

REAL ESTATE

## The Return of the Luxurious Retro Kitchen

Driven by nostalgia and a love of 20th-century styles, a growing number of homeowners are installing kitchens that give a stylish twist to the kitschy



PHOTO: JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING

By *Katerina Ang*

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Stainless-steel countertops. Marble islands. For years, the tasteful kitchen look hewed toward a sleek homogeneity.

But some homeowners are shying away from the hypermodern in favor of eclectic, retro-looking cooking spaces. At Jackson Design & Remodeling in San Diego, Calif., about 40% of their kitchen projects are vintage-inspired.

Tatiana Machado-Rosas, a senior interior designer at the firm, says that this trend is shared by older and younger homeowners interested in authentic period-design styles.

Decorating kitchens that stay on the right side of the line separating whimsical from cheesy isn't cheap. Owners of the four spaces featured here spent between \$26,000 and \$150,000 for their kitchen redesign.



PHOTO: INDIVAR SIVANATHAN

### GOING ENGLISH COUNTRY

The owner of this Bay Area kitchen wanted the “essence of a 1920s English country kitchen.” To that end, designers at Canyon Design Build in Oakland settled on a white Wedgwood stove—from the 1950s. “One of the problems was that there was no ventilation in the home, so we mixed that with a contemporary hood made of stainless steel,” says Chris Avant, chief executive of the firm.

Other features include a checkerboard-yellow backsplash, and an alternating yellow and red palette for the rest of the kitchen. Another throwback touch was the surface-mounted lighting.

Cost: About \$150,000 in today’s prices

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PHOTO: ELIOT COHEN/ZEITGEIST PHOTOGRAPHY

#### AN ISLAND STATEMENT

Australian designer Gavin Hepper was commissioned to renovate the kitchen of a 1950s cottage in Wollongong, south of Sydney. One of the bedrooms still had avocado-green wallpaper from the period, which the designer appropriated for a geometric backsplash.

The centerpiece is the roughly 13½-foot island, which has timber laminate and lime-green accents. Lights attached underneath the unit cast shadows onto the floor. According to Mr. Hepper, the statement piece is what gives the space sophistication. “Otherwise, it’s just a funny green kitchen,” he says.

Cost: About \$44,000

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Sunny Yellow Retro kitchen. San Diego. Jackson Design and Remodeling PHOTO: JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELIN

#### ‘YELLOW AND RETRO’

The homeowner in this San Diego condo gave designer Rosella Gonzalez, at Jackson Design & Remodeling, just two words: yellow and retro. “She knew the feel she wanted, but had no clue beyond that,” says Ms. Gonzalez. The first step was to locate colorful period appliances, including the yellow Elmira stove Ms. Gonzalez found. The designer then suggested a countertop and backsplash of yellow ceramic tiles with black trim made by American Olean. Yellow-and-white linoleum on the floor finish the look. Softer and simpler touches, like round-edge Carrara marble countertops, are used as contrast elsewhere.

Cost: \$95,000

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PHOTO: ADAM GIBBARD

#### THAT '70s SHOWPIECE

The young owners of this kitchen in a cottage on England's Cornish coast hired George Robinson of George Robinson Kitchens to create a room inspired by their orange period fridge. Mr. Robinson picked shelving that alternated between apricot and neutral colors. The drawers are made of birch plywood commonly used in the 1970s, instead of the solid wood typical today. Chunky cast-iron handles add to a "built-in look with a '70s vibe to it," says Mr. Robinson. He also put in a Silestone quartz worktop that resembles Formica laminate.

Cost: About \$26,000

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