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REAL ESTATE | DESIGN

Kitchen Islands—Does Anyone Really Need Two? We Asked Interior Designers

Are dual islands—one for prep, one for seating—useful additions to the heart of the home or offensively showy statements of affluence? Design pros debate the growing trend.

By Allison Duncan

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ALLEY KITCHEN Parallel islands in this Wellington, Fla., kitchen by HW Interiors beautifully lead the eye to the mosaic-tile wall behind the range, but some design pros find the trend excessive. PHOTO: JESSICA GLYNN

For the recurring series, [That's Debatable](#), we take on a contentious issue of the day and present two spirited arguments—one in favor and the other emphatically opposed. Previous installments from the series are [here](#).

YES, DOUBLE ISLANDS HAVE ADVANTAGES IN TERMS OF FUNCTION, AESTHETICS AND RESALE

Martha Stewart-types who approach cooking as performance have embraced the more-is-more idea of two kitchen islands: one for food preparation, another for gathering and entertaining. “There’s a dinner-theater component to double

islands,” said Chicago designer Marshall Erb, who first designed a double-island kitchen for a kosher family that needed to separate meat and dairy during meals. “It’s interactive, like a chef’s table in a fine restaurant.” Park & Oak, an interior-design studio in Glen Ellyn, Ill., recently completed an open-concept kitchen that includes an island pair: one of navy-painted cabinetry topped with white quartzite, and a second whose quartzite waterfalls down the sides, offering no storage but accommodating six bar stools for kids, guests and back-seat chefs. “About one in four of our clients requests a double island, and it’s always those who love to entertain,” said the firm’s co-founder Christina Samatas.

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