany counters, all of which pop against the green.

She color-saturated the moldings, the cabinets and even the back of the door in the vibrant hue, and then paired it with a complementary wallpaper (Peter Fasano Brompton in sage, available through the John Rosselli Manhattan showroom) to add texture.

To further lighten the room, she went with glass-fronted cabinets. "If you're doing cabinetry in a color like this, it's nice to have a little bit of glass to break it up," she says. "You could also do open cabinets." Braff says that in a small space, it's easier to play with really bold color choices. "If you're not quite fearless enough to do this in your whole kitchen, a pantry like this is a way to do it," she says. "The color gives it a richness and personality."

2. BRIGHT AND CHEERFUL

This Roslyn Estates kitchen is filled with cheerful color, and that's just the way she wants it, says owner Alyson Irom, 48, a homemaker who lives there with her husband and three children. "Most people tend to play it safe and be a little more neutral," says Gail Tarasoff-Sutton, designer at Anne Tarasoff Interiors in Manhasset, who designed the space. "Then there's someone like Alyson, who loves color and isn't afraid to use it." Tarasoff-Sutton says the kitchen color scheme began small and then grew. "We were shopping for chairs, and came across these metal chairs at a place in Brooklyn," says Tarasoff-Sutton. "We saw the fabric and the texture and that was it."

After that, Tarasoff-Sutton found the wallpaper (Thibaut Tulsi Block Print in Coral) and window fabric, and then bought fabric for the window

seats and pillows. "I love pink and orange, and I decided to be daring with the two colors," says Irom. "The right side of the kitchen is muted, so I wanted this side to be brighter. I think it just makes it cheery, and it adds a 'wow!' factor."

Tarasoff-Sutton says that although pink is often considered a difficult shade to work with, it suits the space. "Because this room is predominantly orange with hot pink accents, it doesn't feel too girly," she says. As for Irom, she says she has no regrets about her brightly colored kitchen. "If you want to add color, just go for it," says Irom. "When people come over, they'll be so jealous that you did."

3. SUBTLE AND STYLISH

Despite the profusion of bright, sparkling tiles, the Port Washington kitchen of Jill Kreitman, 53, a chaplain at Nassau University Medical Center, is surprisingly subtle.

TIPS

DO

Consider the cost. "There's so much millwork and wood in a kitchen, and it's usually floor to ceiling, so it's very costly to paint cabinets," says Braff. "Plus, cabinets typically need three coats of paint."

DON'T

Overlook new places to put color. "There's more than one way to give a kitchen color," says Braff. "In my home I have a blue, high-gloss ceiling. You can even have white cabinets and blue floors. There's more than one way to do color."

DO

Try small doses. "It could be bar stools, colorful painted green lanterns," says Braff. She suggests that even place mats, napkins, or a simple cotton rug are great ways to add a hue. "These are great ways to infuse a little color without spending a lot of money," she says.

DON'T

Skimp on lighting. "You have to be able to see the color," says Baltimore. Under-cabinet lighting versus overhead lighting can make a big difference in how bright or muted your color will be.

DO

Consider artwork. "I think you can get some fantastic posters, frame them inexpensively, and that can give you a great splash of color," says Tarasoff-Sutton. "I put a framed Andy Warhol Campbell's soup can in my own kitchen because I wanted color."

— LARA EWEN



3 Owner Jill Kreitman finds the subtle, shimmering colors of her kitchen more soothing than neutrals ever could be.

lot of serenity and calm to it."

Baltimore says the room reflects the homeowner's personality. "A home is representative of who you are, and when someone comes into your colorful kitchen, they know you're a colorful person," says Baltimore. "It's just happy. And that's who Jill is." The kitchen, finished three years ago, features a centerpiece backsplash made of glass tiles from Artistic Tile, which has a location in Manhasset, that were reverse-painted and cracked by an artist in California. Surrounding the backsplash and elsewhere in the kitchen are more colorful glass tiles, all from Artistic Tile, that bring a sparkle

to the space, even on cloudy days.

"Whenever couples walk into my home, they say, 'You're anything but beige,'" says Kreitman. "White screams to me. It's not a calming color. Neither is beige." She chose lavender to add accents through the room and the adjoining breakfast nook because of her mother. "My mother's favorite color is lavender," she says. "That's a piece of my childhood that I carried forward." In the end, the kitchen ended up being her sanctuary. "There's no better gathering place," says Kreitman. "I have so many different rooms, and I always choose this room."

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