

Add an island to "beef-up" the kitchen

(HT) Ask most homeowners and they'll tell you that there's not enough counter space in the kitchen, no matter how much or how little they have.

Whether you need a second work station, a space from which to serve an informal buffet, or just a place to toss the day's mail, kitchen islands are popular solutions to the lack of kitchen space. Over 50 percent of kitchens created include islands.

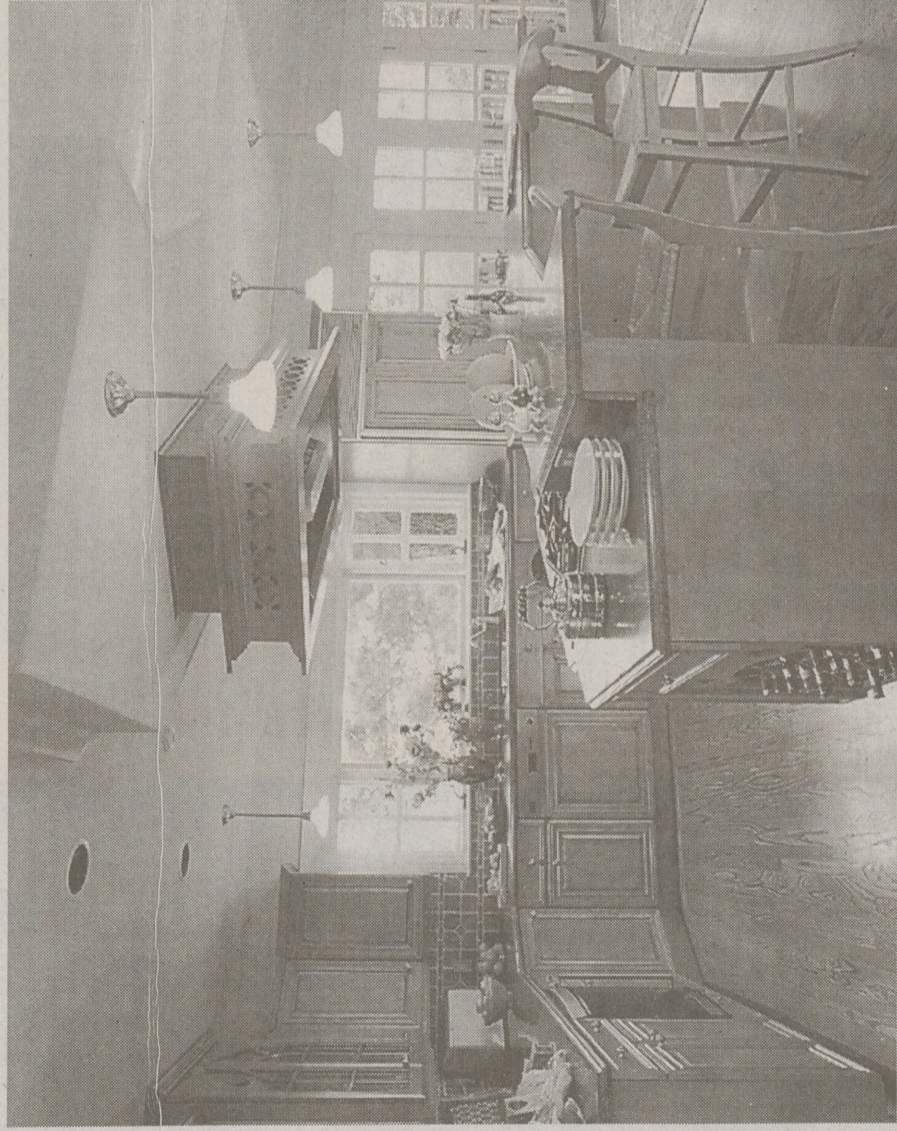
With the wide range of in-stock, ready-to-install cabinets, accessories and trim moldings available, it's possible to create an island that's just right for your kitchen, at less cost than if you turned to a custom cabinetmaker.

If you are planning a kitchen remodel that will include an island, consider these tips:

- Most important, there should be sufficient space between the island and other work surfaces to allow for opening cabinet and appliance doors, and for two people to work without jostling one another.
- Depending on your specific needs, the island can be located so it functions as an integral part of the work area. It can also serve as a divider between the kitchen

and the family room.

- Adding an island permits a reconfiguration of the classic "work triangle" of refrigerator, cooktop and sink, because it is an ideal place to relocate either the cooktop or the main sink, or to install a second sink as the focal point of a second work triangle.
- If the cooktop will be located in the island, with a wall oven elsewhere, consider pull-out trays or drawers below the cooktop to store pots and pans. If the island will be a second work station with a prep sink for cleaning veggies and the like, include a pull-out waste basket in the cabinet.
- Be sure to plan for the mechanicals needed to locate the cooktop or sink in the center of the room. For the sink you'll need supply and drain lines, and for the cooktop a ventilation system—either an overhead unit or a downdraft model. The plumbing and downdraft unit will require breaking through the floor. That's fine if you have a basement or a crawl space, but could present problems if the room is on a slab.
- And finally, don't forget about adequate lighting. Without it, the island will lose much of its functional appeal.



An island can add versatility and needed space to most kitchens.

Tile is at a plate of the hot Southwest look

By Lis King

(HT) The style of America's Southwest has grown way beyond the clichés of cacti, long-horn skulls and kokopelli renderings. Today, it's a highly sophisticated look, a far cry from its earlier, faddish versions, and it's sweeping cities and suburbs far removed from Taos and Santa Fe.

According to Don Schreckengost, design director for Summitville Tiles, it's the use of natural materials and hand-crafted looks that has made the style so well-loved.

"We live in such a frenzied world, and the Southwest style creates a calm, relaxed atmosphere that it's nice to come home to," he explains.

"It's such a welcome change from the high-tech, digital spaces where we spend our working hours."

Furnishings crafted of wood and leather, kilims, pottery, Western artifacts and colorful art are important ingredients of the Southwestern look, but no material establishes it faster than tile floors, and weather-worn tile designs are especially suitable.

Schreckengost explains that the Southwest's original hard-surface floors were actually hardened mud sealed with oxblood to make them shiny, and ceramic tile, which is produced from clays harvested from the earth and then fired at extreme heat, is at least in the same family.

Summitville's earthy quarry tiles, substantial and rustic, are among the products often chosen for Southwestern rooms, and while several of its 16 colors would have looked familiar to the original settlers, hues like Wintergreen, Harbor Blue and Palomino would probably have been appreciated for their cool demeanor.

Also attractive to today's homeowners and designers is the variety of sizes that Summitville's quarry tiles come in, because they invite creativity with over-all patterns, borders and textures.

Another group of quarry tiles are faithful reproductions of decorative designs created around the turn of the century by celebrated American studios, and their artists



Natural materials, notably wood, leather and tile, are the essence of the Southwestern look.

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