


**NEW HOMES & CONDOS**

# Give your kitchen that expensive look



JULIE MCNICOL

## BEFORE AND AFTER

**Y**ou don't need to have gold-plated knobs to make your kitchen appear expensive. In fact, there are certain items that are worth saving on so that you can splurge on the ones that will stand out.

The most obvious one for designers, but not usually so obvious to clients, is to make an open-concept space that allows your guests (and family) to be in the kitchen while you cook.

Do away with the galley-style kitchen or the U-shaped boxy kitchen if you can. Instead, try to get an island into the middle of the space with seating.

If you don't have the room for that, a peninsula with seating will do the trick. You don't need to spend a lot of money on the cabinetry if you are on a tight budget.

Instead, spend the money to open up the space, providing a grand first-impression, even if you are going to fill it with inexpensive cabinetry from a big box store.

In the kitchen shown here, the overall size worked but the layout was awkward. The angled peninsula impeded traffic flow, there was no opportunity for a breakfast table and a wall separated the fridge area.

rated the fridge area.

The central location of the stove and vent hood created a visual obstruction to the rest of the kitchen. It felt closed off from the family room. We took down the wall, moved the fridge, and a bay window was added to create a breakfast nook away from the kitchen, which allowed us to expand the island to 8'.

Next, think about which appliances will stand out or be central to your layout and be willing to spend a little more on those items. My clients wanted to purchase a Wolf range, which is pricey, so I placed it on the back wall in the middle of the kitchen so those signature red knobs could be seen!

Keep in mind that a French-door fridge, as shown here, should be placed with a counter directly opposite instead of on

the sides. It is not ideal to reach around an open door to place items on the nearest counter.

There are a few choices for countertops and if you can afford it, install a quartz counter in all areas of your kitchen. If your budget is already tight, consider installing it only on the island or wherever you will do your prep work.

Quartz composites are the most forgiving for staining and scratching, as they are less porous than granite or marble. You can then install less expensive granite in the other areas. Don't forget about the backsplash!

This also doesn't have to be expensive but should provide some subtle visual interest. Try to match it to your counters and look for an interesting shape or pattern. Here we chose a hexagon shape to match the coun-

tertop.

Now to the finishing touches: accessories. This is where I usually try to get my clients to spend a little, as they will add sparkle to even the lowest budget kitchen.

Pendant lights, a chandelier, pot filler and window treatments are examples of accessories shown in this kitchen. Beware; a cheap chandelier will look cheap in person, as will thinly lined drapes (or worse — no lining!). Spending more on these small items will not break the bank and will make your kitchen appear custom designed.

Keep in mind, removing a non-structural wall and buying a nice chandelier will be a small percentage of the entire reno-

vation budget. If you can save a couple of thousand with less expensive cabinetry, then apply it toward these items. This will give you the most 'bang for your buck'!

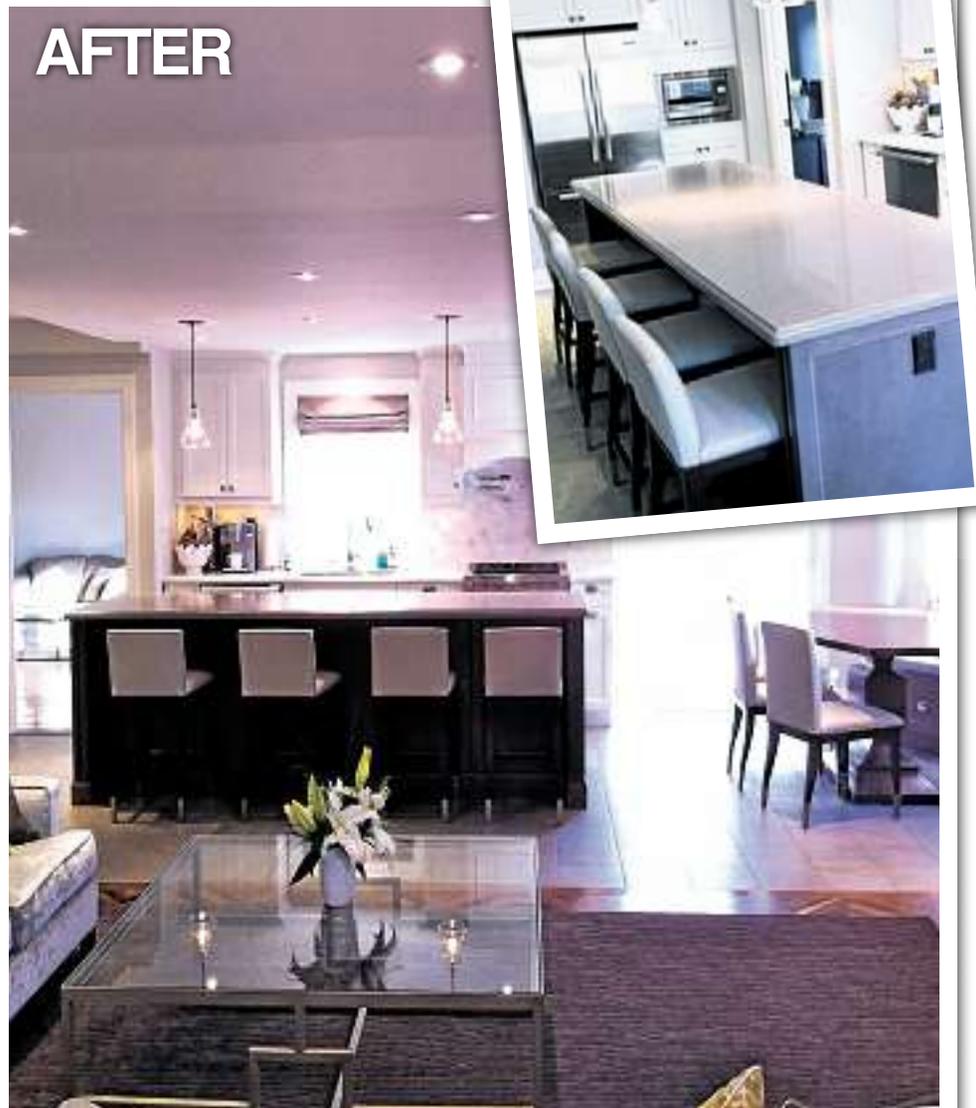
— Julie McNicol of *McNicol Interior Designs* specializes in residential interior design and is based in Mississauga. She is a member of ARIDO (Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario) and has completed residential, commercial and retail projects all over the GTA. Visit her at [www.mcnicolinteriordesigns.com](http://www.mcnicolinteriordesigns.com).

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## AFTER



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