



Gehman Design Remodeling

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Open and Closed

GEHMAN DESIGN REMODELING HELPS HOMEOWNERS MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT A CORE ELEMENT OF EVERY KITCHEN REMODEL: CABINETRY.

BY BILL DONAHUE

stained, full overlay or inset, framed or frameless, melamine or clear finish, furniture board or plywood, concealed hinges or visible hinges, soft close or gliding, adjustable shelves or pullout trays, extended style or filler strip, undermount or side mount, flush toe or recessed toe, etc.

Gehman admits that having so many options might sound overwhelming. A skilled kitchen remodeler such as himself will walk homeowners through the process. In fact, he prefers to sit down with homeowners and talk to them about how they intend to use the kitchen, what's most important to them, who does most of the cooking, etc. Once he has a good understanding of those needs and preferences, he can use specialized software to provide a 3D rendering of how the cabinets would look before moving forward.

Gehman offers two caveats to any homeowner considering a kitchen remodel: First, tackle all aspects of a kitchen remodel at the same time, because it's much more difficult to replace the cabinets after, say, a countertop has been installed. Second, enlist a skilled professional to think through all aspects of the remodel, down to the littlest detail.

"Most people don't remodel the same kitchen more than once," he says. "The cabinet doors and drawers are going to be opened and closed thousands of times, so pick something durable. The little things are important, too. Maybe it's a door that you wish opened the other way. Each of those little things is like a pebble in your shoe. It keeps coming back, bothering you more and more over time, until you deal with it."

Of course, cabinetry does not apply solely to the kitchen. Gehman increasingly incorporates cabinets into remodels of bathrooms, bedrooms, and other parts of the home. He cites another benefit of a remodel: Existing cabinetry can often be repurposed elsewhere, such as the mudroom, the basement, or the garage, to provide more storage space without additional cost. ■

Dennis D. Gehman, MCR, has built a career on his skill for creating kitchens that homeowners dream about. Before deciding on colors, styles, and the general layout, he believes in asking a central question: Who is the kitchen being designed for?

"Your decisions might differ depending on whether you're going to put the house on the market in a few years or if you're going to be there long term," says Gehman, the co-founder and president of Gehman Design Remodeling in Harleysville. "If you're going to sell the house in the near future, go with something more neutral. If you intend to stay there 10 years or more, you can be a bit bolder in your selections and colors that are personal to you; we have done cabinets for people that are bright red, navy blue, canary yellow. It's a matter of ROI, whether it's about a better selling price or years of personal enjoyment."

Cabinetry requires special consideration. A central element of every kitchen remodel, cabinetry not only adds aesthetic appeal and storage space, but also plays a key role in a kitchen's functionality.

"The kitchen has become the center of the home," Gehman adds. "You want the kitchen laid out so the space is workable and flowing—a nice place to work in and entertain, with plenty of room for your spatulas and spoons, hot pads, trashcan, and everything else you need. Cabinets make that happen."

Homeowners have several quality options from which to choose, beginning with what Gehman describes as "good, better, best": stock cabinets (good), semi-custom cabinets (better), and fully custom cabinets (best). Each has its own advantages. Well-made stock and ready-to-assemble cabinets come in limited variety. They are often made of furniture board, and they should last a good while as long as they stay dry. On the other end of the spectrum, custom cabinets offer nearly unlimited possibility. "If you can draw it, you can build it," Gehman says. He often suggests semi-custom cabinets, which provide high quality and greater variety in terms of style and color, as well as size flexibility to maximize storage space.

Other considerations, depending on the type of cabinets a homeowner chooses: painted or