

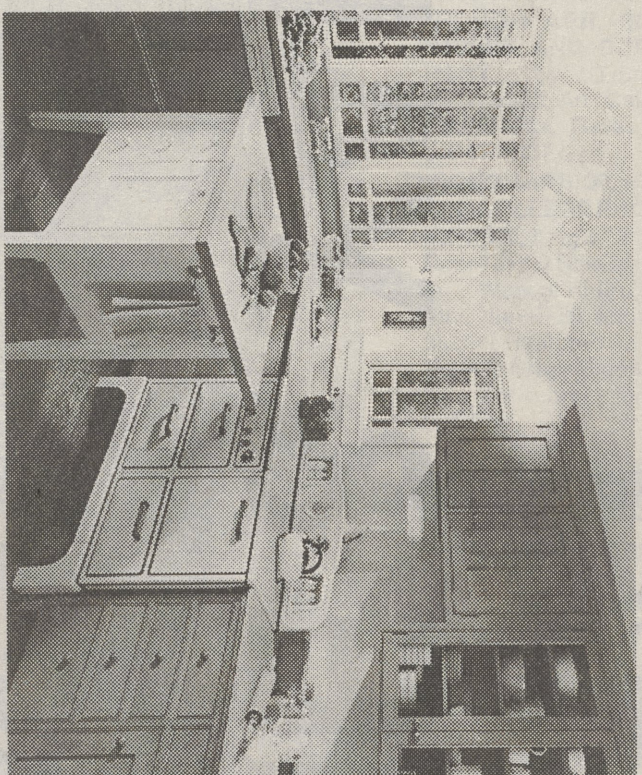
Stock cabinets can stretch your kitchen remodeling budget

If you're planning to remodel your kitchen and have money to burn, don't bother to read the rest of this article.

But if you're like most, you'll need to do your homework before selecting cabinetry — usually a costly part of a kitchen remodeling project — to ensure that you're getting the best value for your hard-earned money. And just like anything else you purchase for your home, value is dependent upon quality, selection and function — as well as price.

To make certain you are receiving the best value, take a closer look at stock cabinetry. "Stock" cabinets are affordable because they are factory-produced in standard sizes and readily available from the manufacturer. If you're thinking, "I want a recycling center, a lazy Susan and a desk to fit into that neat little alcove I have in my kitchen," and you thought the only way to go was "custom," you will be pleasantly surprised, according to Connie Edwards, Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) for Timberlake Cabinet Company, Winchester, Virginia, a leading national manufacturer of cabinetry.

"Smart manufacturers offer stock cabinets in a multitude of standard sizes and with a variety of specialty cabinets, accessories, styles and finishes to meet every kitchen's storage needs and fulfill almost any homeowner's dreams," said Edwards. "By utilizing the manufacturer's filler strips which match the cabinetry's finish, you can make your cabinet selections fit beautifully in almost any space."



Arts and crafts kitchens are making a comeback.

Quality cabinets in all price ranges should have sturdy construction and solid hardwood frames, according to Edwards. Shelves should be at least 1 1/2-inch thick and adjustable. Interiors and exteriors should have an easy-care finish for long-lasting beauty and the cabinets should come with a minimum one-year warranty.

"When comparing one manufacturer to another, homeowners should inquire about what features are standard compared to those considered upgrade options with an additional cost involved."

the need for decorative hardware and such styles provide an attractive, streamlined profile.

Other factors to consider when selecting cabinetry for long-lasting value are color and door material. According to a recent survey conducted by the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBNA), white continues to be one of the most frequently requested colors for kitchens. According to Edwards, this should come as no surprise since white allows you to accent with almost any other color. You can easily switch to another accent color to get a whole new look without spending a lot of money. As far as resale value goes, real estate professionals would tend to agree that you can never go wrong with a color appealing to most people. And whether

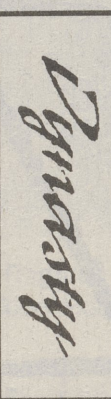
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Some tips for choosing home insulation

Installing insulation is an easy way for homeowners to reduce their energy bills and save money in the long run.

The purpose of insulation is to prevent heat from invading the home during the summer and escaping in the winter. Think of insulation as an envelope around your living area.

The Celotex Corporation, a national manufacturer of residential building products, offers the following guidelines for buying insulation for your homebuilder:

Practice The First Rule Of Insulation

Some insulation in all areas is better than a lot of insulation in a few areas.

The critical areas to insulate are ceilings, walls and floors over unheated spaces, and areas around heating and air conditioning ducts.

Choose Insulation That's Easy To Install

Insulation should be easy to handle, nail, staple, glue and cut with a utility knife.

