

Modern Minimalism

BY CHRISTINE HANLON



We've all heard that less is more but this Euro-style kitchen definitely makes minimalism ring true. The impeccable lacquered finish of the Aster Cucine doors creates uninterrupted sightlines to the hammered stainless steel back-splash. Completing the focal point, ulivo, an exotic olive wood veneer, is book matched to carry the grain through the flat panel doors.

The wood reappears as an L-shaped accent bordering the island's tempered glass countertop with built-in sink. Set in the counter against the wall, the cooktop is almost imperceptible. It's the concealment of functional elements that creates the polished, uncluttered look of the space.

"Although it's a kitchen, it doesn't read as a kitchen," says Artur, the owner of M-Concept.

"It's hidden away. Then you open the doors and everything is accessible."

Unique hardware technology allows the white lacquered doors to swing open and slide aside to expose the refrigerator, wall oven and organizers, all from Aster Cucine's vast selection. Here, open glass shelving combines with stainless steel silent close drawers incorporating such easy-access features as built-in plate racks.

Artur notes that redesigning is an opportunity to improve both function and aesthetics. "We're here to make your dreams come true," he says, adding that M-Concept can take out walls and completely reconfigure a space.

Once finalized, plans are sent to Italy for manufacturing. Lacquered doors – available

in 35 colours or custom options – undergo a 20-step process. From design to installation, the process takes about three months.

At a price-point accessible to the average homeowner, M-Concept offers seven different lines of cabinetry in various styles. The company's upcoming 3,500-square-foot two-storey showroom on Portage Avenue will continue to feature three to four constantly changing full kitchen displays, as well as everything to complement the bathrooms and closets they also design.

Says Artur: "Once we reopen in our new location, we'll be a one-stop shop for the modern home."



Distinctly Defined

Wide frames, a wrap-around counter and white accents distinctly define the elements of this classic yet contemporary kitchen. The pillow frame design of the rail mitred Napoli door style takes full advantage of the warm cherry wood, while the reverse raised solid wood panel insert further enhances the definition.

"It's a brand new door style that just came out this year," says Sherri Friesen, Design and Sales Associate at Kitchen Craft's Regent Avenue showroom.

The Napoli joins an ever-growing line-up of 30 door styles in the popular Integra line. Each door style is available in different stains and wood species, including maple, cherry, oak, alder, rift oak and rustic alder. Paints and thermofoil options complete the extensive selection.

In this kitchen, the door style, wood and stain provide the perfect contrast to the grey-toned countertops, backsplash and floor. The kitchen designer wrapped the solid surface over the back of the island and added a bright white insert to match the line leading to the peninsula.

In fact, the entire kitchen is perfectly finished both inside and out. The Integra line features superior interior construction with aspen wood drawer boxes on undermounted metal slides with full extension and soft close, blu-motion technology.



Quintessential Quality

Building dishwashers since 1929, Miele lives by its slogan: Immer Besser (Forever Better).

"They test all their dishwashers to last 20 years," says Curtis Penner of Coast Appliances, one of only two Miele distributors in Manitoba.

Boasting the peerless quality of German design and manufacturing, the dishwashers feature three spray arms and two heavy-duty pumps built to run for 12,500 hours non-stop. With a 16-place-setting capacity, some Miele dishwashers also include the world's first, third level cutlery tray.

"This guarantees a better wash for your cutlery," notes Penner. He adds that all Miele dishwashers are Energy-Star certified and can accomplish gentle thorough cleaning with as little as 10 litres of water.

The La Perla model seen here even has a sensor that adjusts the cycle to how full the dishwasher is or how dirty the dishes might be. Then when the cycle is completely finished, the door automatically opens a crack for better drying. A dispenser for water softener tablets and a flood control safety mechanism round out the sophisticated features.

Among the quietest dishwashers available, the La Perla also looks great, with either an integrated style or a fully integrated option that allows complete cabinetry coverage with top-mounted controls.



Capacity & Efficiency

In a perfect world, our washing machine would make our clothes truly clean, allow us to wash large loads and clean gently enough to preserve our fine delicates. It seems as if Whirlpool has been listening. The appliance specialist has even added a 70% reduction in water and energy to sweeten the deal – all without sacrificing style or the ability to choose between top loading and front loading washing machines.

“The top loading washers have a capacity of over five cubic feet, which allows you to wash three baskets of laundry at once,” note Bryan Cripps, Appliance Manager for Dufresne. At the same time, Whirlpool has replaced traditional agitators with low-profile plates that move clothes gently through the water and

detergent. Thanks to enhanced vibration reduction technology, these top loaders are ideal for either main floor or second floor applications.

