

Photo: Courtesy of Crown Point Cabinetry (www.crown-point.com)



Arts and Crafts Inspired

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How Does Your Garden GROW?

With spring weather right around the corner, it is time to start thinking about your garden again. Which flowers would you like to plant this year to add some vibrant color to your yard? Certain varieties make up into lovely floral bouquets to decorate your home as well. Or perhaps your mouth is already watering for some fresh garden vegetables. Have you been looking forward to warm summer days when you will be putting them on the grill?

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Photo: Courtesy of Kohler (www.kohler.com)



Exterior Transformation

"Wow! Phenomenal! It looks like a new house!" These are some of the responses our clients received when they went with an exterior "facelift" on their 45-year-old colonial style house. Their home was desperate for new siding, roof and windows. Our clients were willing to spend more than the required maintenance on their home, if we could give them fresh curb appeal comparable to the new homes in their neighborhood. The results speak for themselves.



Arts and Crafts Inspired

Have you noticed that a great many homes are being constructed today with wide overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails and tapered stone columns? Craftsman style architecture and interior design is experiencing a resurgence in popularity throughout the country. In addition, Craftsman style homes from the early twentieth century are being lovingly remodeled and updated with spacious kitchens and baths. If you, too, are enthused about the style, you will enjoy learning more about its origins.

The style has its roots in the Arts and Crafts Movement of late 19th Century England. Proponents of this movement, the best known of whom was William Morris, emphasized the beauty of natural materials and hand craftsmanship, which they believed was being lost through the excesses of the Industrial Revolution. They were social reformers who felt that mass production dehumanized the factory worker and resulted in shoddy workmanship. They preached a return to a simpler way of life where a craftsman could enjoy his work, be proud of his skill, and produce quality handmade items for the masses. British Arts and Crafts items often featured exquisite curvilinear inlays and carvings of flora and fauna. Unfortunately, only the wealthiest could afford them.

The United States was still a relatively young country during this same time period, full of optimism for the future, and excited about the new possibilities of the machine age. Unlike the British concern for returning to a simpler past, American architects thought of Arts and Crafts as a wonderful new design trend from Europe. Gustav Stickley, an American furniture designer and architect who championed the Arts and Crafts ideals, published a magazine named *Craftsman*, from which the Craftsman Bungalow received its name. This highly influential magazine featured Stickley's furniture and architectural plans for creating the perfect Arts and Crafts lifestyle. The basic components of his simple, sturdy furniture were produced utilizing factory methods and



Photo: Courtesy of Crown Point Cabinetry (www.crownpoint.com)

then finished by craftsmen. This practical approach resulted in furniture that was attractive and also affordable for the middle class American market.

The simple, rectilinear Arts and Crafts form became the dominant style for American home interiors, furnishings and accessories of the early twentieth century. Homes from that era typically featured rich, dark hardwoods for the paneled wainscoting, built-in cabinetry, wide window and door trim, exposed beams, and the flooring. Colors were muted greens, rusty reds, soft browns, creams and grays. Double-hung windows would include simple geometric shapes in the upper portion.

Kitchens in the early twentieth century were tiny, utilitarian and stark in appearance, not at all like today's spacious kitchens that are so central to the life of the family. In creating Arts and Crafts style kitchens, designers today often use the above features for inspiration. In addition, they may choose other natural materials, such as handmade artisan tile backsplashes, metal and glass light fixtures, and wood or soapstone countertops to create the look. Fine details in the cabinetry may be patterned after the typical geometric elements of a Craftsman exterior, such as tapered columns and exposed rafter tails.



Photo: Courtesy of Homecrest Cabinetry (www.homecrestcabinetry.com)

Wake Up & Smell the Coffee

Coffee starts off the day for the majority of Americans. Drinking a cup or two of coffee is a morning ritual of supreme importance to most people; for some it is even more essential than breakfast. It is not surprising that there is a trend for creating a coffee bar in the kitchen, so that everything you need is located in one handy place. You can relax and savor a delicious cup of coffee at home, while saving yourself the time and expense of visiting a coffee shop.

The ideal coffee bar will include a coffee maker, storage cabinets, a small sink, and an under-counter refrigerator. The cabinetry is useful for storing coffee cups and mugs, condiments, utensils, napkins and a waste basket. The sink is handy for filling the coffee pot and rinsing it off afterwards. The refrigerator will keep milk, cream and coffee beans fresh longer. Remember to include several electrical outlets for plugging in your coffee maker, espresso machine and coffee grinder, if you prefer to grind your own.

DISAPPEARING ACT

If you like spending time outdoors, then one of your greatest pleasures may be relaxing on the deck or balcony of your home and taking in the picturesque views. It can be frustrating, however, if your view is obstructed by a safety railing with thick wooden spindles. For this reason, many homeowners are switching from a standard wood railing to a cable rail system that is practically invisible.

Cable rail systems were initially specified only for contemporary buildings, but now that cable rail posts are available in traditional styles, cable railing has become popular on all types of homes. It is often specified for staircases and balconies inside homes with open floor plans. It helps maintain that open aspect, making the home interior appear larger. Cable railing may be preferred over glass



Photos: Courtesy of Atlantis Rail Systems (www.atlantisrail.com)

panels—the other see-through railing alternative—since it does not produce a glare and requires less maintenance.

