

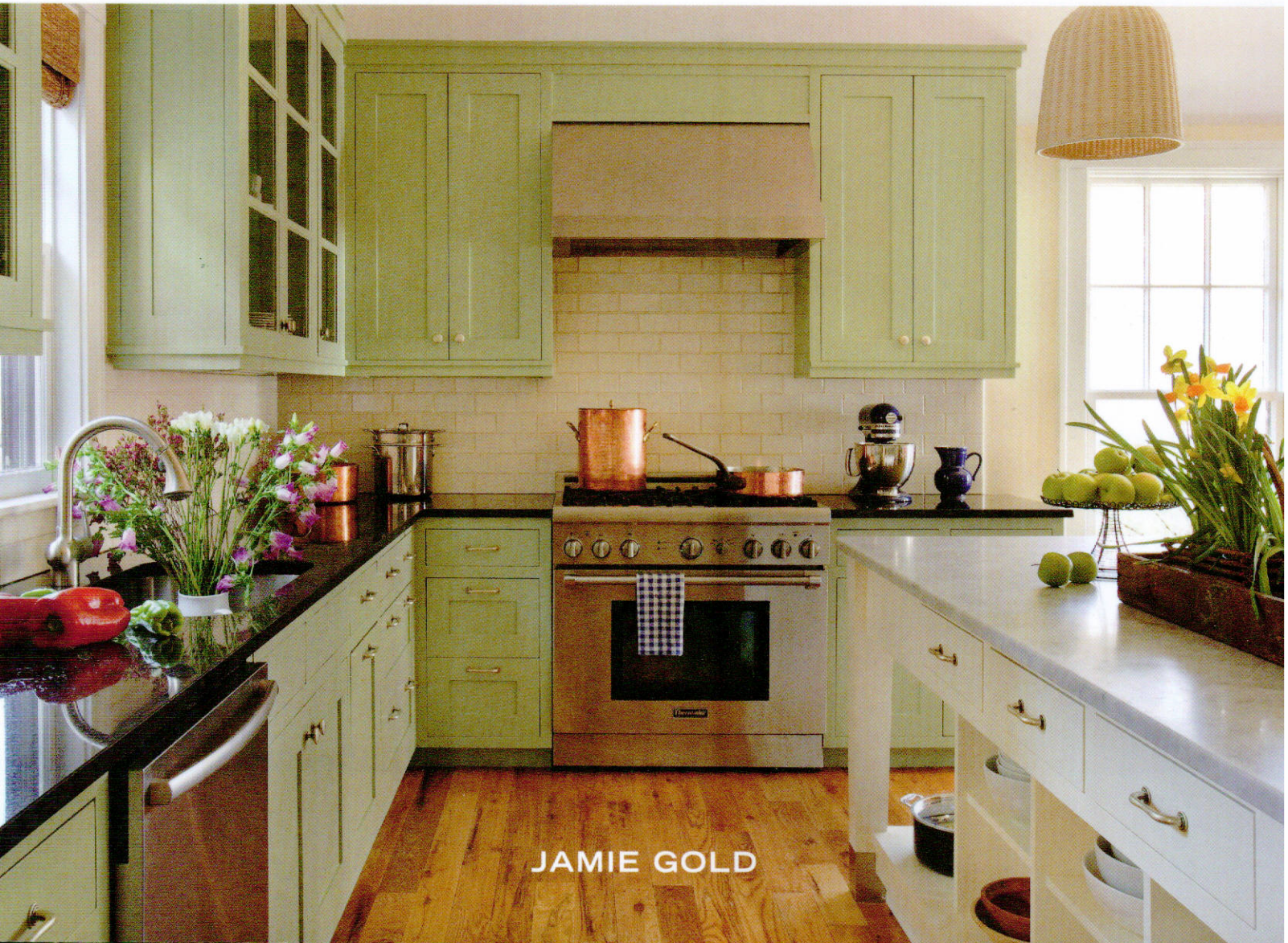


TAUNTON'S

NEW

KITCHEN

IDEAS THAT WORK



JAMIE GOLD

Framed versus Frameless Cabinets

Cabinets with face frames—strips of finished wood that attach to the front of a cabinet—are the standard in many American homes. Frameless cabinets are relatively new to this market but have been popular in Europe for years. There are pros and cons to each type.

