Over the past decade, we have seen many innovations in the cabinetry industry that have helped shape today’s design trends in kitchens, baths, home offices, closets and more. The following is an overview of trends to consider when updating your residential spaces.

**Make it personal, make it convenient.**

For many years, homeowners were afraid to make personal design statements in their homes for fear that such statements would hurt the resale value of their home. Today, many homeowners are throwing caution to the wind and making the interiors of their homes more reflective of who they are and how they live while making the organization and storage more convenient.

**You can never have too much storage.**

Many homes built in the 1990s and early 2000s included walk-in pantries in the kitchen and walk-in closets in the master bedroom. These “amenities” had lots of curb appeal and storage as measured by square footage. But as many homeowners found, they are storage nightmares, with shelves so deep, you can never find anything. And, by the time you do, it is well past its expiration date! To remedy this issue, convenience hardware manufacturers and cabinetmakers have developed hardware that “brings the storage to you” (as in the pull-out pantries and blind corner pull-outs pictured to the right). The net result is better ergonomics, organization and inventory control as well as less wasted time looking for lost items.
Open access.

There is a growing trend in open shelving for dishes, pots/pans, towels, decorative toiletries, books and other items. For people who are avid cooks, the ease of the open shelf allows them to be more fluid during the cooking process while homeowners who have collectables or cherished items can kill two birds with one stone with open shelving by making a design statement with the “storage” of their housewares.

This way and that.

Standard cabinet doors open out into a room. When you get into corners or have a small kitchen/bathroom, this method of opening can become problematic. Hardware manufacturers have answered the call with several innovative options including door hinges that swing up or slide to the side, providing homeowners with better access and ultimately better space utilization.

Hiding in plain sight.

Using integrated cabinet panels to face appliances is a trend that is still going strong, especially since many homeowners have discovered that not only do stainless steel appliances display finger prints but that by customizing the appliance panels, they can create a more tailored design statement with wood grain patterns rather than fussy moldings.

We all look better with a little color.

And cabinets are no exception. The Tuscan or French Provincial looks with distressing and rub-throughs have lost a bit of their shine in favor of more simple, cost-effective stains and glazes that accentuate the cabinetry’s inherent wood grain, which renders a natural decorative element all on its own.

Tried and true and a few things new.

Maple remains the No. 1 selling wood species for kitchen and bathroom cabinets, followed closely by cherry and alder. Back on the scene is rift cut oak, its beautiful tight grain appearance made popular by Frank Lloyd Wright’s Prairie
architecture; it has a transitional look unlike its cousin, the rotary cut found in many '70s split-level home kitchens and baths. Walnut and bamboo are two rising stars in the exotics species category. Walnut’s deep rich color and beautiful graining make it an excellent choice for clean-lined contemporary décor while bamboo plays well for both the contemporary and eco-conscious designs.

Kitchen cabinetry comprises approximately 40 percent of the total cost of a full kitchen remodel, 25-30 percent of a full bathroom remodel and as much as 75 percent of a home office remodel. Given this level of investment and the visual impact cabinetry has in most rooms, it is very important that you choose cabinets with a door/drawer style and wood species that you will enjoy for many years to come. Settling for your second or third choice will likely render buyer’s remorse. Once you have made your cabinet style decision, your other choices such as pull-out pantries, tray dividers, etc. will simply be the icing on the cake.