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VOLUME I: KITCHENS

With a humble nod to the great tastemaker Diana Vreeland, who coined the phrase "Why Don't You?", I would like to introduce my inaugural issue of the same name...



Who Am I... And What Am I Up To?

Well, I am a realtor with Prudential Rubloff and also a home owner and mom and someone who likes to garden and cook and buy a great handbag now and again.

"Why Don't You" is my assemblage of anyone and anything inspiring and wonderful for home and lifestyle. Including, of course, a few tips and picks on my specialty, Real Estate. I hope you will find it fun as well as informative, but mostly fun.

This inaugural issue of "Why Don't You" is all about the Kitchen, one of the most wonderful places in the home.



Why Don't You...Have a Treat?

My favorite family-friendly glassware!

It's hard to believe I'm so excited about anything family-friendly, but I think these Pavina thermal glasses are amazing. Two came with our Bodum French press, and I've been using them every since. They are really versatile, scratch resistant, and great design to boot! And I can give them to my kids without worrying that they are going to break every time they use one. (But they are glass, so I'm not making any promises here.) The two-layer construction also resists heat and prevents condensation, so no matter what temperature the beverage is, the glasses remain comfortable to hold and safe for any tabletop...at amazon.com, about \$15 for two.



Chilewich Bamboo Placemats

If you love round dining tables like I do, you are constantly searching for round placemats. My favorites are the bamboo placemats by Chilewich-they are modern, elegant, durable, low maintenance (i.e., you just wipe them off), and affordable. What more could you ask for from your placemat? Also available as squares and rectangles, if you love square or rectangular dining tables...\$13 each at velocityartanddesign.com.

Why Don't You...Dream?

I love my stainless commercial range, but I'm totally excited about the warm, homey feel of these refurbished workhorses from the '30s and '40s. These beauties are fully restored to pristine condition, and rely on old-fashioned gas to perfectly cook and warm all of the wonderful things you are making in your kitchen.

60" O'Keefe & Merritt Town & Country stove with custom trim made circa 1940s. Equipped with six burners, two ovens, three broilers, and one warmer. Also comes with removable griddle and one utility shelf. Put your name on a waiting list at antiquestoveheaven.com or antiquegasstoves.com.



Why Don't You...Get Acquainted

Designer Darryl Carter

I think Washington DC based Darryl Carter is one of the most compelling designers today. Bridging the gap between modern and traditional, his use of neutral palettes, natural materials, (think linen, marble, oak, steel) and his ability to create dramatic, comfortable, useful living space, make him my current favorite designer! You might enjoy learning more about his philosophy reading his book "[The New Traditional](http://amazon.com)" available at amazon.com.



Why Don't You...Consider

As a realtor, I get to see all the fantastic properties listed on the North Shore. So this issue, I am going to share my picks for properties that I think have REALLY GREAT KITCHENS!

This gorgeous loft with bamboo floors, two balconies, and views of downtown Evanston also features a modern take on the granite/stainless steel kitchen, with high-end appliances and Italian cabinets. Check it out at [1800 Ridge](#) in Evanston. 2 bedroom, 2 baths, asking price \$349,000.



This beautifully redesigned and updated East Wilmette home features a sensational eat-in kitchen with custom-designed cabinets and top-of-the-line appliances. At [356 Isabella](#), the home features 3 bedrooms, 2.1 baths and an asking price of \$725,000.



This wonderful kitchen is only one of the lovely features of [611 Greenleaf](#) in Glencoe. This architecturally significant English country home, built in 1929, has 5 bedrooms, 4.1 baths and sits on a beautiful half-acre lot. The asking price has been reduced to \$1,695,000.



My Tips on Kitchens

For Sellers...

First! Don't renovate your kitchen for a potential buyer! Your taste is your own and no matter how good it is, it won't be for everyone. You usually get back about 75 cents on every dollar you spend on improvements. Keep that money safe in the bank, but feel free to freshen it up with the following improvements to make your home look its best.

A fresh coat of neutral paint.

This is not the moment to indulge your love of purple! Consider the color hues of your cabinets, appliances, tile and floors. White looks good in just about any kitchen, as do pale yellows, subtle blues, greens and grays. Make sure it looks good day and night, and get a second opinion from an honest friend.

911-Emergency!

If your dishwasher door is falling off, or your stove is so worn it never looks clean, consider replacing appliances on an "as needed" basis. If you only need to replace one appliance, make sure it looks nice with the others. Don't get a stainless steel dishwasher if everything else is white, or a range that sits awkwardly higher or lower than your countertops. If your flooring is badly damaged, repair or, if necessary, replace it. Find an inexpensive, practical material and make sure it does not call too much attention to itself. Clean lines and a uniform feel keep a tired old kitchen looking like the respectable workhorse it is.



For Buyers..

Try to find a home with a kitchen you love! Kitchen renovations are much more fun to fantasize about than to live through. Major renovations are expensive! Even more so if you expand or change the location of your sink and other major appliances.

However, the reality is, your dream house might not have your dream kitchen. But look for the following elements:

- A good floor plan,
- A cabinet design you like (you can always paint)
- Sufficient storage
- Sufficient cooking and eating space for your lifestyle

If the property you are considering has most of these, you will save yourself lots of aggravation and money.



Why Don't I...Sign off?

I hope you enjoyed reading my first installment! I always appreciate your comments and would love to know what you're excited about these days.

Lastly, I am always available to help you with your real estate needs; no question will go unanswered!

Until next time,
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