

BUDGET STRETCHING DECORATING IDEAS

Kitchen Renovation Too Expensive? Try A Facelift

(NAPSA)—Not many homeowners can afford to completely renovate their kitchens. In fact, according to the National Kitchen & Bath Association, the average kitchen renovation costs \$36,200.

Fortunately, many tricks of the trade exist to easily and inexpensively freshen up the busiest room in the house without breaking the bank. The user-friendly renovation shortcuts listed below make substantial differences in any kitchen.

- Replace the kitchen countertop. Counters function as a major focal point in kitchens and nothing alters the room's appearance like a new one. Since granite and solid surface cost a small fortune, opt for laminate. Wilsonart International recently introduced MesaGranite, a collection of premium laminate patterns that resemble granite.

Says Roderick Shade, New York-based interior designer, "A nice clean counter changes the attitude of the kitchen. When the budget is limited, there is a lot you can do with paint and laminate. I like laminate because it's inexpensive, has a long life and stands up to kids, cats and dogs."

- Add a custom edge to a new or existing countertop. Custom edges take ordinary countertops upscale. Beveled and curved edges—in laminate or wood and in matching or contrasting colors and patterns—add a customized look to counters with plain edges.

- Replace the hardware on the cabinet doors and drawers. Help bring cabinetry into the 21st century with new handles and knobs. This easy and low-maintenance change carries lots of impact.

- Incorporate glass cabinet doors. Consider replacing a cou-



A laminate countertop is one inexpensive way to give your kitchen a facelift.

ple of solid cabinet doors with strategically located glass doors for a more open, modern look.

- Add a fresh coat of paint. "After the countertop, the most visible surface in the kitchen is the walls," says Ken Charbonneau, color marketing consultant and member of the prestigious Color Marketing Group in New York.

For small kitchens, Charbonneau recommends keeping the paint color light and on the warm side. It's okay to use richer color with more spacious kitchens. Today's popular color families include yellows and golden neutrals, the entire range of terra cotta and warm stone colors. And for the adventurous—paint the ceiling or insides of the cabinets in a bright color.

- Invest in new kitchen accessories. Accessories are an easy and affordable way to add pizzazz to the kitchen. New place mats, curtains, tablecloths, seat cushions, floor mats and oven mitts in any array of bright colors work wonderfully. Generally, the smaller the object, the brighter the color can be.

To learn more about Wilsonart laminate or custom edges, call 1-800-433-3222 or visit wilsonart.com.