Know Your R-Value

Choose insulation with a high R-value. "R" means resistance to heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating power.

Check The Conditioning Time Period Length Of The R-Value Test

Some R-value tests are conducted on insulation conditioned in a laboratory only six months, but look for insulation that has been tested for at least several years.

Seek An R-Value Guarantee

Some manufacturers warranty R-values for up to 15 years.

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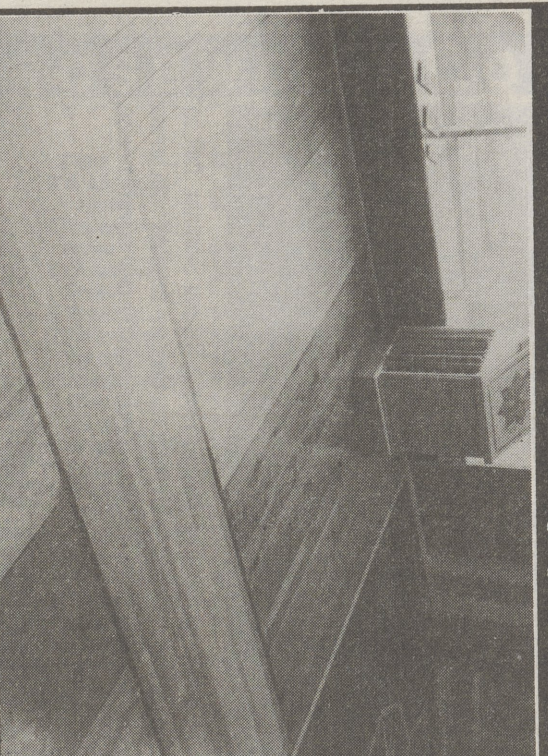
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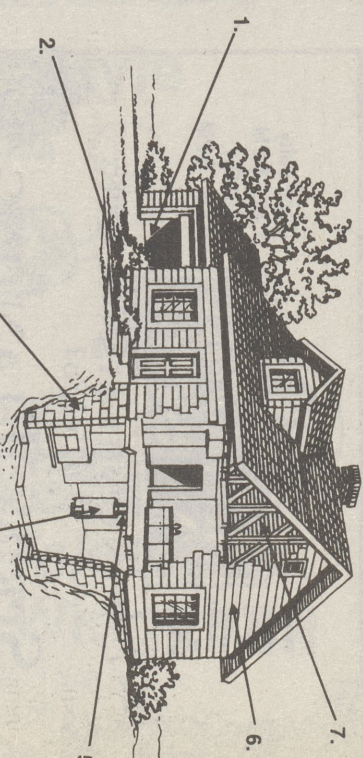
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The Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Research Center Thermal Certification are two standards of quality.

Look For Vapor Retarder Quality Facers

Vapor retarders prevent moisture from damaging insulation. If moisture penetrates the insulation, it can cause wood to rot, metal to rust and plaster to crack.

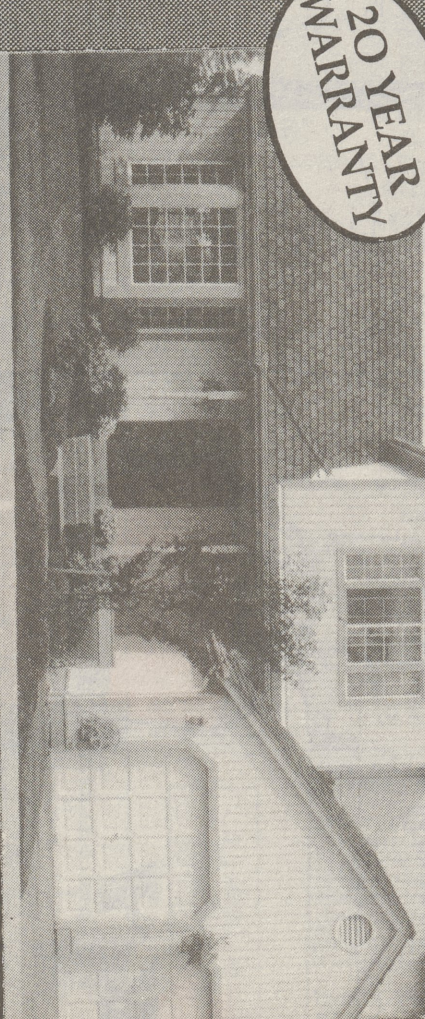


Critical Insulation Areas: 1. Garage walls, 2. Where foundation meets structure, 3. Basement walls, 4. Hot water heaters, 5. Hot water pipes, 6. Exterior walls, 7. Attics

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