

What's HOT in the kitchen

By Lesa Knollenberg

Sara* stops in her office between meetings. From her computer, she arranges for the oven to download a recipe for *coq au vin*. The oven checks with the refrigerator to see if the ingredients are available and the refrigerator orders the necessary ingredients online. Sara hurries to her next meeting and invites her staff to conclude the budget meeting at her house, over dinner.

Sound like an episode of *The Jetsons*? Think again. The future of kitchen appliances is exciting and innovative, and the appliances in Sara's scenario are newly available on the international market. Closer to home, the appliance market still has much to offer.

The buzz word in kitchen appliances is *integration*. Balancing design and function, integrated appliances blend with cabinetry and are literally hidden. The result is a kitchen with a streamlined, cozy look that is functional and efficient. This integration means that choosing appliances has become complex.

Walking through the myriad of choices, designers such as **Jenny Sinnott** of **Bella Domicile** help clients create kitchens that are congruent with their lives. "As designers, we meet with clients to investigate how they live," Sinnott says. "We investigate things like how they use their kitchens, storage capacity needs, their need for convenience."

Sinnott helps clients (with budgets large and small) choose appropriate appliances with features such as French doors or counter-depth refrigerators. "Appliances don't have to be ugly anymore," Sinnott adds. "It's much easier to make a functional kitchen pretty than a pretty kitchen functional."

Attractive kitchen appliances are the name of the game, as the kitchen has become the hub

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You'll feel like a barista in your own kitchen with a Miele integrated coffee and espresso maker.

of our social interaction. **Rick Simler** of **Grand Appliance & TV** in Fitchburg has noticed the new lifestyle trend. "People are requesting professional-grade equipment. They're entertaining more. They are watching the Food Network and want what they see."

Jeff Sweet, kitchen design account manager for **American TV and Appliance**, is a liaison between clients and kitchen designers. He has seen an increase in appliances that utilize drawers for entertaining — refrigerators, microwaves, dishwashers, freezers and warming drawers in cabinets. "Consumers are requesting drawer technology," he says. "The appliances aren't always used as a primary unit, but put in second kitchens or basement bars."

Other hot new appliances for the kitchen

For coffee aficionados: a **built-in coffee maker**. Plumbed or non-plumbed, the coffee maker houses a grinder, too. "Who doesn't want barista chic?" quips Sinnott.

Microwaves don't have to be on or above the counter. They can be built into lower drawers. A 9 x 13" pan can be dropped right into the microwave drawer, turned on and utilized efficiently.

Warming drawers, which can keep food warm while preparing the remainder of the meal. Various compartments keep foods moist or crunchy, depending on their setting. They allow flexibility for busy families with varying meal times, or eliminate kitchen stress if part of a meal is ready before another.

Efficient ovens: Convection ovens are available that function as microwaves as well. These ovens brown, roast, grill and even pop popcorn. No preheating necessary.

For the gourmet cook: **Dual-fuel ranges** with a gas cooktop and electric convection oven below. These two units are stacked on top of each other so cooks have the best of

both worlds.

Induction cooktops: These iron and magnetic stove tops provide efficient, consistent heat — but keep the cooktop surface cool.

Dishwasher drawers: One unit, but utilizes the drawer concept. It's like having two dishwashers in the space for one. Users can run smaller loads without wasting energy.

Under-counter refrigerator or "beverage center." This unit is counter-high, and stores wine, party platters and other self-serve items. With a clear door and a light, it invites guests to help themselves while in your home.



What's hiding behind door No. 2? That's a full-size, integrated Sub-Zero refrigerator in the center, with freezer drawers below.

Photos provided by Bella Domicile

In-home **professional grade ice makers**, which make clear ice.

**Name has been changed to protect the fictional.*



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