



This sleek kitchen combines natural materials like stone and wood. - PHOTO: COURTESY OF DISTRICT CUISINE

Kitchens have become more personalized and organic

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Over the last year, the pandemic has caused people to spend more time at home than ever before, so they began investing in renovations, particularly in the kitchen.

"People have changed their minds about the kitchen," says Isabelle Dion, owner of District Cuisine in Saint-Lambert. "Because everyone is always in the house, it changed everything, and homeowners want to be comfortable and surrounded by beautiful things. If you walk into an office and it's nice, you feel better about having to go work every morning. People want the same in their house — everyone was so busy and had so many activities before, and then, everything stopped, so now they have time to think about what they really want at home. And almost every family wants to renovate the kitchen."

As people took on kitchen renovation projects, they turned less and less to what was "in" and instead started making more personalized design decisions.

"People want to feel an emotion before they want a trend," says Dion. "They want it to be comfortable. We want to create a personality in the kitchen, which is what

all our clients are asking for: more timeless beauty and less a particular style. They want a kitchen with emotion that has spirit."

Patrizia Giacomini, a designer with Cuisines Steam, agrees. While she says many "natural" elements are being used a lot in today's kitchens, people are veering further away from trend-specific looks and are instead opting for choices that reflect the individual households.

"We do very custom and personalized kitchens and everything is different," she explains. "We adapt to individual needs and how each family functions. It's not high-gloss or shiny kitchens anymore — it's tone-on-tone where people want a cozy space that has that cocoon feeling."

While man-made materials and bright pops of colour were go-to features of kitchens a few years ago, today's homeowners are looking for more organic kitchen elements that fit seamlessly within their homes. Designers are using woods and stones to help create a kitchen space that feels more in-tune with nature.

Giacomini notes that oak and walnut are particularly popular. She's also seeing people turn to materials that transform over time.



The cabinetry doesn't have handles and certain functions are integrated to keep the surface area smooth.

- PHOTO: COURTESY OF DISTRICT CUISINE

"When walnut first arrives, for example, it is a bit grey, and then it quickly becomes more caramel," she explains.

With materials such as copper and natural stone, it's less about perfection and more about the unique finish they achieve on their own.

"They age gracefully, and people tend to like that aspect of it," says Giacomini. "There's just something soothing with things that change with time."

Specific décor choices are still popular, but people can customize them to make them their own. Giacomini says homeowners are leaning toward integrated handles and having less hardware in the kitchen for a more streamlined look. Cabinetry is a little softer too, with tone-on-tone colours and the countertop taking centre stage.

"When it comes to appliances, we see both built-in models as well as more modular freestanding units — it really depends on the direction people want to take and how they want to use their space," she says.

There has also been a shift in the sourcing of certain kitchen building materials.

"A lot of people like kitchens made with local durable materials as well as green or eco-friendly products," Dion says. "We had these before, but people want them now more than ever."

Kitchens are no longer styled around cookie-cutter designs — ex-



This Cuisines Steam kitchen showcases the possibilities of working with natural materials. - PHOTO: MÉLANIE ELLIOTT

perts are helping each individual household create a kitchen space that reflects their personality and overall needs.

"Before the trends, kitchens are always about personality," Dion says. "I see that with my clients'

requests; they are well-informed about kitchen design and prefer a kitchen that has spirit more than one that looks like it's straight out of a magazine. The concept is always natural, which is very important to our clients."



The high chairs around the island invite cozy gatherings in the kitchen space. - PHOTO: COURTESY OF DISTRICT CUISINE

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