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HAUTE CUISINE MEETS HAUTE COUTURE

*The Once-Utilitarian Kitchen
Has Evolved Into A Technology-
Laden Hub Of Creativity*

BY **ROGER GRODY**

WHILE FUNCTION REMAINS A preeminent consideration in kitchen design, the days of this room being strictly practical have long passed. The space has emerged as a showplace for visitors—guests at any party worth attending invariably gravitate to the kitchen—and the room’s aesthetics must be as fashionable as the food prepared there. However, no single formula goes into creating a memorable kitchen, and the diversity of approaches reflect the inherent versatility of the space. Laura Giuliani of House of G Designs states, “The kitchen has become more personal, and there’s genuine interest in making it a lovely space in addition to just a functional space.” Designer Elaine Morrison suggests, “The pandemic motivated people to step up remodeling decisions, opening up walls to make their kitchens more a part of their homes.” Most designers agree that the stark all-white kitchen is in decline, with Meredith Gullion of Cooper Pacific Kitchens commenting, “We’re sensing a trend back to traditional

design in terms of detailing and how space is used.” And while clients may be acutely conscious of aesthetics, functionality has come into greater focus during the past two years as homeowners have honed their culinary skills, recognizing exactly what spatial considerations are important. Further altering the dynamics in California is the nebulous distinction between indoors and out, reinforced during the pandemic. “We don’t want to have any boundaries, so the use of similar material and color palettes makes the transition seamless,” reports designer Julia Wong. Technology continues to shape how the kitchen is optimized, enabling its users to become more efficient while connecting with family members in New York or culinary instructors at Le Cordon Bleu. Today’s successful kitchen is a sophisticated blend of utility and high fashion, and the best designers are adept at balancing the two. Presented on these pages are inspiring kitchens from some of California’s most talented designers. **CH**



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Designer Kelly Schandel, founding principal of the modern-leaning firm thinkpure, created a kitchen for a flashy Hidden Hills residence designed by 64North, headed by acclaimed architect Wil Carson. “It reflects our style of ‘warm modernism’ in which the details are pared down but the use of natural stone and wood adds warmth,” explains Schandel, who insists minimalism need not be austere. There is a pair of 131-inch quartzite-clad islands, one with waterfall edges and wooden stools with cognac-colored leather from Article, which specializes in approachable modern products. Lower cabinets feature blonde wire-brushed white oak, contrasting with charcoal-gray uppers. Underfoot are 12-inch oak planks from Spanish flooring specialist Grato, while overhead hang dome-shaped pendants—their shades feature blackened bronze exteriors and brass interior surfaces—from Allied Maker. Dramatic carbon-toned fixtures from California Faucets were selected, and Miele appliances are seamlessly integrated into the design. “This kitchen was influenced by the home’s architecture, but its warm modern design is very much in line with what we do,” says Schandel, who notes the residence is owned by a high-profile professional athlete. thinkpure.com