

THE CONNECTED KITCHEN: *Designing the heart of the home*

by MARIAM ABOUTAAM



When I began designing the kitchen for the Heritage House at Angus Glen South Village, I wasn't simply creating a beautiful room, I was designing the heart of a home with history. Originally built in 1875, the Casely Heritage House was thoughtfully relocated and restored to preserve an important piece of Markham's heritage. Rather than recreating a traditional farmhouse kitchen, my vision was to reinterpret its heritage through a contemporary lens, preserving the warmth, craftsmanship

and sense of permanence that define historic homes while incorporating the functionality and refinement expected in modern living.

As with every project I design, one question guided every decision: How can this kitchen become the place where people naturally want to gather?

At the centre of the room sits a generously proportioned curved island, designed to be much more than a workspace. It naturally became the home's gathering place, a space

for preparing meals, enjoying casual breakfasts, helping children with homework, entertaining guests or simply sharing conversation at the end of the day. Its softened curves improve circulation while introducing a sculptural quality that feels both inviting and elegant. More than a design feature, the island establishes the rhythm of the entire room, seamlessly connecting the kitchen to the adjoining dining and family spaces while encouraging interaction throughout the main floor.

Materiality played an equally important role in telling the home's story. I selected custom white oak cabinetry to establish warmth and permanence, creating a timeless foundation that complements the Heritage House's historic architecture. At the centre of the room, a deep forest-green island introduces richness and depth while subtly reflecting the surrounding landscape of Angus Glen Golf Club. Its fluted detailing adds texture and craftsmanship, becoming both a sculptural focal point and a natural gathering place. Together, the palette creates a quiet balance between old and new, respecting the home's heritage while embracing a fresh, contemporary aesthetic.

Rather than relying on excessive ornamentation, the design celebrates honest materials and thoughtful restraint. Richly veined porcelain wraps the countertops and extends seamlessly into a full-height backsplash, creating a clean, uninterrupted backdrop that is as durable as it is elegant. Above, a sculpted plaster hood canopy softens the range wall with gentle curves, while warm brass hardware, a statement brass sink and carefully selected plumbing fixtures introduce refinement throughout the space. These details may seem subtle individually, but together they create a sense of cohesion and understated luxury that elevates the entire kitchen.

Functionality remained at the forefront of every decision. Integrated appliances preserve clean architectural lines while extensive custom cabinetry conceals pantry storage, small appliances and everyday essentials. Every cabinet was carefully considered to maximize storage without compromising the clean architectural aesthetic. By minimizing visual clutter, the room feels calm and organized while effortlessly supporting the demands of modern family life.

Wide-plank white oak hardwood flooring grounds the kitchen, flowing seamlessly into the adjoining dining and family rooms to reinforce the home's open-concept layout.

Carefully curated artwork, collected objects and sculptural accessories introduce personality and tell the story of a home that has evolved over time rather than one that was decorated all at once. Layered decorative lighting creates warmth after sunset, while every accessory was intentionally selected to complement, not compete with the architecture and material palette.

Natural light completes the experience. Expansive windows frame uninterrupted views overlooking Angus Glen Golf Club, allowing the changing seasons to become part of the interior itself. Direct access to the adjoining terrace extends the kitchen beyond its walls, strengthening the connection between architecture and landscape while creating effortless flow for entertaining. The transition between indoors and outdoors reinforces the idea that the kitchen is not an isolated room, but part of a larger living experience.

Perhaps the biggest evolution in kitchen design is that beauty and functionality are no longer separate conversations. Today's most successful kitchens don't ask homeowners to choose between the two. Instead, every element is expected to perform multiple roles. Storage becomes seamlessly integrated into architecture. An island becomes a prep station, dining table and gathering place. Materials must not only be beautiful, but durable enough to support everyday family life while aging gracefully over time.

The Heritage House kitchen reflects this philosophy. Every curve, finish and proportion was carefully considered to create a space that feels timeless rather than trend-

DESIGN TIPS FOR CREATING A CONNECTED KITCHEN

- Design around your lifestyle. Before selecting finishes, think about how your family cooks, gathers, entertains and lives every day.
- Create a multi-functional island. A thoughtfully designed island should serve as a prep space, casual dining area, workstation and social hub.
- Invest in timeless materials. Natural wood, porcelain, stone and plaster create warmth, character and lasting appeal that transcends trends.
- Layer your finishes thoughtfully. Combine warm wood tones, natural stone, textured plaster and brass accents to create depth, balance and visual interest.
- Prioritize concealed storage. Integrated appliances and custom cabinetry keep countertops clutter-free while maintaining clean architectural lines.
- Maximize natural light. Large windows and strong connections to outdoor spaces create brighter, more welcoming kitchens that feel connected to their surroundings.

driven, elegant without feeling formal, and luxurious because of its craftsmanship rather than excess.

For me, the most successful kitchens aren't defined by the cabinetry, appliances or finishes alone. They're defined by how they make people feel. They invite conversation, encourage connection and become the backdrop for life's everyday moments. That's what transforms a beautiful kitchen into the true heart of the home. Because the most beautiful kitchens aren't simply designed to be admired, they're designed to bring people together.



An award-winning in-house designer, Mariam Aboutaam is Director, Sales and Marketing, Interior Design at Kylemore, Markham, Ont., a builder known for master-planned communities and luxury homes. kylemoreliving.com.