

Home How-To: The Making of a Modern Farmhouse Kitchen

The popular farmhouse kitchen style is here to stay. We asked local experts for their advice on how to get the look.

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As HGTV's Joanna Gaines proved time and time again on "Fixer Upper," modern farmhouse is the cozy, on-trend way to make all your kitchen desires come true. From exposed wood to classic white subway tiles and clean lines, what's not to love?

Country-inspired — but with an urban edge — elements of a modern farmhouse kitchen typically include a farmhouse sink, natural materials, open shelves, contrasting cabinets, industrial appliances — and a whole lot of white.

For evidence, look no further than Pittsburgh Magazine HOME's 2019 Best of Design winners for ["Best New Kitchen"](#) and ["Best Kitchen Renovation."](#)



photo by Erin Kelly

Judges chose a contemporary take on a [farmhouse kitchen in Wexford](#) as the "[Best New Kitchen](#)," while interior designer [Katy Popple](#) took "[Best Renovated Kitchen](#)" honors for an aged Lawrenceville kitchen she transformed into an open and comforting space — another hallmark of modern farmhouse design.

“[It’s] all about the balance and choice,” says Popple. “It’s great how you can sway the design more modern or rustic.”

To successfully achieve the modern farmhouse style, Popple says durability is key. Stainless steel, iron and matte black accents all are timeless choices, she says.



In another modern farmhouse example, Popple says her design for a 2018 project in East Liberty incorporated wood accents, subway tile and industrial lighting. She also exposed the home's original brick wall. Dark countertops were chosen to contrast with the clean, white cabinets and walls.



To tie everything together, Popple used a dark wooden "X" on the sides of the kitchen island and again on the staircase.

“Find a design element that really speaks to you and repeat it a few times in the space to make it cohesive,” is her advice to tentative DIY designers.

Venetia-based interior designer Christine McCall describes modern farmhouse as personal, inviting and “perfect for the modern American family,” she says. “They’re warm, livable and feel like home.”

McCall likes to create beautiful living spaces with an achievable price point. With a classic foundation that includes neutral materials and fixtures, she says “the timeless look can withstand short trends, saving you money for the future with elements you can carry over time.”



photo by tyler norman photography

McCall says wood, including floors or a butcher block countertop, is huge part of the modern farmhouse look. She adds brass accents are a beautiful way to contrast the hardwood.

Although not a professional interior designer, Sewickley resident Lauren Lang says she renovated her kitchen with charm and character in mind. She used black grout on the

kitchen's classic subway tiles to highlight her neutral design choices. To personalize the space, she added open shelving. She also chose industrial light fixtures with a modern edge and exposed wood beams.



photo by lauren lang

“We changed the layout a couple of times,” she says. “X beams were a definite from the beginning, but other elements, like the open shelves and modern knobs, were added later.”

She adds she had a lot of fun with the renovation, in which she channeled Joanna Gaines.

“Now I feel like I could redo any kitchen,” she says.