

**MAP OF THE STARS: SEE THE HOMES OF WOLF BLITZER, CRAIG LIVINGSTONE, TONY KORNHEISER, AND 45 OTHERS**

# WASHINGTONIAN

AUGUST 1996 • \$2.95

## WHERE TO FIND

**CREATING YOUR  
DREAM KITCHEN**

**WHERE TO GET THE**

**BEST CABINETS,**

**COUNTERS, TILE, AND**

**APPLIANCES—PLUS TOP**

**KITCHEN REMODELERS**

## IT

**GOOD STORES FOR  
FURNITURE, LIGHTING,**

**HOME OFFICES, CARPETING,**

**COMFORTABLE CHAIRS,**

**DRAPERIES AND**

**BLINDS, UPHOLSTERY,**

**SLIPCOVERS, AND MORE**



# THEY DO KITCHENS

THE AREA'S TOP DESIGNERS AND  
REMODELERS—PLUS, WHERE TO GET  
CABINETS, COUNTERS, TILE, FAUCETS,  
FLOORING, AND APPLIANCES

By Sherri Dalphonse

**H**UNDREDS OF AREA firms can remodel or spruce up your kitchen; the ones listed here are among the best.

We interviewed more than 50 interior designers, architects, kitchen-supply firms, homeowners, and others familiar with kitchen renovation. The businesses listed here—from tile and appliance dealers to remodelers—received the most recommendations.

Before visiting kitchen showrooms, you might go through magazines and clip pictures of kitchens you like. Two good magazines are *Kitchen & Bath Custom Planner* and the *Better Homes and Gardens Kitchen Planning Guide*.

If you are doing extensive work, ask friends, neighbors, and electricians and plumbers you trust for names of good designers and contractors.

When meeting with a kitchen designer or contractor, ask to see photos of previous work. Most designers have portfolios, and some might suggest visiting a project they've completed. You should check client references, too.

And be sure the designer you choose is someone you like: This is a person you will be working with for a while.

## KITCHEN DESIGN STUDIOS AND CABINET DEALERS

THESE FIRMS SPECIALIZE IN kitchens and are full service; they will design a kitchen, help you choose the cabinets, sink, flooring, appliances, and other

components, and either install or manage the installation. You pay for parts and labor; design help is usually free. Most have showrooms where you can see samples of counters and cabinets, and most represent certain cabinet lines.

These firms often are called cabinet dealers because cabinetry is the bulk of their business. If you just want new cabinets and countertops, these firms can help, although a few do only full renovations.

Design studios usually have limited selections of flooring, tile, lighting, and sinks and faucets. Some send clients to specialty retailers to pick out these things; other studios accompany clients. And while most act as general contractors, hiring subcontractors to take care of plumbing and electrical work, some studios may give you names of subcontractors and have you arrange the work.

These firms received multiple recommendations:

**Alexandria Kitchen and Bath Studio**, 1502 King Street, Alexandria; 703/549-1415. This studio has three designers and a showroom full of high-end products like Sub-Zero and Viking appliances, Wood-Mode custom cabinetry, and Blanco sinks.

**Chesapeake Kitchen Design**, 4622 Wisconsin Avenue, NW; 202/244-3590. In business since 1978. Cabinet lines include Plato, Richmaid, Hagerstown, Millbrook, and Vartta.

**Creative Kitchens**, 1776 E. Jefferson Street, Rockville; 301/984-4477. One of the

area's oldest and most-recommended firms.

**Custom Crafters**, 4000 Howard Avenue, Kensington; 301/493-4000. In business since 1956, it represents moderate to high-end lines, including Birchcraft cabinetry.

**Design Solutions**, 582-B Belterive Drive, Annapolis; 410/757-6100. A small design studio owned by Joan Zimmerman, who won a 1995 award for kitchen design from the National Kitchen and Bath Association.

**Jack Rosen Custom Kitchens**, 12223 Nebel Street, Rockville; 301/984-9484. Jack Rosen has been in the business more than 42 years; some of his installers have been working with him for 30 years.

**Kitchen and Bath Factory**, 4624 Lee Highway, Arlington; 703/522-7337. A small firm recommended for service. There's a good chance you'll work with the owner, Bob Kay, one of two designers.

**Kitchen & Bath Studios**, 7001 Wisconsin Avenue, Chevy Chase; 301/657-1636. Three staff designers, all with at least 12 years of experience. Low- to high-end cabinet lines include Merillat, Christiana, Premier, Crystal, and Snaidero.

**Kitchen Classics by Custom Crafters**, 6023 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington; 703/532-7000. Kitchen Classics is the Virginia showroom of Custom Crafters. Dee David, who has 22 years of experience, is recommended.

**The Kitchen Guild**, 5027 Connecticut Avenue, Northwest DC; 202/362-7111. One of the most-recommended



firms, Kitchen Guild has been in business since 1954.

**Kitchen Techniq**, 12011 Nebel Street, North Bethesda; 301/231-0633. Owner Don Singman puts more emphasis on design than many kitchen boutiques—and he's a very skilled designer.

**Richard M. Tunis Fine Kitchens and Baths**, 7032 Wisconsin Avenue, Chevy Chase; 301/652-5513. Probably the area's most-respected firm, Tunis has been in business since 1958.

**Voell Custom Kitchens**, 4788 Lee Highway, Arlington; 703/528-1776. In business more than 40 years. Cabinet choices include Wood-Mode, Brookhaven, and Stylecraft.



## INDEPENDENT KITCHEN PLANNERS

SOME KITCHEN EXPERTS ARE certified kitchen designers, or CKDs, which means they have at least seven years' experience as a designer or at least two years' experience and some education in the field, have passed a daylong exam, and have satisfactory references. (Lack of a CKD does not mean the designer is not qualified; many experienced designers don't bother to get the certification.)

Most of the kitchen-design studios in the preceding list have a CKD on staff, but many CKDs work independently, out of their homes. Without the overhead of a work crew and a

large showroom, an independent may cost less.

One such independent is **Lyn Wexler** of Vienna (703/242-1812), who goes to a client's house in a van full of cabinet and countertop samples.

Another good one-person operation is **Kitchen Design Consultants** (129 Park Street NE, Vienna; 703/242-0330). CKD Lois Kennedy has been designing high-end kitchens for ten years. She can manage a floor-to-ceiling project or just do design consultations for homeowners.

To get a list of other CKDs in the area and a consumer-information kit, call the **National Kitchen and Bath Association**, 800/401-6522.

**Before remodeling, this Fairfax kitchen was one-fourth the size. Designer Lois Kennedy made it much bigger, and when asked to make it black and white, she softened the look with pearlized laminate cabinets, neutral flooring, and a tile backsplash that blended light and dark.**

## DESIGN-BUILD FIRMS

DESIGN-BUILD FIRMS ARE A GOOD choice for complicated projects that involve moving ductwork or tearing down walls. Most have architects on staff.

Design-build firms do more than kitchens, but these firms received multiple votes from experts in the kitchen field.

A lot of kitchen renovation is done by small, independent contractors. The best way to find independents is through

word of mouth, or by calling one of the services under "General Resources."

**Case Design Remodeling**, 4701 Sangamore Road, N. Plaza Suite 40, Bethesda, 301/229-4600; and 701 Park Avenue, Falls Church, 703/241-2980. A perennial award winner, Case has ten designers including three CKDs. A Handyman Division of master craftsmen specializes in smaller projects.

**Gilday Design and Remodeling**, 9162 Brookville Road, Silver Spring; 301/565-4600.