

Ask The Kitchen Guy Blog

May 6, 2010

Inside Baseball – Kind of

I recently had the pleasure of being interviewed by Chari Andel from Sprovieri's Custom Counters. It was a brief Q & A for a newsletter she sends to her clients and contacts. Many of which, are in the Kitchen & Bath Industry. Hope you find it interesting.

“Q 1: How long have you been in the Kitchen and Bath design industry? What inspired you to get in the field of design?”

A 1: I have been doing kitchens for about 8 years. I like being able to merge my sales and networking skills with my creative side. The satisfactions of completing a project successfully are almost immediate in this industry as opposed to other industries that can take years to bring a project to completion.

Q 2: What counter top materials are you using more of in your designs and why?

A 2: I have been trending towards more eco friendly materials lately. I am bored with 3cm thick rectangles and squares. The more I can modify shapes and thickness the more I am interested in the material. Especially, if its eco friendly and reliable in terms of performance.

Q 3: What is your favorite part of laying out a kitchen design?

A 3: I like to work with my clients not for them. Collaboration is critical. Using this approach ensures the room will perform as expected. I like to think if Mies van der Rohe designed kitchens he would have said “form follows performance”.

Q 4: Do you find that in this slow market clients are harder to please? If so why?

A 4: There is definitely a higher level of expectation and suspicion out there? People are far less likely to take your word for it. It is critical to manage your client's expectations well from the start. For me that starts with a detailed planner that lets clients know all that can be involved in a kitchen remodel with a budgeting tool that helps develop a complete financial picture. I feel this is so important we made our kitchen planner a major part of our web site (<http://dds-kitchens.com>) and marketing plan.

Q 5: What awards or personal achievements have you earned?

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A 5: Accolades, awards and citations are nice. Educational accreditations are very important as well. I wish I had more of the latter. In reality though, it's referrals that pay the bills. Referrals are the product of reputation and relationships. I am proud to say that over 90% of our business comes from referrals.

Q 6: Is there a designer that inspires you or that you admire?

A 6: There are a few that I can think of for different reasons. For example:

Emily Mackie Norris of Inspired Interiors: Emily puts together great kitchens. Her kitchens are well organized, detailed and equipped. Emily does not go overboard with enhancements that take up space without adding to performance. She also understands the materials she is using. That is critical and often over looked.

Frank Lloyd Wright: He integrated the entire building from structure to furniture. His work is/was truly timeless. He was definitely an out of the box thinker.

Gail Drury of Drury Design: Although I have never met Ms. Drury, I have seen a lot of her work in publications. I like her attention to detail, every surface seems to get attention. When I look at her published projects I usually get a case of budget envy.

Mary Lou Rogers of Direct Buy – Hoffman Estates: Mary Lou puts together some great kitchens and baths. She spends a lot of time educating her member/clients and reviewing every detail of the layout and performance with them. Her member/clients really like her.

Q 7: Quartz has become very popular the last few years, which quartz product do you use the most of and why?

A7: I use them all. The more eco friendly and unique the color the more interest I have. I am glad to see that the latest generation of new colors from several of the manufacturers offers far more vibrant colors and patterns. A great fabricator like Sprovieri's with the top equipment make it easier to create shapes.



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Q 8: What do you think of the "green" design/build movement going on today?

A 8: I think it's great and here to stay as it should be. Five years ago green was an extra expense often associated with odd hard to find materials that were expensive, and had performance issues. Not anymore.

Now green often means affordable as well. When green makes sense financially, as it does now in many cases, it's foolish not use those materials when appropriate.

For example, Cosentino's Eco has great colors, price and is made from 75% recycled material.

Another great example is Holiday Kitchens, a great cabinet company in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Their Live Green policy and practices are truly wonderful. More to the point, they make green choices affordable. In many cases it less expensive than the traditional choices of species and construction.

Holiday's Robin Wilson Home (RWH) Collections are great. The RWH collections are frameless and eco friendly. Those who haven't learned to use frameless lines like Holiday's Robin Wilson Home or UltraCraft's Destiny and Vision lines are missing the boat.

Q 9: Have you done a green project?

A 9: Yes a few to varying degrees. We are putting the finishing touches on a Villa Park kitchen that was done in our "Reasonably Green" concept which, as the name implies used products that were somewhat to very green and affordable. Pictures will be on our web site (<http://dds-kitchens.com>) in the next few weeks.

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Q 10: Do you feel Solid Surface will make a comeback? What applications do you feel solid surface works best in?

A 10: Yes once people start seeing what's possible in terms of shapes, patterns and application. The Sprovieri's showroom can really open one's eyes to the possibilities. Like I said, I am getting bored with 3cm rectangles and squares.

As far as applications are concerned, solid surface works great for showers and vanities. It also works great when turning corners, no seams to deal with. I am particularly fond of the Hi-Macs and Corian colors.

It always struck me as somewhat odd when I see people paying extra for a honed finish on quartz when they can use solid surface and essentially achieve the same results. Moreover, its greener and more reasonably priced.

Q 11: What part of the fabrication process is the most important to you?

A 11: The results, that's why I use Sprovieri's. I spec it and you build it."

Thanks again Chari

For those interested in learning more about Sprovieri's Custom Counters a you can find a link to their web site at <http://dds-kitchens.com>. Hope you found this interesting.