

CABINETS:

A Love Story

By Charles Hendrix

A good love story is a joy to everyone. It can put a smile on our faces and bring us closer to others. In reconnecting recently with an old friend and client, we came across a special kind of love story – one involving cabinets. Our story begins with Nancy Lavelly, a certified kitchen and bath designer through NKBA (the National Kitchen and Bath Association) and a licensed interior designer through the state of Georgia. One of only three people in the state with these credentials, she is the owner of Cabinet Wishes in Marsh Point Plaza, located adjacent to Kroger between Prudential Southeast Coastal Properties and Rep. Jack Kingston's office.



And just what does it take to become a certified kitchen and bath designer, you might ask? First of all, a candidate must have a minimum of seven years of experience in kitchen and bath work in addition to references from clients, architects and builders. The CKD and/or CKB designations require design and practical exams: computer-aided design (CAD) scenarios that must be completed within six hours time. These exams test practical skills in space planning, placement of fixtures, fitting knowledge, and basic presentation skills. The candidate is required to produce four project documents: a floor plan, a construction/mechanical plan, an elevation plan, and a completed NKBA specifications form. The exam for the Associate Kitchen and Bath Designer (AKBD) designation also features a two-hour academic component

As for our love story, the object of Nancy's affection is a line of custom cabinets. The latest advertising campaign for Plain & Fancy Cabinetry in Pennsylvania, titled "Love Stories," highlights clients like Nancy who have had Plain & Fancy custom cabinetry and remain "in love" with it. Nancy's particular love story has its origins in Tennessee, where she owned and operated her first cabinetry store.

"I first fell in love with Plain & Fancy through a magazine advertisement," Nancy remembers. "It caught my eye because it was designed for a rustic camp style, which was widely used in Tennessee and fit with the rustic timber frame and log homes prevalent there. This was perhaps the first theme-designed kitchen I had ever seen. While I had been doing cabinet design for some time, was a licensed interior designer in Tennessee and was studying to take the CKD (certified kitchen designer) exam, this advertisement spoke to me like nothing I had seen before. As soon as possible, I visited the manufacturing plant in Shafferstown, Penn."

Nancy had read a lot about the Amish people of this region and was fascinated by their culture and heritage. So the trip was a wonderful opportunity to see the rolling hills, farms, horse-drawn carriages and hands-on craftsmanship of the Amish in Lebanon County. The beauty of this craftsmanship is in the simplicity of its design. The phrase “less is more” must have been coined with the Amish in mind. The brand name Plain & Fancy is derived from an old Amish saying that things should be plain unless their “fancy” features also have a function.

When she arrived at the plant, Nancy immediately noticed the pride in spotless surroundings both inside and out. True to the Amish way of life, there was an emphasis on quality achieved by the group rather than as an individual effort. “I was amazed to learn that the originator of these ‘theme-designed’ cabinets was not a highly paid New York designer, but Vince Achey, whose father, John, started the cabinet business from a garage in 1969,” Nancy says. Vince’s brother, George, is the plant manager at Plain & Fancy today.

Nancy was shown vignette after vignette of themed cabinets, ranging in style from Asian to Contemporary to Arts and Crafts to French Country to Tex-Mex and beyond. “My creative side was exploding with possibilities,” Nancy recalls of her excitement on this initial visit.

Upon her return to Tennessee, Nancy became the westernmost Plain & Fancy dealer in the country. As a rule, the company doesn’t cross the Mississippi River to do business, but for Nancy they made an exception. She used Plain & Fancy cabinetry throughout her home in Tennessee and was featured on the cover of a national magazine.

“Today, an island and a free-standing pantry piece designed by me and made by Plain & Fancy are in my kitchen at The Landings,” says Nancy with obvious satisfaction. “The more I use these pieces, the more endeared they become to me, like heirlooms. I like to open and close the pantry piece just to hear the sound of quality. I have worked with a dozen different lines of manufactured cabinetry, and Plain & Fancy stands head and shoulders above the rest in terms of value and quality.”

On display at Cabinet Wishes is a freestanding armoire in the new Brushmark Crackle finish, an island with horizontal Wenge hard-

wood, and crisp white cabinetry with a coastal look and feel. Since Plain & Fancy is a fully custom line, the sky is literally the limit when it comes to design and finish. If you can imagine it, Plain & Fancy can build it. And to ensure each project is installed to perfection (while adding another love story to the mix), Nancy employs a husband-and-wife team that has been working with Plain & Fancy for years.

“One of my current clients is a couple whose second Plain & Fancy kitchen is on the cover of the new ‘Love Stories’ ad literature,” says Nancy. “I am working with them on a second home in this area. That makes theirs a triple love story!”

Call for an appointment today to begin your own love story with Plain & Fancy cabinetry while working with the most qualified cabinet design expert in the area. Cabinet Wishes keeps its overhead low to pass the savings on to you.

