



Gail Drury, CMKBD and Jim Drury,
Owners Drury Design

Drury DESIGN

Wins 10 kitchen and bath design awards, including best of show, at the 2018 NKBA Chicago Midwest Design Vision Awards

BY **JANIS VON KAENEL**

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Drury Design Studio, an award-winning kitchen and bath design atelier, has been a western suburbs' go-to for more than 30 years. Gail Drury, certified master kitchen and bath designer, launched this woman-owned startup in 1987 from her very own home, catching the eyes of those who are now her loyal client base. Now with a team of more than a dozen other designers, project managers and support staff, Drury Design Studio is located in Glen Ellyn, and nestled in one of the village's landmarked buildings at 512 N. Main Street.

"When I first started, everything was designed around the basic work triangle as part of a simple, u-shaped kitchen,"

Drury said. "Cabinets lined up in a row under soffits, colors matched and basic materials gave limited options."

With time, Drury said trends started to elevate, offering complex spaces designed for multiple uses with custom-designed furniture pieces, mixing and matching of colors, door heights, finishes and even hardware.

Earning more than 80 awards since 1998, Drury Design Studio has received national recognition. These include a dozen National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) awards for best of show, the American Society of Interior Design's best kitchen design, Best of House Awards and two of Trends Publishing Top 50 American Kitchen Design. Most recently, Drury Design Studio received ten honors in the NKBA's midwest chapter.

WHAT ELEMENTS DEFINE YOUR STYLE?

Often, we are designing very specialized spaces within our projects. We are very good at it, whether it is a custom shower area, a custom artesian metal hood or custom tile-rug floors beneath islands or tubs. Many of our client design projects have unique signature elements inspired by our clients.

WHERE DO YOU FIND INSPIRATION?

Most of our inspiration comes from our clients. We get to know our clients through our client-focused approach, and receive most of our inspiration from our clients' ideas, wishes and requests. The fun part is bringing those ideas to life, and incorporating them into the overall spaces, and making the room look great and functional, just as our clients had hoped.



In-Studio: Ruth "Ruskin" Kitchen Design

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PROCESS?

Our design process is focused on our clients, and is all about education throughout, and revolves around four milestone meetings. We start with a visit to their homes to get to know them, to discuss their ideas and what they like and dislike about their current situation. Once retained, in the first of the four design meetings, we draw up four to five different floor-plan options to explore possible room layout options to dial in the one that works the best. The second meeting, we present elevations to explain how the kitchen might look, based on cabinet and material selection done in our studio, and make revisions to make the kitchen design fit the expectations of our clients. From there, we present a final design that includes an artistic 3-D model, drawings of the space and a line-item agreement for the complete remodeling package, including custom cabinetry, other materials like counters and appliances, flooring and construction services that we provide. In the last of the four steps, we make any needed changes in the last meeting to insure the design and aesthetics are perfect.

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT DESIGNING A HOME?

What's most challenging for us is translating what our clients see in their minds, and bringing together all of the elements cohesively to create that ideal space.—That, by the way, is also what is most rewarding about our work.

WHAT SEPARATES YOU FROM OTHER DESIGNERS OR FIRMS?

We take the time to explore many options, and educate

our clients about design alternatives, costs and material choices. The last thing you want is for clients to be unsure about their decisions, or force them to be made at the end of the design process or during the construction. Since we complete about 80 projects a year, we are very good at managing the installation of projects, and provide a daily schedule of activities during the construction, and how to incorporate new design trends and products.

WHAT IS ON ITS WAY OUT AND TRENDING IN?

We'd like to think that white kitchens are becoming less popular, but it does not seem like that trend has reached its end yet. What's in: walnut cabinetry, darker stains and painted cabinetry; modern appliances like steam ovens and ovens with programmable cooking cycles; oversized lighting fixtures; more neutral color tones; engineered stone counters; bolder, decorative tiles; galley sinks and a more modern design aesthetic.

WHAT'S YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

Our basic philosophy is to treat our clients well. To us, that means good communication, customer service and taking the time to educate them as to what are the options so they can make informed decisions. We understand good decisions that provide lasting value are made by informed clients. It takes an investment time, however, for both us and our clients. We have developed a design process over the past 35 years that brings education to the forefront of our client engagements and our work. ■