

# HOMESTYLE



Publisher Name | 2011 Issue 5

## KITCHEN+BATH

ISSUE

**SPA DAY,  
EVERY DAY**

**Bathroom spas for every price range**

**Inside**

**Customized kitchens**

**Mike Holmes remodels it right**

**Cabinet quick fixes**

# Cheap, CHIC Cabinets

Get creative with cabinets to save money – and time – on the kitchen's biggest investment



Rust-Oleum

Space to create: Chalkboard paint transforms these cabinets into message boards and erasable art space.

By **DAN RAFTER** | CTW Features

Virginia Toledo calls it the toughest time of her career. As co-owner of New York City-based interior design firm id 810 design group, Toledo often finds herself working with clients who want high-end home makeovers at bargain prices.

This trend is especially evident when it comes to kitchens. A growing number of Toledo's clients want to spruce up their outdated kitchen cabinets. In today's challenging economy, they don't want to spend the dollars it would take to replace them.

Fortunately for both Toledo and her clients, there are plenty of options to accomplish this.

"During the last two years, we've

been asked to be as creative as we've ever been on half the budget," Toledo says. "Homeowners today want budget-friendly ideas. It has inspired us to be more creative. We want all of our jobs, including cabinetry work, to look as if they've been done on much higher budgets."

Toledo's clients are far from alone. Homeowners across the country are looking at cost-effective alternatives to replacing kitchen cabinets.

## Get Creative with Paint

It's a tried-and-true technique to rejuvenate tired cabinets with paint. But paint can also turn cabinets into funky message boards.

Jane Brown, owner of Jane Brown Interiors in New York City, is a fan of chalkboard paint. With a few coats of this paint, any surface becomes

**Less is more: The simple act of removing cabinet doors can change the feel of a kitchen.**

as useful and fun as a school chalkboard. Anyone can scribble messages on it that erase with a simple swipe. Need someone to pick up milk from the grocery store? Just write a message on the kitchen cabinet.

"It's kind of a groovy look for kitchen cabinets," Brown says. "It's functional, too, and it doesn't cost much money at all."

If chalkboard paint is a little too adventurous, a new paint color will do the trick on old cabinets. Interior designers say that clean white is always a good look for kitchen cabinets. Others suggest a two-tone look: One color for the cabinet doors, another complementary one for the wood surrounding them.

Just be careful to choose the right paint.

"Latex paints won't cover oil paints. If you try that, you'll be left with a big mess," says Melinda Miles, owner of Melinda Miles Interiors in Dallas. "A lot of do-it-yourselfers don't get the looks they want because they're missing small, but important, pieces of information."

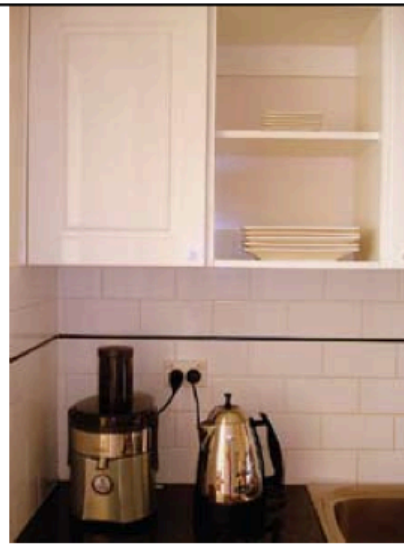
### Unconventional Hardware

Small touches can mean a lot when it comes to outdated kitchen cabinets. Toledo often recommends new cabinet hardware for her clients who are looking to add some dash to their kitchens.

Toledo doesn't limit her clients; sometimes the best hardware isn't traditional cabinet hardware at all.

Toledo recently worked with one client to search out hardware designed for boats. This made sense; the client's home sat in a beach community. Marinas and boat dealers surrounded it. The boating hardware – shiny and bulky – provided a "wow" effect in the client's kitchen.

"Changing hardware is a simple solution," Toledo says. "But don't limit yourself. There's no reason why you have to go with hardware that is so conventional. Sometimes you can make a big impact by searching out hardware that you normally



wouldn't associate with kitchen cabinets."

### Put on the Crown

To make her clients' cabinets pop, Toledo turns to crown molding. By installing crown molding around the tops and bottoms of cabinets, bland cabinets become visually dramatic.

Crown molding can be painted the same color as the cabinets or a contrasting color depending on design taste. The effect is that the entire kitchen will appear more sleek and modern.

### Replace Sparingly

Miles offers a simple suggestion for those on a tight budget: Don't replace entire cabinets. Instead, replace the doors.

Glass doors – depending on what's inside the cabinets – can make provide a powerful visual impact. They can prominently display fine china or funky glassware.

Each of the designers interviewed for this story agree that such suggestions have become more important as homeowners weigh the costs of any home-improvement project in today's challenging economy.

"A lot of homeowners are afraid to put too much money in their homes. They're worried they'll never recover the costs with what has happened to housing values," Miles says. "It's not always about whether you have the money. It's about whether it's a smart decision to invest it into your home."

© CTW Features