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**Cabinetry's New Role in the Kitchen
Solutions to Common K&B Challenges
KBIS 2016 in Review**

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Staying True to the View

Showroom puts clients front and center when designing cabinetry displays

KITCHEN VIEWS AT OXFORD LUMBER, part of the National Lumber Family of Companies, recently opened its ninth New England showroom in Oxford, Conn. Several features set this location apart from other kitchen design showrooms, including the fact that it is on the second floor and a hardware store is on the first floor – surrounded by a full-service lumberyard. This location was the former Oxford Paint & Hardware, which was purchased last February by Margie Kaitz of National Lumber.

LAY OF THE LAND

The design team, led by general manager Brandy Souza, gutted and re-modeled the second floor to display a variety of kitchen cabinet lines and bathroom vanities in an inviting space that promotes a relaxed atmosphere. They relocated millwork displays, put down a new floor and added and freshly repainted walls. According to Souza, designing the showroom with angled sections – similar to that in the other locations – makes for a more interesting layout and allows the designers to see clients as they come up either set of stairs.

“This design also allows the clients to see everything we have to offer a little at a time instead of all at once,” she explained. “There is some separation but with a nice flow.”

ABOVE LEFT The Harper kitchen features Schrock Trademark cabinetry in a coffee-brown finish for an old, casual farmhouse feel with a complementing oak hutch in a distressed black finish.

ABOVE RIGHT Valenti is in the Seaside kitchen vignette, which features Decora cabinetry in light tones that create an open-air feeling with lots of natural light.

BY CHELSIE BUTLER

The kitchen vignettes, which range from traditional to modern, feature a lot of transitional, recessed-panel cabinets that she says are on trend right now. Selection centers are located near the vignettes to show all of the cabinet product offerings, such as finish options, door styles and wood species.

A large window brings a great deal of light into the showroom and, according to Souza, displays the beautiful white kitchen vignette like a seaside escape. Since the showroom is on the second floor – away from the hustle and bustle of the lumberyard downstairs – clients have more private viewing of the displays, can really take their time and are offered more personalized, one-on-one attention from the designers.

The bathroom vanities are displayed together in the showroom and include everything from basic models, more decorative units and full custom vanities with what Souza calls lots of design flavor.

“We wanted to make sure there was room for vanities because they get overlooked,” she said. “We designed this area first to make sure we had enough room. When you walk upstairs, they are right there.”

“BUILT-IN” DESIGNERS

Kitchen Views boasts about the two seasoned designers who were with the owners in the previous space for 10 years and transitioned over to the new space. Being able to keep these talented designers was beneficial to the company’s objectives for providing continuity for customers and improving the showroom’s product offerings. Souza established the showroom layout, and the two designers laid out the cabinets in the displays.

Dealer Dish

CABINET BRANDS CARRIED

- Decora
- Schrock
- Schrock Entra
- Wolf Classic

To Come:

- Aristokraft
- Omega Dynasty

FAR RIGHT Cabezas is in the Amira kitchen vignette, featuring dark, transitional Schrock Entra cabinetry, which offers a dressier feel, including a reeded glass door in the raised corner cabinet.

BELOW Bathroom vanities are all displayed together in the showroom and can be seen as soon as one walks upstairs.

“I did the overall plan of how I wanted the layout to be, and they designed each vignette and even their own desks,” she said. “I gave them a lot of leeway, and they really showed their investment in the whole design process. Contractors and homeowners love them.”

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Challenge one was that the design team continued working in the space while it was being renovated to ensure everything was moving along smoothly. They moved their desks close together under a tarp and worked in the middle of the second floor.

Another challenge was showing color palettes and styles that were true to the market, since each has different tastes and trends. In Connecticut, clients typically go for darker woods like cherry and stained maples.

“The two designers, who live locally, really helped out with the selections,” said Souza. “I also went to our vendors and requested their top-selling finishes in the area so we could display the most popular colors.”

As far as lessons learned, she said to add a month to the estimated completion date, particularly because of the time needed to obtain the necessary permits. The electrical permit in this renovation took longer because the team added a lot of cabinet lighting after the plans had already been approved.

“Make it a priority to stick to a schedule, but know there will be delays,” added Souza. “You also need to find creative ways to deal with the challenges of working in the space while under construction.” ●



SOURCES

DESIGN TEAM: Gabe Cabezas, CKD, Brandy Souza & Danielle Valenti, Kitchen Views

PHOTOGRAPHER: Nat Rea Photography

FLOORING: Armstrong Parallel LVT;

LIGHTING: Häfele;

PAINT: Benjamin Moore