

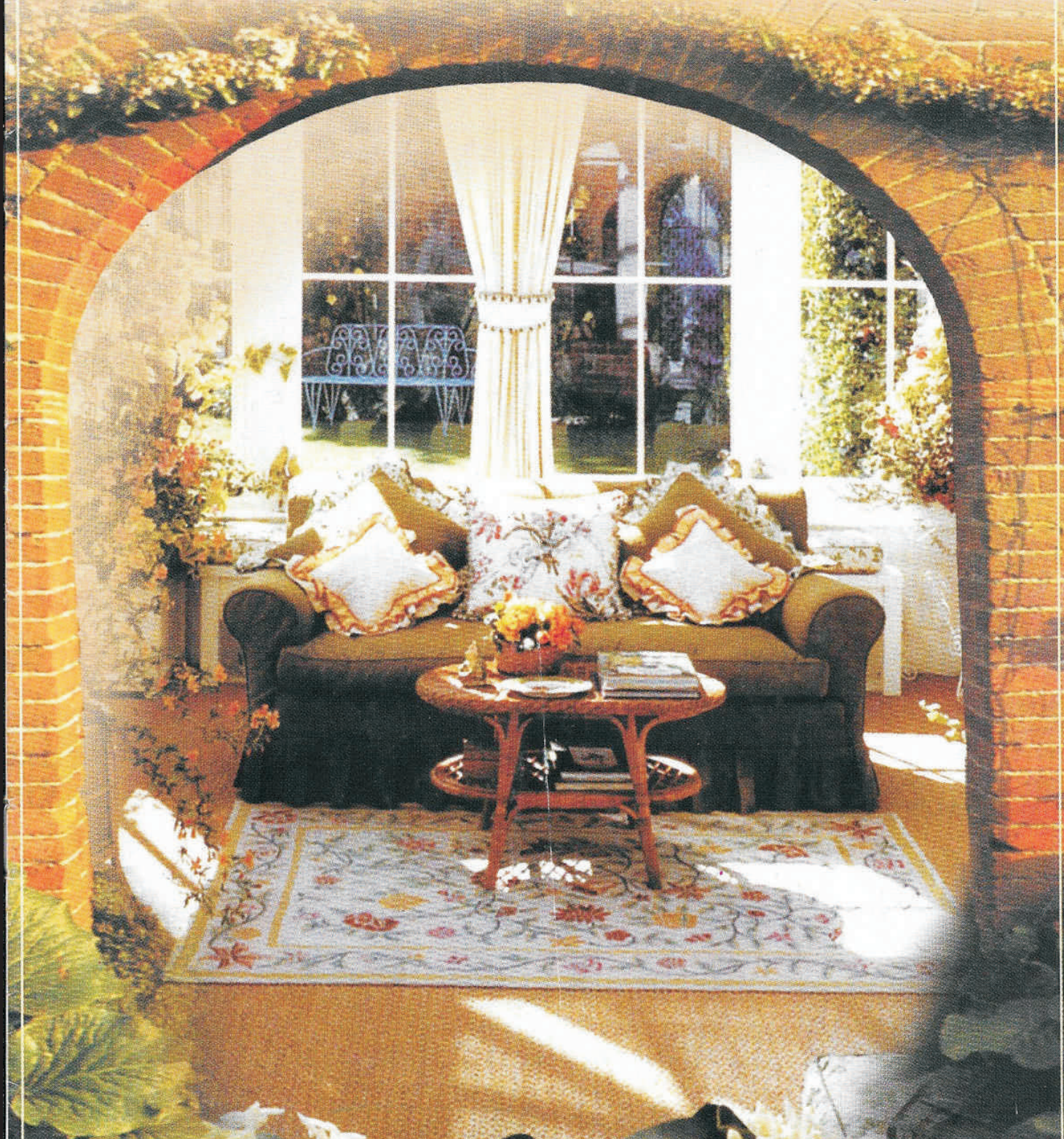


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Ambience

celebrating lifestyle





Dishing out designs

With our priorities changing from mere needs to desires, our kitchens are slowly advancing from being plain, functional units to a much higher level - one of being aesthetically appealing and matching our sensibilities

By Charoo Sood

OUR kitchens are no longer damp, hot corners, cut out from the rest of the house, but they are an extension of the elegance, grandeur and beauty of the same. After all, it is one of the most important places where love and affection is poured while preparing every meal!

An advancement in technology has brought about a 'change' in every sphere. And keeping in step with this tradition, our kitchens have undergone a more cheerful 'face-lift'. A beautiful, smart and functional kitchen is the dream of every 'lady of the house' who spends a good part of the day in it.

