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KITCHEN & BATH

WHITE HOT

Trends ebb and flow, but today's white kitchens range from classic to modern.

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White hot





BY EMILY GURNON

Like any design trend, bright white kitchens ebb and flow. These days, they are hot.

"Any magazine you open, any award that's being given out right now, it's all white-white," said St. Paul designer David Heide, who recently created a new kitchen in a house built in the 1890s by famed architect Cass Gilbert.

In this edition of Spaces, we'll take a look at four kitchens. They range from the uber-white one in the Cass Gilbert house to others in the Twin Cities that either feature white or use white to set off some audacious colors in a mid-century modern style.

Classic St. Paul beauty

One of the first things Robin Belisle said to her husband, Brian, when they bought their turn-of-the-century St. Paul home was, "I love the house but we should do something with the kitchen," Brian recalls. "It took us 31 years."

The kitchen had been recently redone, but it didn't fit with the Belises' taste. They finally decided in 2013 to install off-white cabinets and countertops, a white range hood and a white sink.

Other areas of the home already had plenty of off-white painted woodwork, so the plan created a "cohesive connection" between the front of the house and the back, Heide said.

When Robin first saw the house, "I was drawn to the painted woodwork throughout the house," she said. "I like light and airy, and now our kitchen is very much that way. It's joyful."

And the design stays true to the home's original character. That's one reason they hired Heide, whose team specializes in historic renovations.

People have noticed: Someone on a tour through the historic home told Robin that they, too, have a Cass Gilbert house, with the original cabinets intact. "And they look just like (ours)," Robin said.

For the countertops, the Belises searched high and low, finally discovering two slabs of Bianco Romano granite.

"It looks a little bit like white marble, which is more period," Brian said. "Unfortunately from this quarry it's getting darker and darker, but we were able to find what we thought was a little bit lighter piece."

Heide recommended they hone the surface, to make it look less polished. It was another way to create an older, more marble-like appearance in keeping with the overall historic feel the couple now enjoys every day.



PHOTOS BY
SUSAN GILMORE
PHOTOGRAPHY



South Minneapolis simplicity

Michele Lieske and her husband, Brian, decided it was time for a kitchen remodel when she opened up a cabinet and the door came off in her hand. The question was, what should the new space look like?

With a white floor and white cabinets, the old kitchen in the South Minneapolis home was almost too white, she thought.

"But as I was looking through magazines for inspiration, the kitchens that I thought I would want to go in and cook in all had the white cabinets," she said. "And to me, the dark floors with the white cabinets was such a fantastic combination."

White kitchens stand the test of time, said the Lieskes' designer, Paul Linnebach. When he learned that Michele was drawn to the simplicity and clean look of the white, he recommended a white quartzite countertop and a backsplash of white marble.

"I know a lot of people will do a decorative backsplash or a picture right above the cooktop, and I wanted to actually keep that simple," he said. "I felt like the tile we selected for the backsplash was really elegant."

The walnut floors provide a warm contrast. In addition, Linnebach urged the Lieskes to let him create glassed-in cabinets along one wall. Michele was initially dead set against it — but the reeded glass, which creates a textured look, lets colors come through without revealing potential untidiness.

"I think having splashes of color in something that is so



white across the board is really important," Linnebach said.

Linnebach's company, Mantis Design+Build, LLC, of

Minneapolis, won a 2015 National Chrysalis Award for the Lieske home project in the residential kitchen remodel category.

PHOTOS
BY
PAUL
LINNEBACH

