



Kitchen Design Book Best for Reference

Beyond the Basics...Advanced Kitchen Design by Ellen Cheever, National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA), 124 Main St., Hackensack, NJ 07640; 1990; 483 pages; \$49.95 hardcover.

According to Ellen Cheever, certified designer of kitchens and baths, and author of *Beyond the Basics...Advanced Kitchen Design*, today's designers should be more than simple sellers of cabinetry. Ironically her book is weakest on the subject of design, and shines forth when describing the nuts and bolts of cabinets, appliances, surfaces, and the like. It's also a rather strangely assembled volume—sometimes a page will be left 50% empty, while the text continues on the next page—a feature I never understood. The book is also printed in rather large type (easy on my aging eyes) and thick paper, so that it seems to contain more than it does, (but it certainly is not skimpy).

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Ms. Cheever's text is illustrated by a large collection of adequate black-and-white drawings and a mere handful of photos. (The photos show a fascinating variety of storage options for cabinets and drawers.) Much more could have been done with photos on this subject, and their absence is not made up for by the assortment of perspective renderings, which I found generally uninspiring.

Ms. Cheever begins by contrasting what we've come to understand as standard kitchen design rules (primarily from research at Cornell and the University of Illinois) with the needs of contemporary chefs, homemakers, and families. She ends with a description of how one kitchen could be designed differently for three different clients. She then goes into the basics of shape, layout, and work centers. She covers islands, pantries, and double work triangles (for two cooks). She gives detailed advice on incorporating televisions into kitchens and even covers the requirements for creating a kosher kitchen. So far, so good.

From here the author launches into a rather theoretical discussion of what constitutes creativity, brainstorming, and design principles. Unfortunately it's almost impossible to learn creativity by reading about it, and her discussion of design left much to be desired. Examples of different lines are shown (not applied to kitchens), as if we bonehead readers don't know what curves or angles are. The author discusses tactile (physical) texture, but neglects visual (or apparent) texture. She claims that it is "extremely difficult" to mix two contrasting textures. (Not true, in my opinion.) She also advises that coarse fabrics should be used with oak because of the noticeable pores in that particular wood species. I had a hard time accepting

this as serious design advice.

Color theory is presented through black-and-white illustrations. Finally, I found the discussion of architectural styles virtually useless and without illustrative examples, until the end of the chapter where perspectives by designer Donald O'Connor showed 28 stylistic interpretations of one basic layout. These drawings had no descriptive captions though, which severely limited their value.

The book winds down with two chapters on professional practice and sales techniques for people in the business. Curiously, a list of illustrations ends the text, followed by a bibliography (arranged by chapter), and, for some reason, a metric conversion chart (including hectares—for very large kitchens). An odd mixture, oddly presented, but its best parts will be of interest for kitchen planning.

I found *Beyond the Basics* to be a valuable reference book on cabinets, countertops, surface finishes, specialty design, ergonomic factors, appliances, lighting, and the basics of electricity, plumbing, and breaking through a wall.

Currently, this book cannot be simply purchased. It is a companion text to an NKBA design seminar. The seminar is \$385 for NKBA members and \$485 for non-members.

Lack of Illustrations Stupefies the Smart Kitchen

The Smart Kitchen by David Goldbeck, Ceres Press, P.O. Box 87, Woodstock, NY 12498; 1989; 129 pages; \$15.95, plus \$2 postage and handling; 8 1/2 x 11 paperback.

Kitchens, experience has taught me, are very personal places. Home economics, ergonomic studies, and textbook solutions are all well and good, but when it comes down to it, homemakers and cooks always have their own, dearly held convictions about what is right for them. David Goldbeck's *The Smart Kitchen* is like that—very personal, even idiosyncratic in presenting the author's views about what makes a workable kitchen. This is okay if you're inclined to question authority or challenge conventional wisdom (and goodness knows that American kitchens could stand improvement in certain areas), but regrettably *The Smart Kitchen* is a bit of what I call an "Oh, wow!" book—thought provoking, but lacking in analytical depth.

A few examples will illustrate my point. I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Goldbeck's observation that kitchen counter heights should vary according to the activity in that area. In his own "demonstration kitchen" the author installed an electronically adjustable counter to solve the problem, but detailed information on how he built this innovative feature is absent. In fact, it was not until the

very end of the book that two illustrations of his kitchen appear, and there is no reference to their existence anywhere in the text.

Illustrations are one of the main shortcomings of the *The Smart Kitchen*. It consists entirely of lackluster line drawings and no pho-

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tographs. The author often gives verbal descriptions (as in contrasting face-frame and "Euro" cabinets), when one picture would be worth the proverbial thousand words.

