

MULTI-HOUSING NEWS

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Contemporary Kitchens

Enhance multi-housing product with sleek cabinetry

By Erika Schnitzer, Associate Editor

As multifamily developers embrace open floor plans and kitchens become more integrated with the living space, “condo buyers are customizing cabinetry work to reflect their total living environment,” says Ken Markgraf, senior vice president of development for The Prime Group, Chicago, adding that kitchens now complement the residences’ furnishings.

Streamlined kitchens are increasingly popular, and Markgraf notes a tendency for buyers in Chicago to choose white and dark lacquer finishes, as well as gray wood laminate, since the neutral preferences balance most color schemes. Similarly, “Shaker looks are very adaptable to this cleaner, simpler line of kitchen design,” observes Connie Edwards, CKD, CBD, director of design, Timberlake Cabinetry, Winchester, Va. She also notes a strong interest throughout the country in medium to darker finishes, since they tend to blend with furnishings.

Still, she asserts that many buyers are looking for some individuality, which can be easily achieved with decorative hardware, glass inserts or a new cabinet arrangement. “No matter what the price point,” she says, “every kitchen ought to have at least one spectacular focal point.”

Interior storage options create clutter-free counters, making the kitchen a streamlined addition to the living room. “Slide-out shelves and cutlery dividers are becoming standard. Among the newer options are slide-outs that are specifically designed to hold pots, pans and their lids,” says Edwards. Markgraf also observes a blending of appliances with the millwork, adding more to that sleek look. “In effect, all the appliances are disappearing,” he says.

Green-wise, the Environmental Stewardship Program (ESP)—developed by the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association (KCMA) in 2006—awards points for products that meet requirements such as using low-emitting products and wood from sustainably managed forests. While cabinets may include green features, however, Dick Titus, executive vice president, KCMA, notes that only cabinets using FSC-certified wood without added formaldehyde can contribute to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) points. Additionally, on Jan. 1, 2009, new regulations from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) will limit the level of formaldehyde in composite wood products.

For the future, Markgraf and Edwards agree that the kitchen will remain a showplace of the multifamily home. Technology will play a larger role, they assert, as more affordable appliances add features to make meal preparation easier. And residents will persist in maximizing their space. Additionally, Titus predicts, “Projections point to increasing demand for building products that demonstrate sound environmental practices. As the economy improves, demand is expected to rise.” MHN

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AlnoLux from **Alno** [1] features high-gloss doors with slightly rounded acrylic edges. Available in rich coral, deep cocoa (both shown) or metallic graphite, the line is equipped with “tap-on fittings,” allowing drawers and wall units to open and close when gently tapped (www.alno.com)...In solid Plantation Hardwood, **Armstrong’s** Calibra

[2] features a flat panel design that provides a variety of décor options. It is available in five finishes—Bordeaux, Chestnut, Espresso, Honey and Mocha—as well as with an array of hardware and accessories with additional storage (www.armstrong.com/cabinets)...**Snaidero’s** newest line, Kube, [3] which will be launched in North America this fall, uses Elm and stainless steel to provide a warm aesthetic. Doors are available with or without handles, opening through a device activated with a light touch. The line is also available in gloss, matte and metallic lacquer, in the Snaidero color range (www.snaidero-usa.com)...Using natural and decorative materials, **Omega’s** new Natural Resin Insert collection [4] adds individuality to any kitchen. Ten inserts, set into a translucent and light resin, are offered, including Parchment, Oriana (shown), Reflections and Silhouette (www.omegacabinetry.com).

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