

Decor Score: Kitchen designers can help with modern makeovers

by *Rose_Bennett_Gilbert*

Q: We are buying a foreclosed home that was built in the 1970s — the bargain price leaves us enough to afford a modern makeover of the really blah, old-fashioned kitchen. Both my husband and I love to cook, mostly together. Eventually, we hope to modernize the entire house, but meanwhile, do you have any suggestions?

A professional chef spices up his own kitchen with a bold blend of color, steel and extroverted zebra-wood flooring. Photo courtesy of David Duncan Livingston. A: Step 1: Race to your favorite book source and locate a copy of a recent book-like-no-other-kitchen-book because it's all about streamlined contemporary design. You won't find any cutesy country kitchen ideas here. All 128 colorful pages of "Contemporary Kitchen Style" are rich with how-to tips and insider information on cutting-edge design for today's kitchen.

Author Mervyn Kaufman has spent much of his journalistic career in the kitchen, so to speak, working with designers and manufacturers as well as with the editors of *Woman's Day* Special Interest Publications, with whom he shares credit for his latest achievement.

Browse this book and you'll come away well-prepared for step 2 in your run-up to kitchen renovation: Find yourself a certified kitchen designer (CKD) to lead you through the actual steps. Unless, you're as talented as David Gingrass — the professional chef and owner of the San Francisco restaurant, *Two* — who designed the exciting and efficient pictured kitchen in his own '70s ranch house.

Of course, being a pro means you already know what you'll need to cook happily ever after. Some of Gingrass's special touches include a trio of wall ovens, a storage hood over the work center and acrylic insets in the cabinet doors over the windows to let in light.

The rest of us who need help with such creative ideas would do well to find one of these aforementioned CKDs through the National Kitchen & Bath Association. Click on www.nkba.com and look under "Find a Professional."

Q: Love visiting show houses?

A: 'Tis the season to go idea-hunting at show houses all across the country. And nowhere are the idea pickings more plentiful than in the state of Virginia.

The entire state will be open to you during Historic Garden Week, April 18-25. Visit more than 200 homes and gardens, spanning 400 years of American history, from the settling of Jamestown in 1607 to the 21st century. Many of the homes are private and open to the public for the first time.

Billed as "America's Largest Open House," the festive event has been produced every year since 1929 (except during World War II) by The Garden Club of Virginia – spell it with a capital "T," please. These club members don't do dirt. Instead, they accomplish dramatic tasks with the \$14.5 million they've raised in 76 years, such as restoring homes and gardens that have belonged to important Americans like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Robert E. Lee and Woodrow Wilson (all open during Garden Week).

Also on the agenda are concerts, luncheon events, fashion shows and flower arranging demos by master gardeners. All open houses feature smashing flower arrangements created by Garden Club members, largely from plants and flowers native to Virginia.

Learn all the details at www.gcvirginia.org.

Rose Bennett Gilbert is the co-author of "Hampton Style" and associate editor of Country Decorating Ideas.

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