

Kitchen revolution: cabinets that aren't all one color

Who says kitchen cabinets have to all be the same color?

Mixing cabinet woods and finishes is now "very cutting-edge," says Katherine Flaherty, vice-president of building products and special projects at Chicago-based Merchandise Mart Properties Inc. It echoes the more comfortable, less matchy-matchy appearance of the family room, dining room and entertainment area. "The design reflects how we want to live. I think it's a great American look."

Amy Galvin and her husband chose weathered gray and weathered white cabinets for their 1984 Highland Park colonial. Complementary cabinets will create a "super-custom, super-cool" look for the 1,000-square-foot kitchen, says Ms. Galvin, 30, a stay-at-home mom. She balked when Stacey Cohen of Chicago-based Cohen Interiors LLC suggested the combo but relented after seeing the cabinets in a showroom.

The Galvins will spend about \$25,000 for the cabinets, with plans to live in the house at least 10 years. "We thought a little bit about resale," Ms. Galvin says, "but really just wanted to create a place we enjoy."

Resale should be a concern, says Chris Pagano, an agent in Coldwell Banker Residential's Lincoln Park office. The look confuses some buyers: "There's been a few times when people don't get it," he says.

Kitchen trends, he adds, tend to cycle every seven years or so: "I'd be a little cautious if I were doing it today."

Highland Park kitchen designer Bobbi Packer calls the look a plus for resale, as long as it's done with care. Buyers might not have the cash or creativity to put together a trendy kitchen themselves, but they know one when they see one. "A beautiful kitchen helps sell the house," she says.

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