Whirlpool also has a selection of high efficiency front loading washers that can be arranged side by side, raised on optional pedestals, or stacked to save space. The washer’s capacity of up to 4.5 cubic feet capacity can handle 16 pairs of jeans in a single load. The front loaders are available in white, silver or the increasingly popular cranberry. With these models and many more, Dufresne has Manitoba’s largest selection of Whirlpool appliances.





Fabulously Functional

Style and functionality combine to make this kitchen perfect for both preparation and entertaining. Working in conjunction with Plush Home & Design, James Friesen of Norcraft Cabinetry transformed this addition into a space that flows well with the adjoining great room. "Before, the kitchen was very closed," he notes. "Now there's a nice transition."

There are several work stations as well as an area for people to sit and talk around the island. "You can have two people working in the kitchen comfortably," says Friesen.

Ample space separates the counter's electric cooktop from the island's prep sink, while the microwave and oven combination are at an easy-to-reach height. Hidden amenities include a double waste bin with recycling, and a tray divider for cookie sheets above the oven. Norcraft has virtually an endless array of accessory options along with more than a hundred different combinations of door styles, wood species and colours.

Here, instead of a separate display area, the Shaker cabinet doors – in maple with a chocolate stain – are all one unit, with an attractive glass insert. "That particular door style has become so popular that we've made it one of our standard offerings," says Friesen, "We're constantly looking at trends and bringing in new styles," he adds.



One Hot Kitchen

With its grey smoke stained cabinets and white ash quartz countertop, one might be forgiven for concluding this kitchen is the result of one hot design process. But then, that's exactly what it is.

For the cabinets, Kitchen Designs by Decor used white rift oak, a newer wood selection with a beautiful close-knit vertical grain and a refreshing alternative to the characteristic arched pattern of regular oak.

"The transparent stain reveals brown or grey undertones depending on the time of day," adds Sales Manager Jason Banman.

The shaker door style is an equally perfect choice for this transitional kitchen design as are the rod-style brushed nickel handles. And by selecting quartz, the homeowners ensured the island could be any shape they wished.

"You're only limited by your imagination," says Banman, noting that the island cabinets are a contrasting cottage white on maple. All the doors and drawers feature soft-close technology, an ideal complement to the plywood veneer centre panels.

"In our climate, with its extremes from dry to damp, this engineered material is the most stable, especially when you go with darker colours," notes Banman, adding that, even with the upgrade to soft-close, total cost is lower than solid wood. "We want to make sure our customers are happy for many years to come."

Definitely a Plus

There's more to this kitchen than meets the eye. Behind the clear alder flat panel doors and drawer fronts in their smart Irish cream finish is a series of roll-out shelving with an undermount full-extension soft close system using blumotion technology.

"That's a nice feature that more people are asking for now," explains Dorothy Janzen, co-owner of Kitchens Plus with her husband Dennis.

Kitchens Plus handled the cabinetry and counter portion of this home renovation. The process started with the homeowners visiting the showroom to explore the many available



options. Then Kitchens Plus worked closely with the clients to design a kitchen that would meet their taste and needs.

In this design, a bank of drawers conveniently faces the dining area. Other features include a contrasting quartz countertop, a double pantry beside the fridge and functional angled units on the other side.

"It makes a smoother transition to the doorway than a sharp corner would," notes Janzen. She adds that Kitchens Plus is more than just



kitchens. Established in 1986, the family-owned business is the exclusive Manitoba dealer for the authentic Murphy bed system. Like the kitchens, the cabinetry with Murphy beds is available in a wide variety of wood species and colour options. The oak unit seen here features a charcoal stain and a double bed.

"Once you've decided on the size of the bed, the cabinetry is flexible, according to your space and needs," says Janzen. "The possibilities are almost endless."

A single, double or queen sized bed can be combined with open shelving or cabinets with

doors and drawers of all sizes. This particular wall unit incorporates an electric fireplace and a television. The latter is a popular item, as homeowners often opt for a Murphy bed to make a room multi-functional.

Desks are another popular option. With an effortless opening of the Murphy bed an office can be transformed into a bedroom in mere seconds. "You can leave it made up with the bedding so it's ready any time you need it," says Janzen. A lifetime warranty on all the hardware ensures that the Murphy bed will be there to serve these needs for years to come.

