



Peek inside 5 of Cambria's greatest kitchens

From vintage to newly remodeled, this year's Great Kitchens of Cambria Tour offers something for everyone who loves the culinary arts

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The Great Kitchens of Cambria Tour will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, July 25. This year's tour features five residences. There will also be a tour of the commercial kitchen and grounds of gourmet natural foods market and restaurant Centrally Grown. Food and beverage tastings will be available at each stop, as well as a raffle for prizes.

Tickets are \$40 each and may be purchased online, by mail, or at several countywide locations including the Cambria Chamber of Commerce. Each ticketholder will be assigned a starting location. From there, tour stops may be visited in any order. Guests provide their own transportation. For all ticket purchase options and more information, visit www.ffrpcambria.org.

Proceeds benefit the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, a hiking and wilderness preserve in Cambria that is open to the public.

When the Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve began tossing around ideas for a home tour 15 years ago, they considered the myriad home and garden tours in San Luis Obispo County at the time.

So the group zeroed in on one room — an essential one, often considered the heart of the home — and the Great Kitchens of Cambria Tour was born. It continues this year with a peek into five home kitchens and one commercial kitchen.

This year's committee made an effort to choose a variety of styles, "from vintage to newly remodeled, and from residential to commercial," said Joyce Renshaw, chairperson of the Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, as well as the Kitchen Tour.

Although the wide variety of food and drink available on the tour is a prime attraction, most attendees come looking for design ideas. Renshaw believes that everyone will "leave with new and interesting kitchen ideas, having had the opportunity to enjoy fellowship and fun during a day well spent."

Here, we preview the five residential kitchens on this year's Great Kitchens of Cambria Tour.

Williams kitchen

Architect: Bruce Beery

Builder: Wayne Gracey Construction

Joyce Williams has fond childhood memories of picking blackberries near her home, then baking pies with her mother in the tiny family kitchen of the house built by her parents in 1953. Today, that home belongs to Williams — and it has come a long way.

For one thing, the kitchen is no longer tiny. Williams recently remodeled the home, doubling the size of the kitchen and creating a more open space.

She parted with its formerly quaint persona: strawberry print wallpaper, her mother’s ruffled white curtains, and vintage O’Keefe & Merritt appliances. Now, the kitchen has a decidedly more contemporary feel with honed black granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, and custom white cabinetry by Bob McDonald.

She did manage to save the original wood floors, which were refinished. Williams noted that the kitchen “might look a lot different, but to me it still has the warmth of a wonderful family home that I grew up in with a great deal of love.”

Ryan-McLauchlan kitchen

Designers: Lucie Ryan and David M. Brown (architect)

Builder: Boa Constructor Contractors

Against the warm yet sleek backdrop of flat-panel cherry cabinetry, details pop in the contemporary kitchen of Lucie Ryan and Ian McLauchlan. Ryan, an artist who works in clay and bronze, incorporated some pieces of fine art in the kitchen. But there are also functional forms of art, such as the hood/vent over the island cooktop that is a sculptural piece in glass and stainless steel.

The kitchen was part of the design of the original home built in 2003. The couple wanted it to function well for guests, as well as everyday living. The long island is ideal for group cooking, informal family meals, or an afternoon of web surfing. A smart layout allows for easy traffic flow, whether the group is two or 10. Still, the kitchen is not massive. “We decided, no more dinners for 20 or cocktails for 80,” said Ryan, who said that the kitchen, and entire home, are designed around “a lifestyle of intimate gatherings.”



Breen kitchen

Architect: David Brown

Builder: Rick Allen

The kitchen of Richard and Kara Breen is no shrinking violet. Materials and colors dazzle and evoke the shimmering, iridescent quality of water.

Tile is the star of the show. Seaglass-green tiles line a dramatic half-barrel vaulted ceiling. Others spill downward in shimmering ribbons on the backsplash and along a pole.

Even the sinks are extraordinary. The couple chose hammered nickel sinks, made by [Native Trails](#) of San Luis Obispo. “We had them in the master bath and liked the way they looked,” said Kara Breen.

The kitchen isn’t just eye candy — it functions well, too. The couple enjoys entertaining, so they installed amenities like a steam oven, warming drawer, Sub-Zero refrigerator and Uline wine cabinet.

Swauger-Barghini kitchen

Owner/Designer/Builder: Gary Swauger (architect)

Susan Barghini always wanted an “eat-in, country-type kitchen,” she said. So when she and her husband, architect Gary Swauger, built their home, they skipped the formal dining room and concentrated their efforts on creating a cozy, kitchen dining space.

The backdrop is simple: traditional oak cabinets, neutral tile floor, and polished granite countertops. Yet there is drama overhead. Stamped copper “tin” tiles, made by WF Norman from original dies created in the late 1800s, gleam on the kitchen ceiling. The couple got the idea when touring gold country towns in Northern California.

Barghini is a volunteer with [HART](#) (Homeless Animal Rescue Team) and has a fondness for cats. So she included numerous lion motifs in the room — on cabinet knobs, on the lion-foot pedestal table, and on the ceiling tile motif.

The kitchen was designed to accommodate some of their large collection of antiques. One of Barghini’s favorites: a late 19th century oak sideboard — with carved lion feet, of course.

Alexander-Hildebrand kitchen

Designers: David M. Brown (architect), Sligh Cabinets

Builder: JAI Construction

Tom Alexander and Tanya Hildebrand’s home remodel was strongly influenced by the work of famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. For instance, the balustrade separating the kitchen from the dining room and living room is a replica of the “chain-style” used in Wright’s Meyer May house in Grand Rapids, Mich. It was redesigned and built by local artisan William Heistand. “It set the design direction for the rest of the room,” said Alexander. This included the ample custom woodwork in the kitchen, again by Heistand.

Even the light fixture is Wright-inspired. It is a reproduction of a sconce designed by Wright around 1908. Heistand created its carved walnut surround.

Not everything was a Wright design. The couple spied barstools at the [Ahwahnee Hotel](#) lounge in Yosemite and were won over by their simple yet elegant form. They found out who the manufacturer was and ordered a set for their kitchen island as an everyday reminder of a favorite time and place.

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