



The 5th Wall

Shapely curves, vibrant paint, deep trim add wow to blank ceilings

Karen Turner - The Ottawa Citizen
Saturday, October 20, 2007

While edgy kitchen cabinets, stunning fireplaces and walls of glass dominated many of the designs in this year's Ottawa-Carleton Housing Awards, several finalists looked to the ceilings for inspiration, adding swirling recesses, shapely panels and bold swaths of colour.

To give a jolt of eye candy to a modest custom kitchen, Michael J. Martin Luxury Renovations raised the ceiling above the dinner table with a shallow ring painted rich terra-cotta and edged in a wide, angled moulding. In the centre of the recess is a large dome light suspended from a round drop panel.

"It looks like a racetrack," said first-time judge Chris Hewett, a professor of architectural technology at Algonquin College, of the funky ceiling detail that pulls the eye upward.

Kitchen Craft Cabinetry chose a large octagon cutout to dress up the ceiling in another custom kitchen where cultured stone and granite counters were paired with Shaker-style wood cabinets with steel bar handles.

Located above the centre island, the multi-sided recess adds a lofty feel to the space and is rimmed in potlights to further accentuate its angular shape.

"I always detail the ceilings in all my projects," said designer Chuck Mills who enjoys incorporating grid patterns, elaborate recesses and coffered ceilings into his custom homes and renovations. "It's the single largest blank palette, so I think detailing is the way to go."

In a dark-cherry kitchen near Manotick, Mills added a deep white dome with smooth plaster trim above the centre island. Reminiscent of a church ceiling, the circular recess softens the edges of the formal cabinetry and long angled breakfast bar.

In the adjoining eating area, a smaller dome crowns a round bistro table. Its interior is painted soft green to match the toile draperies in the open great room.

"A ceiling can be a big plus in a house," said Mills, owner of Chuck Mills Residential Design and Development Inc., who likens a decorative ceiling detail to an exquisite painting or sculpture. "A ceiling can be part of the artwork of the house."

Further proof is found in an Old World-style home in Rothwell Heights designed by architect Christopher Simmonds. A finalist in three categories, including custom kitchens over 220 square feet, this sprawling bungalow is heavily detailed with curved archways, vaulted ceilings and an elliptical panel dotted with tiny lights that hover like a spaceship above the kitchen's crescent-shaped island.



Designer Chuck Mills added a wide dome above the kitchen island to break up the expansive white space and soften the edges of the formal cabinetry.

In the renovation of a light and airy condominium, Carleton Kitchen Creations added playful punch to the ceilings by using curvy recesses and strategically placed lighting.

In the kitchen, a cutout best described as an amoeba-shaped recess brings movement to the white expanse above the cooking area. Four pendant fixtures are staggered in a row above a cantilevered breakfast bar made of textured glass.

In the dining room, the kitchen's curvy detail is repeated with a spherical raised ceiling over the table.

"We're seeing lots of masculine and feminine elements," said judge Dexton Bennett, who described the mix of angled recesses and sexy curves on this year's kitchen, dining room and living room ceilings as a good balance of "the yin and the yang."

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