

Jeff Priebe

CABINET & FURNITURE DESIGN

Jeff Priebe began his career at the tender age of 12, when he got a part-time job at a woodworking company. Sweeping floors and staining and sanding furniture led to his career of designing, building and installing kitchen cabinets, bookcases and bathroom vanities. Woodworking also helped fund his college education. "I'd build a kitchen or an entertainment center and pay for a quarter of tuition," he says.

In 1995, after teaching vocational and computer-aided design classes at a local high school, he opened Priebe's Creative Woodworking in Benton Harbor, Mich. The firm builds custom furniture and cabinetry for homeowners, builders, design and architectural firms in southwest Michigan. His 12,000-square-foot showroom and manufacturing facility employs nine craftsmen and four designers.

Priebe, who notes that while granite and quartz countertops continue to



be popular choices, says glazed, antique and distressed wood finishes represent the biggest trend he sees in cabinetry design among homeowners looking to recreate "old world charm" in their kitchens.

He prides himself on one-of-a-kind designs – "We're strict about not duplicating our work" – and says the most rewarding projects are those in which the homeowner gets involved in the design process. To that end, he encourages clients to clip pictures of



favorite kitchen designs from magazines. He uses these as a starting point to guide the design process. 269-926-2469; PRIEBESWOODWORKING.COM

Virginia Phillips, an interior designer with Marc T. Nielsen Interiors in Valparaiso, Ind., is also an abstract oil painter. So it's no surprise that she approaches each of her clients' rooms as blank canvases. She favors neutral wall tones that

allow vibrant colors elsewhere in a room to pop. She once based a room's color palette around one of her artworks: "I created a nice, rich color scheme inspired by the painting."

She describes herself as a good

Virginia Phillips

INTERIOR DESIGN

space planner who carefully considers traffic patterns and optimizes space flow. She underscores the importance of an interior design plan that can be augmented over the years, explaining that clients often purchase a piece of furniture without first determining where it will fit in a room. That often results in expensive mistakes.

Phillips, who incorporates existing furniture into a plan when possible, likes to develop interior designs that take clients out of their comfort zone. "When people are building a house, they tend to be too safe," she says. "I encourage them to make a little more of a statement than they would do on their own." 219-462-9812,

MARCTNIELSENINTERIORS.COM ■

