

The Making of A Kosher Kitchen

How to marry form,
function, friendliness
and faith to make a
space where family and
friends love to be.

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Whether strewn with take-out menus or well-used pots, it's long been known that the kitchen is the heart of a home. That truism gets ratcheted up a notch when talking about kosher kitchens—which cater to the very precise and specialized needs of observant Jews. In that particular instance, the kitchen is not just the heart of the house, it is its very soul as well. Making the kitchen have a happy heart and soul depends upon the chemistry of the family. But creating the backdrop for that is the work of the designer. Therein lies the challenge: Lots of people can plan stoves and sinks, but few can understand and



The Straus Kitchen



The Ratzker Kitchen

translate the needs of the inhabitants, religion and house so that the kitchen becomes the place where everyone—family, friends, community and yes, even the dogs and cats, want to be.

That's what makes Lauren Ostrow stand out. A noted interior designer, Ostrow along with Mindy Miller and Richard Rosenbloom have created yet another niche for themselves in successfully marrying family needs with religious commandments to make happy homes. A kosher kitchen is a hard thing to

plan: it calls for two work areas, as meat and dairy must be kept separate, two sinks, two dishwashers and lots of cabinets and drawers to accommodate double sets of dishes, cutlery and pots. Very often, two ovens and refrigerators are seen in these homes. Depending upon the size of the kitchen, making room for these requirements can cause major headaches. Some professionals throw it together based upon where water lines lie and call it "done." Others knock out nearby rooms (goodbye family room, maids' quarters, etc.) to cre-

ate mammoth spaces that require an intercom or skates to get from one area to another. That's why so many kitchens often look divorced from the rest of the house: specialists come in and "design" the area with little thought as to how it fits in with the rest of the house's décor and the family's lifestyle. Function trumps form. That's not the case for Ostrow's clients. Her team sees to it that form, function, friendliness and faith marry together to create a kitchen that blends perfectly with the house and family's needs and tastes. "You want to put in a

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The Orbach Kitchen

kitchen that is proportionate to the size of the house,” says Ostrow. “You never want the house unbalanced by the kitchen.”

There are some true hallmarks of an “Ostrow” kitchen. One is the inclusion of computer work areas. Realizing that the observant lady of the house spends more than a few of her busy waking hours in the kitchen, nooks are created where books, bills and bibelots can surround the computer in discreet style. And, in kosher households, where a lot

of baking goes on, ingenious pop up trays holding heavy KitchenAid mixers are built into cabinets rather than cluttering up counter space. Then too, since these households entertain a great deal—Friday night dinners and Saturday after-synagogue lunches are usually big, convivial gatherings with family and friends. Ostrow does her best to include a butler’s pantry in her layouts. These well-designed galleys provide excellent serving and counter space between kitchens and dining

rooms with ample room for platters, sets of dishes and, of course, extra sink and dishwasher. Then too, in homes with outdoor space, Ostrow & Co. make sure to place a patio or deck next to the kitchen for convenience with outdoor grilling as well as for dining in the *succah* during the holiday of *Succot*. It’s because Ostrow understands her clients’ lifestyles and needs so well that she can design the kitchen, as the perfect setting for family time. Take a look and see how this has translated for these three families...

