



REMODELING

the Kitchen & Bath Spaces

an interview with
designer Alana
Busse

Milgard: How did you get started in the world of design?

Alana Busse: It started when I was in high school. My grandparents had just passed away and their house was put on the market. I went into the home and started rearranging the furniture, playing with the window treatments and adding little cosmetic items to help the home sell. It was the first time I realized how aesthetic changes could also influence the way people felt within a space.

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M: What are the most common design challenges you encounter?

AB: Typically, I see three types of design challenges. First is trying to find a nice balance between the style of the home and client. I design a lot of projects in California and I see 60%-70% stucco homes, varying from Spanish, Ranch style, to Mid-Century Modern. Homeowners come to me trying to identify what style goes best in their home, but also what speaks to their unique personality.

Secondly, aesthetics aside, I also have to address functional needs. Are there kids in the house? Pets? Do the home owners have any physical limitations? We can certainly create a design similar to what's shown to me in a magazine photo, but it would most often require adjustments. It's trying to find the right scale and workflow. For example, instead of double French doors that open outward into a small space, it's choosing a single sliding french door that doesn't intrude.

Lastly, there are codes to consider! Especially in California, there are lots of building codes and energy requirements to work with.



M: What are tips for homeowners who wish to pursue a renovation?

AB: Try to identify what style speaks to you. Reflect on what colors you are drawn to, find photos from magazines or online. Every person describes styles differently, so research can really help clarify goals. Going to manufacturer's websites and reading reviews is also a valuable tool.

M: What is trending right now?

AB: A lot of people who have active lifestyles want low-maintenance materials, such as quartz countertops. They don't want to spend time sealing granite or wiping down grout. A hot trend that is still going strong is the white shaker cabinet door, creamy marble looking countertops, and 3x6 white subway tiles.

We see funkier hardware and light fixtures to add a pop of interest that can be easily changed in a few years, or when the client decides to sell the home. People are designing toward their own unique style, rather than selecting pre-packaged options. For 70% of my clients this will be their forever home. They are also designing for aging in place. Everybody wants drawers for storage, trash cans, spice pull-outs, and not having to bend down to dig stuff out. It's about making things accessible and organized.



M: How do you select the best window for the kitchen or bathroom?

AB: A lot of times, homeowners don't replace all their windows at once. They're likely to change out only the ones in the remodel area, so matching the existing style and working with the new space is important. I think vinyl windows tend to be the best for kitchens and bathrooms with high traffic use. I use Milgard® vinyl windows with white frames a lot because they create a clean look and tend to work with a lot of different styles.

I have also used dark framed Milgard® windows to match existing dark aluminum windows, but the new ones include features such as SunCoatMAX® for upgraded performance. This helps meet energy codes too.

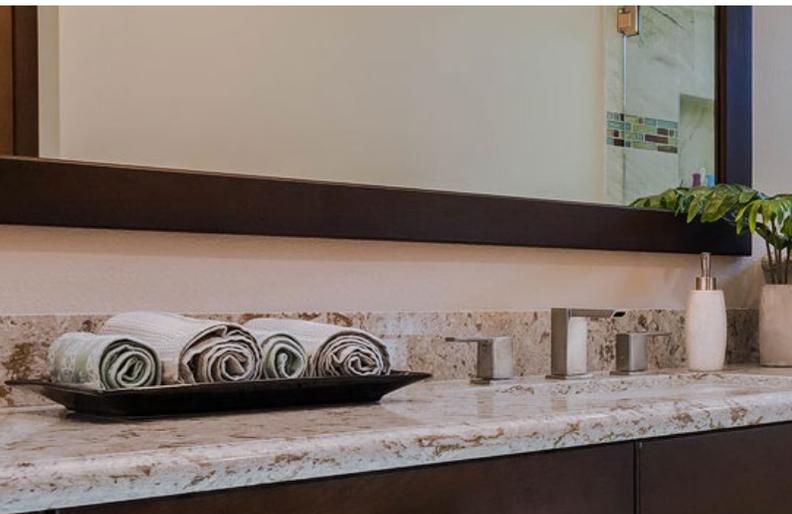
“ Try to identify what style speaks to you. Reflect on what colors you are drawn to. ”



M: What are some tricks to sticking to a budget?

AB: That's a great question! Homeowners often want to get all the bells and whistles, but don't realize how quickly costs can add up. Some simple cost savings can be obtained by selecting a cabinet constructed by furniture board instead of plywood boxes. This typically lowers cost by 8%-10%. Also consider choosing a simpler backsplash in order for more money to be allocated toward the countertops you really love, or vice-versa.

I would advise homeowners to think carefully about foregoing organizational items. I'm a member of the National Kitchen and Bath Association and recent research showed that the number 1 regret homeowners feel is they didn't opt for more organizational item such as extra drawers, cutlery dividers and other cabinet accessories that help add function and ease to everyday workflow.



Photos by Westside Remodeling



ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Alana is a nationally recognized kitchen & bath remodeling specialist, designing projects from London to Los Angeles and working with clients ranging from everyday homeowners to celebrity chefs. Homes aside, Alana's experience includes designing for appliance showrooms, as well as working outdoor kitchens for upscale chain stores. She has been selected as a National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) 30 under 30, as well as the NKBA Central Coast and Valley Chapter President for 2016.