

Living Local

KITCHEN AND BATH ISSUE

MARCH 2026

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Daily Rhythm

By Designer Jessica Cinnamon

Today's kitchens, whether compact city spaces or expansive family hubs, are becoming more thoughtful, personal, and far better tailored to the rhythms of daily life. As a designer, I've noticed that clients are craving environments that support cooking, gathering, and organization with equal intention. They want rooms that feel intuitive, calm, and beautifully connected to how they actually live. From clever storage solutions to the rise of warm, tactile materials, these five shifts are guiding how modern kitchens are planned and experienced. Let's explore how these trends will shape 2026.

Hosting zones

A growing number of kitchens now operate through subtle zoning, allowing the room to work efficiently without ever feeling crowded. Hosting areas are increasingly common, creating dedicated spots for daily rituals or relaxed entertaining. Coffee stations, beverage counters, and open shelving for frequently used items help streamline morning routines and make serving guests feel effortless. These thoughtfully placed micro-areas also reduce congestion around the primary prep zone, encouraging smoother movement throughout the room. Even in smaller footprints, a well-designed hosting area (such as the clever wine cabinet pictured) can free up valuable counter space and lend structure to the layout.

Islands with character

Kitchen islands have become expressive focal points that bring personality to the heart of the home. They're no longer just extra worktops; they're sculptural, multifunctional centrepieces that anchor the entire space. Designers like me are experimenting with ribbed or fluted details, gently rounded corners, warm wood cladding, and stone surfaces with softened edges to give islands a refined, furniture-like presence. These details introduce visual warmth while also enhancing the tactile experience of the kitchen. Whether the island spans several metres or is compact enough for

a condo, it naturally draws people in—inviting conversation, casual dining, or simply acting as a place to pause.

Natural and tactile

A renewed appreciation for sensory richness is shaping material selection throughout the kitchen. Finishes feel grounded and soothing woods with expressive grain, velvety matte surfaces, and metals with brushed or softly aged patinas. These layers add depth and warmth, creating a stronger connection to nature. Even smaller details—thin metal cabinetry accents, leathered stone, or handcrafted tile—bring a sense of craftsmanship that encourages a calmer, more mindful experience. This same philosophy extends to faucets, where sculptural silhouettes and subtly tactile finishes take centre stage. Notable introductions from Canadian brands like VOGT are celebrated for their natural feel and refined, touchable presence—where every curve, finish, and detail is thoughtfully designed to engage the senses and elevate your everyday kitchen experience.

Clutter-free style

The idea of “conceal and curate” continues to gain momentum as people look for ways to keep their kitchens feeling orderly without losing everyday practicality. Full-height cabinetry with understated profiles creates a serene backdrop, and slide-away or pocket doors let you hide small appliances when they're not in use. Many of my clients are requesting compact pantry zones or narrow utility cabinets that organize gadgets, ingredients, and cleaning essentials so they don't end up crowding countertops.

Panel-ready refrigeration and dishwashers disappear into surrounding millwork more often, while flush induction surfaces maintain clean, uninterrupted lines. The goal isn't perfection—it's a room that feels intuitive, visually calm.

Warm minimalism

Warm minimalism is becoming a preferred approach for homeowners looking for spaces that feel serene yet full of personality. Instead of stark surfaces and



cool palettes, this direction embraces rich wood tones, earthy neutrals, warm greige cabinetry, and stone with organic veining or movement. These elements work together to create a palette that feels grounded and inviting. Softly rounded shapes, matte finishes that diffuse light, and materials with natural variation contribute to a look that feels both refined and approachable. Warm minimalism encourages a slower, more thoughtful environment—one that supports cooking, socializing, and unwinding with equal comfort.

Taken together, these trends reveal a clear shift toward kitchens that feel intentional, welcoming, and thoughtfully organized. They're rooms built around real routines—brewing coffee before sunrise, preparing meals with family nearby, hosting friends at the island, or simply enjoying a quiet moment while dinner simmers. With smart zoning, layered textures, hidden storage, expressive islands, and seamlessly integrated technology, today's kitchens are evolving into spaces that genuinely support how people live day to day. They balance beauty with practicality and comfort with style, proving that good design can make even the busiest household feel a little more harmonious.



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