



Carol Liquori is ready to plan supper in her renovated kitchen that any chef would enjoy cooking in

Donna Cohen is pictured in the model home center at Avalon that she designed.



# Light and Air For Your Kitchen

by Darcy Meeker



Let's face it. If you live in an older house, your kitchen probably needs some help.

"Older kitchens are always dark and small," explains Donna Cohen of Donna Cohen Interiors, a six-year-old Gainesville design firm serving and commercial clients. "The number one thing people do when they renovate their kitchen is to lighten it up. The second thing they do is to find a way to use their kitchen space more efficiently."

At the grocery store, \$100 will buy a couple of fluorescent fixtures to glue under cabinets for light and storage and a carousel to put in your corner cabinets. You'll even have money to spare for a fresh coat of paint.

But, if that doesn't cure your case of the dark and dingies, it's time to go see the pros.

You'll need serious money—five, ten, fifteen thousand dollars. "But," contends Jim Stringfellow of Stringfellow's Supply Company (where the kitchen design section has grown like Topsy), "you'll find bankers glad to lend you the money. Kitchen renovation can add much to the resale value of your home." And besides, what other room is so central to your family activities?



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## Kitchens

There are many things you can do in order to make your kitchen look light and airy.

Cohen suggests using space between cabinets and ceiling to install indirect lighting and display baskets or other collectibles, solving light and space problems both at once.

Another solution for daily appliances and cereal boxes is to tuck them away behind a "garage door." Otherwise known as an appliance garage, it is a small cabinet with a roll-down door.

In cabinets, the most popular construction is whitewashed or 'pickled' oak, with white laminate second. Also popular are the European-style cabinets that have no frames.

Another way to lighten your kitchen is by installing a skylight, possibly using recessed lighting for the evening hours.

For countertops, dealers explain that Corian is the top of the line. At \$40 per square foot, Corian has a man-made, indestructible surface available in many colors and patterns. Another choice is granite, which is even more indestructible and also comes in beautiful colors. Also available are the newer, thicker laminates that last well (especially protected by a posh Corian cutting board). Ceramic tiles look great too, running across the cabinets and up the walls.

**Floors:** Ceramic tile is sensible for the floor. The cost is low, starting at about \$1.25 per square foot. It comes in wonderful colors, and you can stain the grout the same color as the tile or even make the grout stainproof.

One way to save money is to do some of the work yourself. "You can save \$1.50 to \$2 per square foot doing it yourself," says Pete Olsen of Tile Contractors Supply Company. "But be careful. I've seen very few bad jobs. However, if people are willing to take the time, they can do a good job on their own floors."

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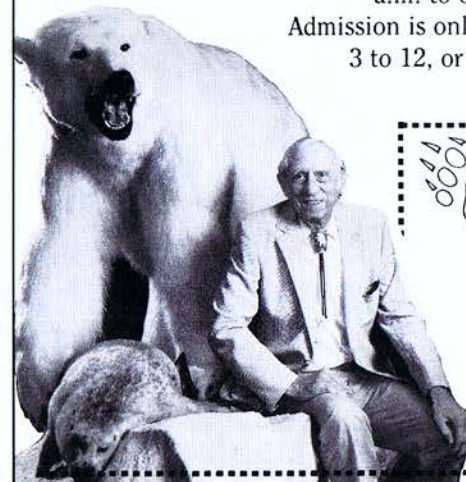
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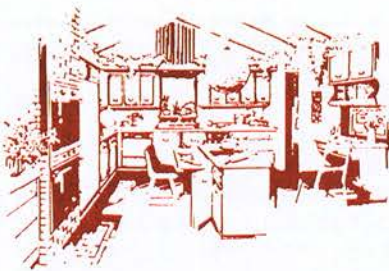


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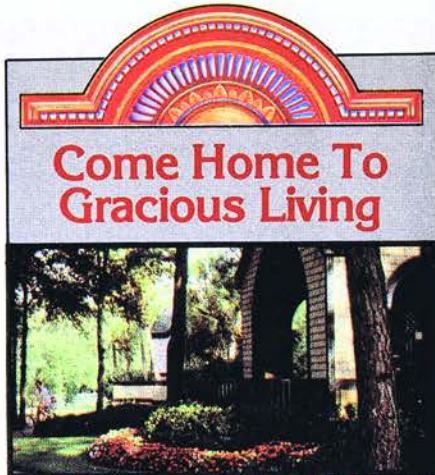
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## Kitchens

(continued from 14)

to one-half inch wide, make the job a lot easier than it used to be.

Whether you do a tile floor yourself or have it done by a professional, buy a few extra tiles so you can replace broken ones later. For now, glue cork on the back and use them for trivets.

A light-colored wood floor is another possibility you might want to consider. You'll want to buy the acrylic impregnated wood. This flooring can wear away one-eighth of an inch before it loses its finish. Designed for do-it-yourselfers, one Hartco runs \$3.75 per square foot, but it's easier on your legs, dropped plates, and, oh yes, the delicate bodies of young children, says Steve Elder of Gainesville Tile and Flooring.

"I also recommend Armstrong's Designer Solarium," Elder advises. "If you have kids, they can even skate board. In fact, they can do everything on that floor. If you buy cheap vinyl, it gets nicks and tears, but this stuff can take it." Vinyl flooring is basically a picture with vinyl on it. You'll want your design as thick as possible. Elder's best is 30 mils. For comparison, FHA minimum is 10 mils. Some do-it-yourself shops sell vinyl with only five mil-thick designs, barely suitable for wall use.

**Appliances:** Light and lovely are the bywords for most appliances, too. "The hottest thing we have is the white on white look," declares Steve Dobbins, a Whirlpool sales rep. "White gives appliances more of a built-in look.

The new refrigerators are space-saving marvels in their own right. They are no deeper than the average cabinet. They have pull-out shelves that can be moved. They have a rack for one big bottle of soda or wine and lots of crisper areas because we're eating more vegetables these days.

New range hoods pull back into the stovetop when not in use. Gone are the old hoods that used to poke you in the eye and get dirty over your stove.

Next thing you know, they'll even figure out how to give you the time to cook!

**Checklist:** Where does darkness lurk in your kitchen?

- Is it color?
- floor?
- cabinets?
- countertops?
- appliances?
- curtains?
- insufficient lighting?

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