

Hints for Homeowners

Getting The Most Out Of A Kitchen Remodel

by James Young

(NAPSA)—According to the U.S. Census Bureau, homeowners spent \$130 billion on remodeling projects last year. If you hope to join them anytime soon, there are a few things you'll want to keep in mind. After all, a kitchen remodel can give you one of the best returns on investment as long as you know where to save and where to spend.

I help homeowners who dislike their kitchens evaluate all their options, from cabinets to countertops. Here are a few tips for a kitchen renovation that's worth the time and investment.

• **Play with color.** You spend a lot of time in the kitchen and you want it to be an inviting, comfortable place. One way you can really spice things up and show your true personality is with paint. Go bold or lighten things up with your favorite wall color; it's really up to you and your personal style. It's also one of the most inexpensive things to change down the road, so don't be afraid to go outside your comfort zone or experiment with the latest color trends.

• **Mix and match materials.** Combining materials of different textures—such as stainless steel, concrete and reclaimed wood—adds warmth and visual interest. Invest in a marble slab for baking prep and a coordinating laminate or solid surfacing on other surfaces. This is your kitchen; get creative.

• **Make a statement with countertops.** One place you can make a big statement is with countertops. The amount you spend on this item should account for only around 10 percent of your kitchen renovation budget. For



TV host James Young recommends Formica® laminate to get the look of granite without the high cost.

this reason, I prefer working with Formica® brand laminate. Through the latest design and print technologies, you can get the look of granite and marble without breaking your budget. For example, the 180fx® line of laminates captures the true scale and color variation of exotic, natural surfaces but at a fraction of the cost.

• **Update your cabinets.** While this can be a pricey endeavor, new cabinets can completely transform the look of your kitchen. No budget to replace them completely? You can create a unique look by adding laminate to the fronts of cabinet doors and drawers. Even more simple: Update them with a coat of paint, add new hardware and you'll be all set.

For more tips on renovating and getting the best bang for your buck, visit the Knowledge section at www.formica.com.

• *Mr. Young is a licensed contractor, electrician and TV host.*