

## Part 1-Kitchens

# Remodeling Trends for Baby Boomers

By Bella Babot



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*Universal Design, Aging in Place and a Barrier Free Home – why these design elements are the key to your ability to stay in the home you love.*

We're seeing a trend in remodeling among Baby Boomers – and that is the desire to stay in their home (Aging in Place), enjoy their beloved community and neighbors and create a safe haven to call home for their "sunset years."

We often receive a call from a homeowner who decided the problem with their house is it's too small with too many unused, cramped rooms or may have kitchens or bathrooms that are no longer easily accessible.

A common challenge in many of our neighborhoods are two and three story homes that have stairs that were so beautiful at one time but are now seen as a painful challenge to tackle each night and again in the morning.

While visiting a home, we as designers, start to ask questions about how the homeowner(s) may be utilizing the different spaces

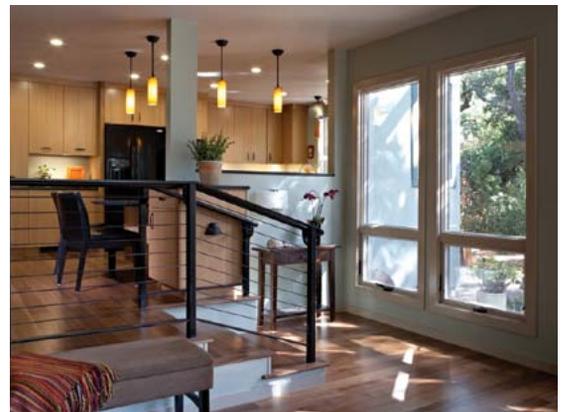
in their home. We also inquire about extended family and visitors such as aging parents or grandchildren who may be coming to the home on a fairly regular basis, and last but not least, how long the homeowner is planning on living in the home.

Discussions about how to have a home that is user-friendly for all ages (or multi-generational) invariably leads to conceptual conversations about Universally Designed homes and remodels.

There are a wide variety of styles and features that can be included in a home remodel that will provide you years of pleasure and accessibility without sacrificing style or luxury.

- The ability to live on one floor is one of the biggest reasons Baby Boomers will move from an existing home or look to remodel. While many Bay Area homes include two-story designs, people are asking for plans that include a master suite on the main floor so "upstairs" becomes guest or other flex space.
- Wide doorways and halls are not only beautiful but they visually open up the space that is usually a major thoroughfare or blockage in your home. They need to be wide enough for a walker or wheelchair to get through.

- Easy maintenance is cited as a top priority which is not a surprise in today's world of on-the-go lifestyles. The kitchen and the bath are the two areas most mentioned when looking for improvements. Antibacterial materials and finishes, cleaner lines, appliances that report trouble back to the manufacturer, self-regulating ventilation or lighting – all the ways we can streamline the care of our spaces – become tipping points for busy Baby Boomers.
- In the kitchen, fewer wall cabinets are key. Fortunately, design trends toward more open spaces and generous daylight allows us to use fewer wall cabinets in exchange for storage within easy reach.



- Cabinet drawers that pull out make it easy on everyone!

When you make any remodeling improvements, make sure modifications include barrier free design so everyone can enjoy your home.

**Harrell Remodeling is a full service design+build residential remodeling company based in Mountain View, CA. For more information, call 650.230.2900. Or visit [Harrell-remodeling.com](http://Harrell-remodeling.com).**