

EATER

Friday, November 20, 2015

Restaurant Designer Glen Coben's 7 Tips for Designing a Great Kitchen

1. GO WITH A PRO



If you can, work with an architect or designer. DIY is great for small projects, but contrary to what reality TV or your broker might tell you, re-doing such a complicated and important room requires the knowledge and experience that only a professional can bring the things like maximizing space and finding creative solutions to problems.

2. FOCUS ON THE DETAILS



Decide where you want to spend your time, and make that your happy place. Coben recommends asking yourself questions like, "Will the kitchen be party central, the place where everyone congregates?" Always prioritize comfort over looks, but adding a pop of color and/or texture brings an area to life. A lot of people like to install a mosaic backsplash for a colorful splash, but even using paint, wallpaper, or an accessory — Coben's is a red-orange Le Creuset teapot — provides that accent and allows you to easily change things over time.

3. LET THERE BE LIGHT



A great light fixture adds functional style, and spending a little more on better one — Coben suggests building your kitchen around one or two significant though not necessarily top-of-the-line pieces — is a good way to make your space look great without spending a lot of money. Try a statement light over a counter or dining room table. Task lighting is also paramount, and you want to have atmospheric lighting with the right color balance. Coben prefers LEDs (for efficiency) at a warm place in the color spectrum that's equivalent to incandescent lighting — too red and all your meat will look underdone.

4. FORGET THE WORK TRIANGLE



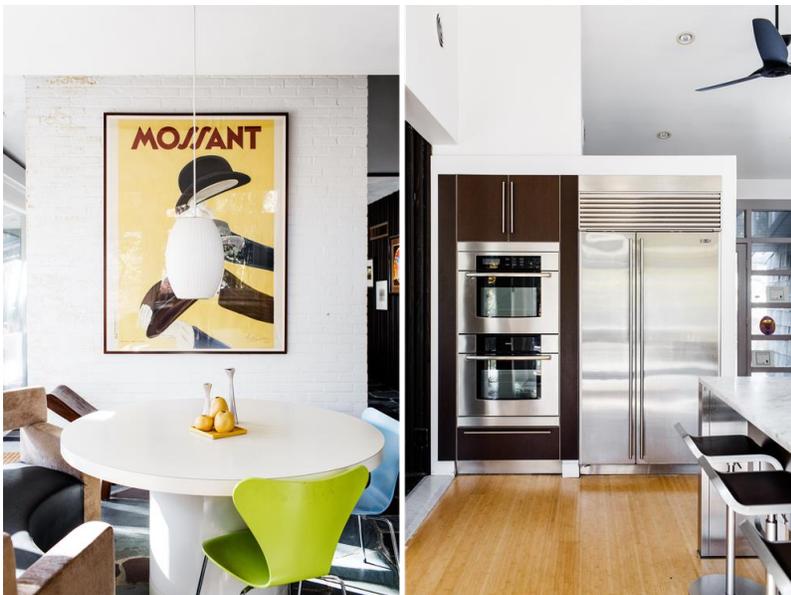
The fridge-sink-stove trinity is from your grandparent's time. Think about the flow of moving groceries and dishes around. For cooking, it's about creating enough space to drop, chop, and plate. "I have seen more food come out of super-efficient small restaurants than in some of the larger kitchens," Coben says, "because in those small kitchens every possible scenario has been vetted."

5. DINING DESIGN



Consider how long you want your meals to be. If your tendency is big, multi-course meal, armchairs are a must. But if you don't have the space, choose a bistro-type of chair and use armchairs at the heads of the table. This was Coben's solution for accommodating groups of varying sizes at Carbone, and he says it works perfectly.

6. CALM COLORS



For his commercial and residential work, Coben uses mostly neutrals with splashes of color. For soothing paint, he recommends three Benjamin Moore whites, First Crush, Crisp Linen, and Mirage White, along with Café Doppio and Indi Go Go.

7. OVERTHINK IT



Thinking through the details doesn't cost anything. Consider the practical application and how it's going to be used. "It's just a question of taking a couple of minutes longer, a couple of hours, a couple of days, to think through the possibilities," Coben says, "because those things will eventually save you a lot of time later on."