



Kitchen Cabinet Accessories

by Michael Poster

Like a workshop, the well-designed kitchen needs well-designed storage to function efficiently. In this column, I'll describe some of the cabinet storage accessories I offer my customers to make the daily work of cooking and caring for the kitchen a lot easier.

Drawer Dividers

For customers who want clean, uncluttered storage space for cutlery, utensils, and gadgets, I often use single and multi-tier drawer divider systems (see Figure 1, top).

These trimmable components can be custom cut (a table saw with a fine-tooth blade works well) to fit nearly any size drawer opening. A cutout in the back end of the drawer allows the top tray of the multi-tier variety to slide back, revealing the contents of the lower tray. Costs for single trays are \$18 to \$30; multi-tier trays are \$30 to \$50 (prices don't include installation).

Roll-Outs

There are many kitchen accessories available that roll out of the cabinet openings. Lately, every kitchen I've completed has had at least one roll-out trash container (Figure 1, middle), often a model that allows a hingeless cabinet door to be mounted directly to the roll-out slide. Multi-bin recycling units are also becoming common. These two-, three-, or four-bin models make separating glass, plastic, and other recyclables a simple chore.

In addition to kitchen waste roll-outs, there are many units designed to store canned goods, cleaning products, and other kitchen essentials. The best of these are built around stable suspension systems that can accommodate a wide variety of hanging baskets and accessories. Prices start at \$56 for a complete unit.

Tilt Trays

Have you ever come across a sink cabinet that has a pull installed on the

false drawer front? The drawer pull invariably serves as bait for a practical joke. As a visitor attempts to open the nonexistent drawer, their quizzical look is followed by furtive glances to see if anybody was watching.

There are plastic or stainless steel tilt-out trays available that can turn this laughing matter into useful storage for small items like soap and scouring pads (Figure 1, bottom). The plastic variety can be trimmed to fit unusual openings, a useful feature in some custom installations.

I prefer the tilt-out systems that are packaged with their own hinge mechanisms. The concealed hinges are easy to install, and eliminate the "sideways" look when matching cabinet hinges are used to hinge the bottom of the drawer front.

Prices for the trays (including hardware) range from \$16 to \$30. Unfortunately, some "wide body" sinks will not allow installation of the current crop of tilt-out trays.

Mixer Shelves

A serious cook will want a convenient place to store a heavy-duty food mixer. A spring-assisted mixer shelf that pulls up and out of a base cabinet gives easy access to an otherwise unwieldy appliance. A machine capable of mixing bread dough needs a solid, secure platform, so I use a shelf unit with one of the heaviest load ratings available.

The hardware consists of a pair of hinge mechanisms that can accommodate an attached shelf of any reasonable width. Stock cabinet manufacturers offer these units installed in a limited number of cabinet sizes, while the custom cabinetmaker can vary the size of the wood shelf and offer the unit in almost any cabinet. In the retracted position, these shelf units take up a large area within the cabinet, so specify a cabinet that accommodates the appliance but doesn't waste too much interior space. You can



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Figure 1. Some of the author's favorite cabinet accessories are drawer dividers (top), roll-out wastebasket holders (middle), and tilt-out soap trays (bottom) for the space in front of the sink.

expect to pay \$120 for high-quality mixer shelf hardware.

Lazy Susans

Lazy Susans turn wasted corner cabinet space into functional storage areas.



Figure 2. Half-moon lazy Susans make good use of blind corner cabinets.

Full-round units are used in angled cabinets, pie-cut and kidney-shaped units in L-shaped base cabinets, and half-moon units fit in blind-corner base cabinets.

Some pie-cut units are designed so the cabinet doors are fastened to the revolving shelves. As the unit spins, the doors revolve into the cabinet. I avoid this type: The doors tend to go out of adjustment, inviting callbacks.

Half-moon lazy Susans (Figure 2) will fit in a standard blind-corner base cabinet. Since the shelves swivel past the cabinet door, the maximum size of the half moon is determined by the width of the door opening. The most useful half-moon design adds a slide system that allows the shelf to be fully extended after pivoting out of the cabinet opening.

Lazy Susans are available in many sizes and configurations and will work in most stock and custom corner cabinets. I always try to choose a configuration that will use the cabinet space as efficiently as possible. Although 28-inch kidney-shaped Susans are still common, your client will appreciate the extra storage a 32-inch unit offers. Pricing for most sizes and styles ranges from \$100 to \$200.

Bottle Racks

Gourmet cooks often like a handy place to store a few bottles of wine that have been recently retrieved from the cellar. Bottle racks and stemware holders that can be trimmed to size are available in wood or plated wire. These accessories can be mounted inside, between, or on the underside of overhead cabinets. Wire bottle racks start at \$11 each, and wood racks are priced around \$6 per lineal foot.



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Figure 3. For serious cooks, backsplash rails give easy access to utensils.

Backsplash Rail Kits

For serious cooks, dust doesn't have time to settle on frequently used cookware and utensils. These tools are best positioned out in the open where they're easy to reach. Modular rail systems (Figure 3) offer fingertip access to these items.

These rail systems are sold in kits, with hanging accessories that offer easy access to spices, utensils, cutting boards, and cookbooks. The tubular hanging rails are available in brass or chrome, and are typically fastened to the wall below the upper cabinets. Pricing starts at \$209. ■

Michael Poster owns and operates Michael Poster Woodworking in Montrose, Pa., and publishes Woodweb, a World Wide Web site for the woodworking industry at <http://www.woodweb.com>.

Sources of Supply

Hoffco Inc.
P.O. Box 248
Wood Lake, MN 56297
507/485-3131
Bottle racks

Mepla Inc.
909 W. Market Center Dr.
High Point, NC 27261
800/456-3752
Spring-assisted mixer shelves

Rev-A-Shelf
2409 Plantside Dr.
Jeffersonton, KY 40299
800/626-1126
Drawer dividers, tilt trays, lazy Susans, roll-outs, backsplash rail kits