

designer touch

White delight



Hibou Design & Co. takes a plain new-build kitchen and transforms it into a light, bright and personalized cooking space

by EUGENIA TRIANDOS AND KORINA KHAMIS • photos MIKE CHAJECKI

There are many benefits to buying a brand-new home: You're not inheriting someone else's style preferences, or their wear and tear. However, there are also some challenges, namely the "cookie-cutter" issue. Homes in new subdivisions

are often built en masse, with each being a carbon copy of its neighbours. Such was the case in this brand-new townhome project where builders typically offer limited upgrade options. With few distinguishing features included in the plan, adding character became a conscious consideration at the interior design level.

Another challenge when designing interiors for a brand-new build is not having a concrete structure to work with. Here's where it helps to work with a professional designer who has experience with conceptualizing the final product, and how various features and finishes will play out. These homeowners asked us to infuse



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tip

Hardware is an easy and cost-efficient way to infuse some personal flair into a home. Shop around for something that is unique and speaks to you. Consider mixing knobs and pulls for added interest, but keep them in the same metal and finish for a consistent look.

some charm and character into a home that was still mainly just a plan on paper. So, that's where we started.

This was the third kitchen that we designed for these clients, so we had an intimate understanding of their appreciation for timeless design, bright whites, open space and their penchant for hosting parties. We created a floorplan that was open to accommodate how they live and entertain, setting out the room divisions and overall layout. Once approved by our clients, we handed the final plan to the builder and kept our fingers crossed that our vision would not be denied.

One of the design changes we



made was changing this beautiful townhome's layout to optimize its stunning park views. Our holistic approach to the interior finishes ensured a cohesive aesthetic throughout this open-concept main floor, where the kitchen is open to the dining room and part of the living area. The overall style of the home is contemporary, so the kitchen had to follow suit.

Since the builder's upgrade options were limited, we thoughtfully narrowed down the areas that were worth the extra investment, such as the countertops. We splurged on quartz countertops – white quartz featuring a deep, high-contrast veining. We used this same material to wrap the large island featuring a waterfall edge on either side. The island offers a comfortable seating and serving area for guests, and easy clean-up, making it the preferred spot for family meals.

We continued the predominantly white colour palette with a small-scale, classic subway tile that runs up

the hood's back. We dressed up the builder-grade shaker cabinets with punchy black hardware that nodded to our clients' preferred style.

We decided to make the hood a focal point by giving it a dark finish and framing it with two beautiful brass sconces. This detail meant sacrificing some upper cabinets, but we felt the character this would bring to the space was worth it. We made up for the missed storage space with a full-length cabinet to the right of the range, which is a perfect place to tuck away small appliances. This family loves to entertain, so having these kitchen essentials hidden away yet readily on-hand was a feature they loved.

The outcome of our efforts is a contemporary, bright and open kitchen that perfectly functions and complements the lifestyle of the clients. The kitchen is truly the heart of every home, and it always helps when, as the designers, we have insight into how our clients live and what they love.

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