Another example of the book's lack-of-depth is when the author ducks the question of how to build a soundproof wall by saying it is "not

difficult, but too lengthy...for inclusion here." A single drawing with an explanatory caption would have done the job admirably. However, we are advised in detail on how the author built an acoustic ceiling using fiberglass insulation and pegboard—but the instructions left me wondering. First, says the author, fill the joist spaces with insulation, then attach vinyl (poly?) to keep fibers from filtering down. Wouldn't the reverse order be better?

Later we are reminded that televisions, videocassette recorders, and other such equipment are finding their way into the modern kitchen, but we're not told how to integrate them successfully into the layout and cabinetry. On the other hand, the author suggests eliminating lazy Susans from corner cabinets (I concur), and replacing them with a compost center. He does include a rare detailed plan of this.

I could go on, but surely you get the picture of how inconsistent and poorly illustrated this book can be in its effort to challenge our thinking about kitchen planning.

—Paul Hanke

Free & Cheap

Wanna Install a Sauna?: A sauna plan booklet, *How to: Plan Your Sauna Installation*, is available from Am-Finn Sauna Company. This free, 17-page booklet contains sauna room floor plans, and pre-fab and pre-cut sauna installation instructions. For a copy, write Am-Finn Sauna Co., P.O. Box 810, Valley Forge, PA 19418; 800/237-2862 (in Penn., call 215/983-3212).

The Goods on Wood: *TheWoodBook*, from Hatton-Brown Publishers, is a collection of product reference data and application reports. The 354-page book contains six sections: structural data, charts, application stories; engineered products, charts, statistics; siding/roofing alternatives; decorative products; treated products; and industrial products. Most of this information can be obtained, often free, from the manufacturer. What makes the *TheWoodBook* valuable is that all this information is compiled into one reference source. Send \$20 to Hatton-Brown Publishers, P.O. Box 5613 Montgomery, AL 36103-5613; 205/834-1170.

Energy-use Program: The Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory has developed the *Program for Energy Analysis of Residences* (PEAR) computer program for estimating energy use in new residential buildings. PEAR is designed as both a research tool and a nontechnical energy calculation method for home builders. A database is used to estimate annual energy use of houses based on the types of common conservation measures used. The program, which is contained on a single disk, also comes with a 65-page user manual containing step-by-step instructions. To receive a copy of PEAR, send \$10 to HUD User, P.O. Box 6091, Rockville, MD 20850; 800/245-2691.

Underlayment Videos: A video on installing Structurwood 1/4-inch underlayment, *Installation Details*, is now offered free by Weyerhaeuser. The tape covers proper subfloor preparation, placement of the underlayment, nailing, stapling, gluing, filling, and sanding techniques. A free video on *Warranty Details* is also available. Write

to: Weyerhaeuser Structurwood, 2000 Frontis Plaza Blvd., Suite 101, Winston-Salem, NC 27103; 919/768-5533.

Rehab Resources: For anyone wanting to undertake a housing rehab project, *Affordable Housing in Older Neighborhoods: Multiple Strategies*, is available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Organized in a three-ring binder are 143 pages of resource materials on current housing issues, funding sources, legislation, building codes, and tax incentives. Also included is a guide to housing-related publications, case studies, and examples of innovative housing projects across the country. To order, send \$15 to National Trust for Historic Preservation, Regional Services Division, Preservation Forum, 1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202/673-4189.

Concrete Repair Strategies: *Repair and Rehabilitation of Concrete Structures*, from the American Concrete Institute, contains 92 pages of articles and papers covering topics from recognizing and evaluating concrete defects to rehabilitation strategies. Other topics include cold-weather patching materials, selection criteria for concrete repair materials, and demolition and reuse of concrete and masonry. To order, send \$19.95 (\$15.95 ACI members) to ACI, P.O. Box 19150 Redford Station, 22400 W. Seven Mile Rd., Detroit, MI 48219; 313/532-2600.

Wood Siding—Start to Finish: *Natural Wood Siding, Selection, Installation & Finishing* is a free, 12-page technical guide from the Western Wood Products Association which covers selection of wood by species, grade, and pattern. Other topics include moisture content and acclimatization, installation, and finishes. A table for estimating coverage and a checklist for specifying materials are other features. Coming soon: a video kit combining a 40-minute VHS video with this guide for \$20. Contact the Western Wood Products Association, Yeon Building, 522 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204-21212; 503/224-3930.

—Lauren Chapman