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Finding Balance

The kitchen and bathroom renovation in this Seattle home shows off modern farmhouse style, full of patterns and wood tones.

“What I love about modern farmhouse style is that it gives people the permission to update their space but still have those cozy elements,” says designer Kimberlee Gorsline. In the kitchen, it’s elements like the patterned tile, quartz countertops, glass bulb pendant lights and modern Windsor bar chairs that give off those modern farmhouse style vibes.





Interior design is “all about making choices,” says Kim. The softer color palette of the kitchen cabinets and countertops effectively balances the tile pattern on the walls, accentuating its modern farmhouse style.

Patterning a wall can feel daunting. But Kim realizes the value in deciding to take the leap of faith. “ Oftentimes, it’s some of those more risky choices that infuse that [coziness] into a space,” she says.

Modern farmhouse style should strike the perfect balance between traditional and contemporary styles. Interior designer Kimberlee Gorsline of Kimberlee Marie Interiors has a knack for finding that niche, and shows it off in this boldly-patterned kitchen and bathroom design in Seattle, Washington.

WINDOW WOWS

The inspiration behind Kim’s design for the kitchen began with the windows. “We knew we wanted to have a cozier farmhouse style, but we did have some limiting factors,” says Kim. The wood framed windows were in the kitchen already. While the homeowner didn’t like them at first, they grew on her and became part of the design. “Paired with the right things, they could really become a focal feature,” Kim says.

TILE TONES

The darker tones of the window frames balance out the lighter quartz of the kitchen island and countertops, creating a sense of warmth and cohesion. But the eye-catching tile is the piece de resistance. “The backsplash tile, which is just the star in this kitchen, was such a fun way to tie it all together, to bring that coziness in,” Kim says. “It’s this handmade, gorgeous tile that infuses the kitchen with some character.” The tile does more than tie together the kitchen design; it’s the connective thread between Kim’s vision for the primary bathroom, powder bathroom and kitchen.

“The goal of the primary bath was to get that ‘spa-like’ feel—to have fun with the tile, while still bringing in some cozy vibes and warmth through the wood tones and the tile pattern,” says Kim. While using a bold pattern can feel like a risk, it actually can be the most grounding aspect of a design.



(this page) The wood-framed windows were already a feature in the home, and Kim used them as part of her design by matching the lower cabinets with a stained finish, as well as adding a range hood that further emphasized the wood accents.

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Go BOLD

Bold statements, like patterned tile, colored cabinets or even your furniture upholstery choices, can seem scary. Here are designer Kimberlee Gorsline's three tips for creating a bold statement in your home.

- **KNOW YOURSELF.** "Know yourself to some degree," Kim says. "I always like to challenge my clients, and throw some out-of-the-box ideas their way, but I always encourage people to start with what they're comfortable with." If you know you'd absolutely hate patterned tile, then don't do it.
- **BREAK YOUR OWN BARRIERS.** If a bolder design scares you but you're still drawn to it, see if you can branch out and try it. "Start with your comfort zone, and then see if you can push yourself a little outside of it," Kim says.
- **SIT WITH IT.** Don't reject a design element out of hand. "Sit with it for a bit and see if you still like it," Kim says. Test colors and patterns by mounting tile samples on the wall or painting a small section of your cabinets for a few weeks to help you narrow down to your favorite option.

To counterbalance the neutral cabinets and countertops, Kim decided to add an eye-catching tile backsplash to visually texturize the kitchen. "The pattern is loud, but the colors are still really soothing, which lends to the cozy atmosphere," says Kim. The backsplash carries over not only to the kitchen area, but the extra workspace in the kitchen, too.



In the primary bathroom, Kim created a focal point with the patterned accent wall. "If we had done more than that, it would have been overwhelming," she says. Instead, the rest of the materials in the bathroom are more subtle and neutral, so the patterned tile can take center stage.

Tip

For patterned tile, limit high-contrast color palettes to focal features like an accent wall or small floor. You can use low-contrast palettes for larger surface areas.



The powder bathroom has feminine touches, with a mint-green vanity and low-contrast patterned flooring. "Adding these elements of pattern and texture are really what help achieve that coziness," Kim says.

Concerning high-contrast tile accents, with great risk comes great reward. "It can be such a good way to not only make your design more interesting, more unique, more playful, but it can just change a room—dramatically," Kim says.

DESIGN COHESION

Kim wanted to keep the core design themes present in the powder bathroom, too. "We were really gravitating towards patterned tile on this project, but again, everything was a lot softer, more soothing colors and palettes." Kim decided to use a subway tile that reminded her of shiplap, but contrasted it with the more contemporary fleur-de-lis pattern on the floor.

Deciding what to keep consistent and what to play with is how you weave a connective theme throughout a house. "We were intentional in that regard—of repeating certain elements throughout—but at the same time really letting each space stand alone," says Kim.

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Kim wanted to keep the color palette for the primary bathroom classic. "It's a really busy tile [in the shower], and because of the high contrast, we decided to just keep it to an accent on one wall—almost like a wallpaper—and balance it with the subway tile on the other walls," Kim says.