FRAMED

Framed cabinets are a traditional style and work well in most kitchens. They are easiest for many installers to work with, in part because they've been working with this type of installation system for decades. This could translate to a quicker, better, and more affordable installation.

Framed cabinets allow for style choices not achievable with frameless models. The most significant stylistically is the ability to include inset doors, a look in which the doors and drawer fronts close flush with the cabinet's face frame. The second, more subtle detail is the option to extend the face frame for a more seamless look when applying decorative details to the cabinets or ending bank of cabinets, also called a run.

Because wider framed cabinets need a face frame divider, known as a stile, access to the interior can be a bit limited. They also have narrower drawers than frameless because of the face frame allowance. Including full-extension drawer glides, choosing cabinets that accept butt doors that don't require stiles, and adding interior accessories like roll-out trays can help offset these shortcomings.



top • The continuous integrated handles seen on the island are a custom, frameless cabinet upgrade.

above • Inset doors and drawers are a higher-end style available on framed, usually custom, cabinets.

Creating an Open-Plan Kitchen

Because kitchens are the new living rooms of our homes—they're where we eat, drink coffee with friends, do homework, review bills, and hold family conferences—they increasingly take center stage. The walls that have separated them from the rest of the living space have come down figuratively and literally.

This has entailed a rethinking in the design of the open-plan kitchen. Traffic flow needs to be routed around, not through, cooking zones. Refrigeration and pantry foods should be accessible to the chef but also to other members of the household and guests. Kitchen visitors should be clear of hot pots and pans.

The kitchen's ventilation needs to be sufficient for the specified cooking equipment so that the living spaces next to it, or diners seated at the end of the island, aren't overcome by food gases or steam.



top • Open-plan kitchens with multiple seating areas maximize interaction between guests and hosts and improve traffic flow between work space and entertainment space.

right • Modern European-inspired kitchens often hide appliances behind cabinetry doors for an “un-kitchen” open-plan loft style.





Many homeowners prefer that their kitchens blend completely with the living spaces around them. Integrated appliances featuring cabinetry fronts, with ventilation tucked behind matching millwork, have long been a popular way of creating this effect, creating an “un-kitchen” or “hidden” kitchen look. Newer, European-inspired offerings include island countertops that slide closed to hide sinks and retracting faucets and cabinetry doors that slide in front of ovens and other appliances.

If creating a hidden kitchen is your goal, you’ll want to strongly factor in the architecture, style, and major finishes of the surrounding rooms in your remodel plans. The finishes hiding your kitchen storage and appliances take on even greater importance when they’re the sole focal point in that space. It’s critical that they work seamlessly with the major elements in the rooms opening onto the kitchen. Unless you’re after the rare eclectic style, you’re going to stay traditional or modern, depending on what’s in the open living space.



Some open-plan kitchens put professional-style appliances—especially ranges and hoods—on display as a focal point.

An Enhanced Kitchen Island

Builders and designers often incorporate islands solely because they're popular. They offer home-owners generic storage capacity and possibly an appliance or sink. But islands hold tremendous potential for helping you carve out increased functionality or even a personal hobby in an all-purpose kitchen.

Your island can form its own essential work zone, with all of the appliances, fixtures, and storage needed to optimize it in one convenient, step-saving location. It could alternatively serve as a specialized work center, depending on your space, preferences, and budgets.

Converting an existing generic island into an enhanced work center, or just adding new features, is typically easier than creating a new island. Adding counter-height seating could take advantage of extra floor space and existing cabinetry for a kid-friendly or party zone. Your new countertops would extend 15 inches beyond the cabinets for a one-level countertop, 12 inches beyond a new kneewall for a raised bar; both options will likely call for overhang supports.

To add an island to an existing kitchen, you need enough floor space for both new cabinetry and work aisles around it and more if you're adding seating. You also want your island to be well proportioned to the kitchen surrounding it.

Although many local building codes specify a minimum of 36 inches for walking space, you'll find that this is too cramped for kitchen work. A work aisle should be a minimum of 42 inches for a single-cook kitchen and 48 inches for two cooks. The island itself is likely to be a minimum of 2 feet, the standard depth of kitchen cabinetry. If you have this space



top • Whatever style or functional enhancements you choose for your island, be sure you have enough room to walk or work around it.

above • Open storage on the end of an island creates a stylish and convenient display for cookbooks, household items in decorative containers, or collectibles.