

BUSINESS OF HOME



Neutral hues mingle with black accents in this inviting kitchen by Brittany Simon Kevin Brost

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What are your kitchen design must-haves?



By *Aidan Taylor*

For many, the kitchen is the heart of the home. This week, we asked seven designers—Olivia Botrie, Coco Greenblum, Meghan Jay, Stephanie Larsen, Susan Marinello, Brittany Simon and Diana Wagenbach—what features they’ve used to make a kitchen design shine.

IT’S ALL ABOUT THE LAYOUT

“The biggest kitchen must-have is the perfect layout. Without it, even the most beautiful finishes or expensive appliances won’t make the space function well. I always start by understanding how the client lives—how often they cook, entertain or use the kitchen as a day-to-day hub. Once I have a clear picture of their routines and priorities, I can design a layout that truly supports their lifestyle. My ideal setup includes a clean, uninterrupted island—no sink, no cooktop—just a generous surface for prep, gathering or serving. I like to place the fridge and sink along one wall, with the stove on a perpendicular wall to create a

natural and efficient workflow. If there’s space, a walk-in pantry is a game changer. It keeps all the functional (and often messy) parts of kitchen life—appliances, bulk goods, recycling—tucked away and out of sight. I also love incorporating a narrow cabinet for baking sheets and cutting boards, located somewhere low and accessible. Definitely not above the fridge—that spot is a black hole no one ever wants to use! It’s small details like that that make a kitchen feel not just polished, but thoughtfully designed for real life.” —*Olivia Botrie, Dart Studio, Toronto*



Olivia Botrie Courtesy of Dart Studio