

NKBA

INNOVATION+ INSPIRATION

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL KITCHEN + BATH ASSOCIATION

6 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR BRAND

A CONVERSATION WITH LAURA KIRAR
ECO KITCHENS AND BATHS
CERAMIC TILES / CABINETS

DEPARTMENTS

- 7 Editor's Note**
What's old is new
- 9 News**
LEDs lead AIA trends, Sears opens stand-alone appliance showroom, and more
- 13 Columnist: Melissa Cooley**
The benefits of a design studio
- 14 K+B Insider: Patricia Davis Brown**
An interior designer who flouts the rules
- 16 Plan Review**
Larger footprint and clever storage transform a Maryland kitchen
- 47 Introductions**
A copper sink, Italian-made range, and more
- 51 Q+A**
Designer Laura Kirar
- 53 Process**
Dacor combines hands-on manufacturing with innovation
- 58 Details**
A walnut screen with a secret

**COVER**

Lenox Road kitchen, Aidan Design
Photo: Robert Radifera Photography

JULY + AUGUST 2016**FEATURES**

- 20 Featured Designer**
Sarah Barnard designs projects that consider the planet
- 22 Find & Seek**
Innovative ways to market your brand and attract new clients
- 38 Product Review: Ceramic Tile**
Non-traditional ceramics make gains in the kitchen and bath
- 42 Product Review: Cabinets**
Simplicity and function define cabinet trends

NKBA SPECIAL SECTION

- 30 NKBA Matters**

DESIGN BY NUMBERS

This high-end designer refuses to follow rules, but she loves doing the math

BY SHELLEY D. HUTCHINS



Patricia Davis Brown

Patricia Davis Brown, CKD, CBD, ASID, NCIDQ loves being an interior designer. She adores the profession because it lets her follow multiple career paths without following any rules.

In addition to high-end kitchen and bath design, Brown runs three online retail shops, specializes in lighting design, creates custom furniture, and works on a variety of project types. “I don’t think I could do one kind of anything,” she says, “so interior design lets me evolve into so many areas.”

Brown especially enjoys when a client gives her a tricky project. “I enjoy the chance to rise to new challenges and create a solution in every design,” she says.

While many designers maintain a signature look for their projects, Brown does not. Even if a client asks for a style she might consider unappealing at first, she views it as another challenge. The Vero Beach, Fla.-based designer refuses to follow “design rules” and embraces projects where the client’s tastes differ from hers.

Design by Numbers

Rules aren’t her thing, so what is? Brown insists math provides answers to many problems. Good kitchen design means producing the most intricate space in the house, she explains, so creating a functional kitchen requires a lot of math. Designing bathrooms also requires complicated planning,

especially if clients hire Brown after the house is already designed or even built.

For kitchens, Brown calculates many things, including cabinet space, countertop heights, and work flow patterns. She also considers the planes within a room and how the materials she selects interact and shape the space. “I look at the layers,” she says, “and how they play together to bring out the design you’re trying to create throughout the whole room.”

Despite her busy schedule, Brown is participating as one of NKBA’s K+B Insiders, six design and building industry professionals who presented the association’s Design Trend Report at KBIS and are sharing their insights and expertise with professionals and consumers throughout 2016.

But even though Brown knows the trends, she is not a strict follower of them. She prefers specifying “non-trendy” materials, such as lavastone. In the bath, she also works with concrete artisans to create unique features. Using out-of-the-box choices such as these gives clients personalized spaces.

Lighting design remains one of her passions. It often helps answer big-picture questions, and it’s also about math. She formulates candle power and beam spreads to make sure homeowners enjoy thoroughly illuminated kitchen work surfaces.

Ultimately, she says, lighting is an unsung hero of kitchen and bath design. Shadowy spots on countertops can ruin functionality, and inadequate lighting kills designs. For her, workstations often feature overlapping ceiling spots, and adjustable ambient lighting gives the social island a more casual vibe. “If you control lighting correctly,” explains Brown, “it can completely change the space.” ■



Brown believes homeowners can have a spa-like bathroom even with limited square footage. A soaking tub, she says, provides the key element in elevating an ordinary bath into a relaxation space.



In order to delineate social and work areas, the designer favors two kitchen islands. If there isn't space for two, however, she gets the same effect from a U-shaped island with a raised countertop around the outer perimeter.



Brown often uses glass in her kitchens and baths—as countertops or as wall panels. "I love glass because we live on the coast and glass looks like water," she says.

PHOTOS: ROB DOWNEY