

## Antonella Romano, The Tile Oracle

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NORTH JERSEY HOMES

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QUESTION: I am renovating my kitchen, which is very large, and I need help figuring out the color scheme. I want a Craftsman look, so I want to match my dark wood floor to the cabinets. I'm thinking dark maple with a cinnamon glaze for the cabinets and a "golden beach" granite top. I also want to bring in some color with the backsplash to blend with the stainless steel appliances, which have black knobs. How dark should the backsplash be and what colors should I use?

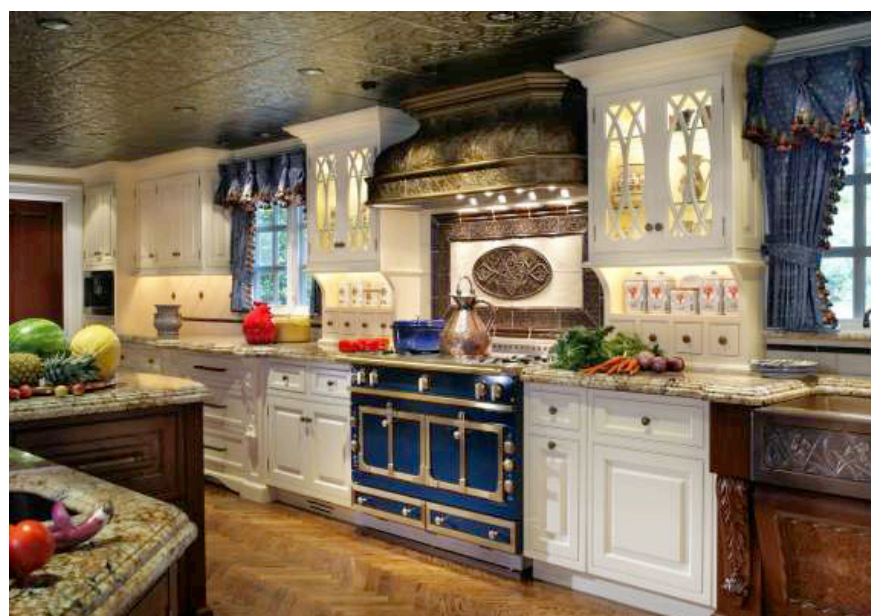


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— Denise, Allendale

ANSWER: When selecting the color scheme for a large kitchen, you need to know that when you first walk in, you don't really take in the whole thing at once, nor are you necessarily overwhelmed by the biggest thing in the room. Rather, you are taken in first by the backsplash.

Unlike flooring or a countertop, a backsplash is directly in your eye's horizon line. Because of this, it will carry the kitchen's colors and express its personality.

The second thing you see is the counter top and the third will be the cabinets and/ or the flooring.

Because the backsplash is the big eye-catcher, it should not dominate in terms of color because it will overwhelm all the other features. Rather, it should pull the room and all the colors in it together. For that reason, your backsplash shouldn't be dark but rather it should be the lightest thing in your kitchen, while making use of darker accents.

To select the color scheme, collect samples of your materials together. That would be your granite countertop, your wood floor and your hardware (handles and draw pulls). When you look at the granite sample, you should see light specks or veins in the background. Take the lightest shade and make that the primary color of your backsplash. Your accent shade on your splash should be the darkest color in the selections. (Since you're using a dark wood floor, you can also have a second accent in the room to bring out the backsplash's accent color, or you can bring out the wall color in the accent.)

As for the countertop, the golden beach granite you're thinking of is light in background with brown and beige vein movement. Your cabinet and floor color will work nicely with that.

Backsplashes aren't just important because they are the first thing to catch the eye in any kitchen. The backsplash is your signature — it's the moment that says, "This is my kitchen." So have your tile designer draw all the details you want. You can use tear sheets from magazines, but don't just copy them. This is the chance to make something your own.

Everything should come together behind the range and over the hood, but without dominating, whether it be in a painted mural, a carved stone, a ceramic tile, or a glass or stone mosaic.

Regardless of how beautifully your backsplash turns out, unless it is sealed it will be marred by the first stray drip of olive oil. These days, most backsplash tiles are delivered unsealed, so always ask that your kitchen backless tiles be sealed. You can even request pre-sealed tumbled marble, perfect for people who cook a lot.

Follow this code of color in the design of your kitchen, and rather than having the backsplash overpower those floors and appliances, you'll have a perfect balance of power...and a backsplash that says this kitchen is yours.