

Andrew Morrison's Advanced Straw Bale Strategies - Day 3

Hanging Cabinets in Your Straw Bale House

If possible, eliminate the use of upper cabinets in the kitchen. A well designed pantry can easily replace many upper cabinets. This will simplify the baling process by eliminating the need to provide horizontal nailers for the cabinetry. If you cannot design the kitchen to avoid the use of upper cabinets, you will have to install nailing backers in the bales on which to hang the cabinets. A horizontal nailer is also necessary for the top anchoring point of the base cabinets.



Bale walls are not known for their flatness. In fact, they are somewhat treasured for their natural undulations. That said, the cabinet and counter sub-contractors will want to install against as flat, straight and square of a surface as possible for a solid and secure fit. Without a flat and straight wall, the counter tops will not fit tightly to the wall. This not only looks bad, but also creates a problem for the bales which run the risk of getting wet from splash dripping down behind the counter. In addition to improving the quality of the job, creating a flat, straight and square wall makes the installation faster and thus less expensive.

A great advantage to straw bale construction is the thickness of the walls. When it comes to cabinetry, it is possible to recess the cabinets or shelves into the bales walls. This creates extra storage space without sticking the cabinets further out into the room. Or, you can set the cabinets back even further and place the face frames flush with the plane of the wall. This works well in Japanese style architecture and creates a clean line for any set of cabinets or shelves. It is also a good idea to recess refrigerators as they are often deeper than the cabinets around them. By recessing it into the wall, you can line the face of the refrigerator up with the face of the cabinets.



Even if you do not hang cabinets within the depth of the walls, you can still create beautiful accent pieces by cutting nooks into the walls. The nooks can be any shape your imagination conjures up and can be cut to any depth. In general, do not cut them too deep as the insulative value of the wall will be reduced by cutting out the straw in the nook. Often, it makes sense to mimic a window or door opening in order to balance the language of the building.

Happy Baling,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Morrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Andrew Morrison
Professional Straw Bale Contractor

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