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# Hello Kitchen, Goodbye Clutter

Amy Wald *Portrait by Ed Verosky, kitchen photos provided by Hello Kitchen*

As an architect, cook, food-blogger, and all-around kitchen expert, Hello Kitchen creator Cindy Black knows what it takes to make a kitchen a truly workable and comfortable space. Her company guides its clients in all aspects of the renovation process, from the design phase to the contract bidding process, and Black makes it her personal mission to create a recipe for kitchen success.

For eight years, Black worked with her husband, Rick, on designing modern-style homes in the Austin area. However, when their son, JR, was born in 2007, Black's schedule changed dramatically. She decided to take a year-long hiatus from active architectural duty, and it was during this period that the idea for Hello Kitchen was born. Since parenthood quickly proved to be a full-time job, Black wanted to find a way to pursue smaller-scale design projects on the side. This led to her great epiphany—the fact that she could narrow her focus to a single space.

"It just occurred to me that I could specialize in something," says Black. "I loved the idea of designing any kind of cooking space; it could be an indoor kitchen, an outdoor kitchen, something

for a commercial baker—just anything related to food."

The decision to make the kitchen her room of choice was therefore not a difficult one, and soon, all the pieces fell into place.

"It started out as just being consultations," explains Black of her initial business plan. "I thought that would be the ultimate way to give someone architectural feedback and design services, but just a snippet of it. So someone may be at the very beginning of the process where they know nothing about construction and design and need someone to get them on track, or they may be mid-way through where now they need to pick finishes or tile. Or they might just have a kitchen

that they are sort of happy with, but it doesn't work well for them."

Black's approach to kitchen design centers around one golden rule: determining her clients' logistical needs and fulfilling them in a way that captures their identities.

"I like to really get a sense for how people like to cook, how they use their kitchen now, and how they want to use it," Black explains. "Most people that I've worked with over the past year don't come to me telling me what they want; they have a sensation or a feeling that they want out of the kitchen, but they don't tell me how to do it. So it's just kind of like reading someone's personality."



Photos feature the "Bungalow Modern" kitchen, part of the Academy Addition project Black worked on with her husband, Rick.



*I've seen this said over and over—that the kitchen is the heart of the house. I think Julia Child said that it was the beating heart and center. It's just the place with the most energy and the most focus.* CINDY BLACK, HELLO KITCHEN





Black draws inspiration from her clients' individuality, and translates it into a space that embodies who they are. This can result in everything from a kitchen modeled after a French country house to one with a minimalist, natural feel. Black's current big project is a 1950s farmhouse kitchen, the center point of which is a beautiful copper sink that her client adores.




The design part of Black's services is just one aspect of Hello Kitchen's offerings. While her clients can choose how much of the renovation process she is involved in, Black is willing to provide guidance all the way through construction. In addition, she loves to give insight into how people can de-clutter their kitchens. She has even posted a detailed map on her blog that describes Hello Kitchen's preferred organization method, which includes getting rid of excess tools and storing materials where they are easiest to use.

After all, according to Black, a kitchen can only reach its full potential when it becomes a space where the owner feels really and truly at home.

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If anyone can capture that energy, it's Cindy Black. She looks at the kitchen as a canvas on which to paint, and she leaves no surface untouched. From the sink to the insides of a cabinet, Black believes that the kitchen should project an aura of organization and harmony, and she ensures that Hello Kitchen waves goodbye to the clutter and chaos in her clients' lives. 

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Cindy Black  
Hello Kitchen  
[www.hellokitchen.net](http://www.hellokitchen.net)