Experts give a few tips to help bring to light some of the dos as well as don'ts one should follow while designing this creative and undoubtedly, one of the most essential corners of a house.

"Each and every individual has a different set of requirements. So the first and foremost thing one should do is plan ahead - what items do they want to keep in the kitchen, what colours they want to include, what is their storage requirement, the size of the kitchen and lastly their budget," says Ashwin Lovekar, interior designer and architect.

Continues he, "There are a number of new gadgets which are becoming a part of almost every household. Some of our clients have special needs like placing the dishwasher, microwave oven, cooking hob and even washing machine in their kitchen."

Listing some of the other changes that have taken shape, Ashwin avers, "Electric chimney systems have replaced the conventional exhaust fans. Also, marble and granite slabs were ideal for kitchen shelves. Now, the material in vogue for the same is 'corian'. The unique feature of this material is that the whole top, including the sink, is in one mould. Thus, the sink doesn't stand out from the rest of the look." Apart from being homogeneous, this material also comes in about 100 varieties.



Smaller kitchens, according to Ashwin, should look spacious while being capable of storing all the basic requirements. "Lazy Suzan - a smart corner unit which can swivel out at an angle of approximately 270 degrees is a smart buy for storing things, in such small kitchens," says he. All gad-

gets not needed daily can be kept behind closed doors. "Clutter makes a place look extremely cramped. Frosted glass, which is of a translucent quality, brings about a feeling of lightness, which opaque materials do not. A liberal use of the same in smaller kitchens will help give it a bigger look," says Ashwin. Areas like the kitchen cabinet doors made of this material come in extremely handy for this purpose.

"Kitchen furniture should be made of materials which are water proof as well as fire resistant," says Meghna Palwe, Manomegh Architects and Engineers. Wood fixtures are also known to attract insects like cockroaches, and termites, so these should be avoided. "But, termite-resistant and water-proof, MDF or pre-laminated wood can also be used for paneling," says she.

"Use of Kadappa stone for platform building and support for niches is advisable," says Kajal Vera, interior designer, Nufit. Listing some of the new options available for kitchens these days, she says, "Wire mesh drawer system is extremely convenient and a smart buy. Kitchens having stainless steel and powder coated drawer systems are also replacing the previous wooden fixtures. Today, due to the convenience factor, trolley systems are also becoming extremely popular."

As for flooring she says, "Care should be taken to use anti-skid materials. Kota slabs are a good choice whereas natural stones like marble or sandstone stain easily, thus

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should be avoided." Agrees interior designer and sculptor Indranil Garia, "Anti-skid flooring, especially in ceramic tiles, is the best bet as they help avoid potential accidents."

Waterproof ply, preferably having a glossy finish, is advisable for making cabinet doors as matte finish helps capture more of soot and dust than materials which come in glossy finish. According to him, granite is apt for the workstation as it is low on maintenance.

The cooking range, sink and refrigerator should ideally follow the triangular concept of placing. "The basic concept behind the same is that three different people can work in these areas without being a hindrance," explains he.

"A kitchen comes in four basic shapes - the 'U-shaped kitchen' with three connecting sides having shelves, the 'parallel kitchen' having one shelf on either side, the 'L-shaped kitchen' having shelves on two connected walls and the 'island kitchen' with the sink or working area in the centre," says Indranil. The final design one chooses depends on the size of the kitchen as well as personal choice. "The U-shaped kitchen is ideal, but due to the space constraints, L-shaped kitchens can be made for smaller areas. Whereas, the island kitchen is meant for extremely huge kitchens."

The height of a kitchen work counter, the proper clearance between cabinets or appliances for circulation, the accessibility to overhead or under counter storage and proper visibility should be the primary considerations while

A FEW TIPS FOR SMALL SIZED KITCHENS

- Provision of a small folding table placed at the empty wall of a L-shaped kitchen can serve as an extra working space as well as a dining table
- Light coloured laminates make small areas look large.
- Use of contrasting colours gives depth to small space
- Cabinets and drawers under the working area provide ample space to store things in.
- Overhead counters facilitate easy access for things which are needed frequently.
- Ample use of translucent materials, like frosted glass, for cabinet doors provide a feeling of space.
- Avoid clutter. Things not needed daily can be kept in enclosed areas rather than displayed on shelves.

designing the cooking space. All should be responsive to human dimension and body size if the quality of interface between the user and the components of the interior space are to be adequate.

According to Ashwin, "The standard height for the work counter is 34 inches. The ideal space between the work counter and the overhead counter should be around 20-24 inches. The height of the remaining overhead counter should be around 27 inches."

With technology growing at a fast pace, the look of the kitchen is undergoing a major change - a change that compliments technology with beauty, comfort and style.