Cable railings consist of a series of slender stainless steel cables installed horizontally or vertically within a rigid wood, steel or aluminum railing frame under very tight tension. One indication that the cables are properly tensioned is that they should be able to prevent a 4" sphere from passing between them. Cables can be retrofitted into existing railing frames, if the frames are sufficiently sturdy.

The quality of your railing also depends on the grade of stainless steel cable that is used. For all major components, it is advisable to use a corrosion resistant 316 grade stainless steel. Some of the advantages of a high-quality stainless steel cable railing are weather-resistance,



strength and durability. It will not crack or rot, nor does it need to be stained or repainted, like wood. However, to preserve the appearance, routine cleaning is suggested.

Keep in mind that residential building codes in certain areas do not allow horizontal cable. In these situations, be sure to choose vertical cable.

An alternative is a built-in system, like Miele's Whole Bean Coffee System. This appliance features fully automated controls for creating cappuccinos, lattes and espresso with the touch of a button. It features a removable water tank, but also may be direct plumbed. The photo on the right shows an optional cup and plate warmer installed below.

If you do not have space in your kitchen for a full coffee bar, create a coffee nook in a location that is close to your sink

and refrigerator. You can place your coffeemaker on the counter, while you store coffee supplies in appropriate cabinetry above and below. Choose a wall cabinet with glass doors so you can show off your attractive collection of coffee mugs.

Whatever the size of your coffee bar or nook, be sure to select countertop and backsplash materials that resist moisture and coffee stains.



Photo: Courtesy of Miele (www.mieleusa.com)

Exterior Transformation

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How Does Your Garden Grow?

Disappearing Act



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How Does Your Garden **GROW?**

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Gardening is one of the five most popular physical activities in the United States. It combines health benefits along with the satisfaction of reaping the harvest. But if you use your kitchen countertop for potting your plants, you risk damaging the beautiful finishes with grit and grime. It is best to create a dedicated gardening center with heavy-duty finishes chosen specifically to withstand abuse from water and dirt.

Your screened porch, mudroom or hobby room might provide a good location for building a gardening center. You will need easy access to the outdoors for transferring potted plants. The area should be well-lit—both with natural and artificial light—and it should be protected from cold temperatures to provide a nourishing climate for seedlings and young plants. It also should include a large sink with a generous workspace, and plenty of storage cabinets or shelves.

The gardening center shown below is located in a porch area off the kitchen. The center provides a potting table with an easy-care quartz countertop and a deep, double bowl stainless sink with a curved basin shape that easily accommodates large pots. The high arc faucet is convenient for filling water buckets or rinsing off produce. Wall hooks, as well as a wide under-counter shelf, offer storage for pots and hand tools. The porch's

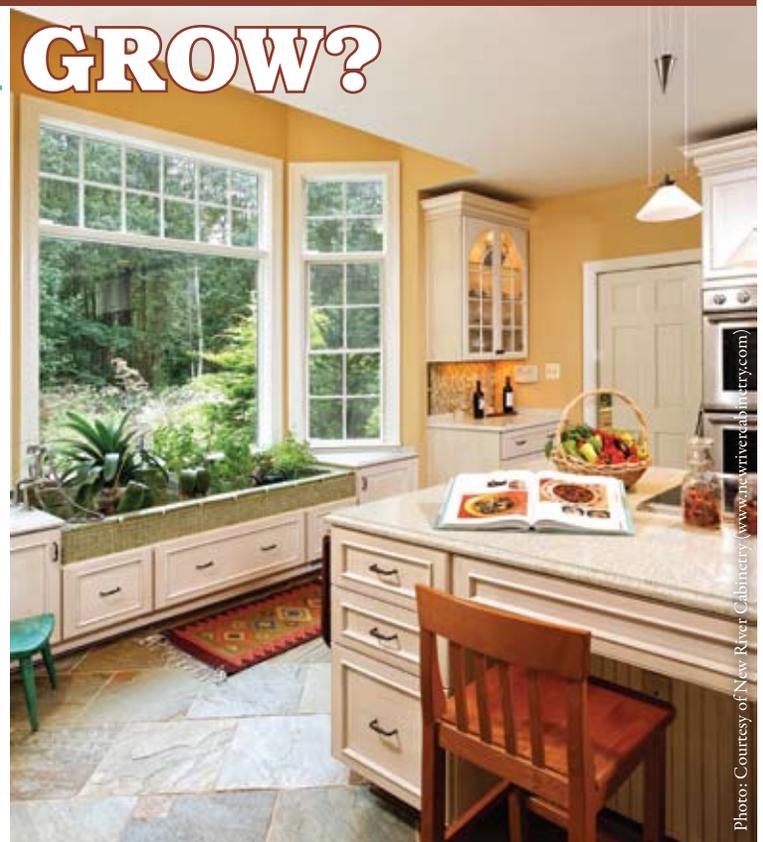


Photo: Courtesy of New River Cabinetry (www.newrivercabinetry.com)

exterior grade wall and floor materials provide practical low-maintenance surfaces.

The unique gardening center pictured above is located in a kitchen, yet conveniently placed where it will not intrude into meal preparation. A large custom-built tub beneath the bay window provides a sunny location for a number of plants to be kept watered and well tended. The faucet at one end includes a spray handle for light misting. Cabinets surrounding the tub provide plenty of storage for gardening supplies. The durable slate floor is stain resistant and offers a slip-free surface.



Photo: Courtesy of Kohler (www.kohler.com)