

picking a style

In harmony

Kitchens that respond to the architecture of a house provide a coordinated look for a home with a flowing, open layout





With respect

In remodeling this kitchen, the architect-owner took her cue from heritage elements in the 1920s house, but gave it a 21st-century twist



A small, dark kitchen that faced a hill to the north was not an inspiring place for the owners of this house to be cooking for and entertaining friends and family.

So it was scarcely surprising that something had to give, says architect owner Linda Brettler.

“We wanted to make the kitchen much bigger and lighter, so we took over the space formerly occupied by a maid’s room and an old pantry. We created one large living space that we can open up to the sunny rear yard with big French doors.

This gives us views in all directions, including a particularly pretty view of the landscaped garden.”

The single flowing space, which replaces four small self-contained rooms, includes a television area and a breakfast area as well as the kitchen. A double-sided glazed overhead cabinet provides a degree of visual separation between the kitchen and breakfast area, while still allowing easy communication.

“I didn’t want to sacrifice the idea of the older house entirely, however,” the

architect says. “I still liked the idea of keeping some point of reference to the original rooms, by giving each space its own flavor.”

For the kitchen floor, Brettler chose a basketweave tile with strong diagonal lines. The tiles convey the look of an older home and help to disguise the fact that the kitchen is not symmetrical – the pattern makes the space look larger.

“The island is like a piece of furniture that has simply been popped on top of the floor at some later date. It is made from

stained alder wood, while the perimeter cabinets are lacquered white. All the doors have recessed panels, with a semi-circular detail on the white cabinets.”

Brettler says a lowered table top helps to break up the perceived mass of the island, so it doesn’t feel like such a giant piece of furniture sitting in the middle of the room.

“Similarly, I chose stools that are not too busy visually, or too large, so we can fit several people around table top.”

To lighten the center of the kitchen, and the main work area, the island top is

Carrara marble – in contrast to the black marble on the perimeter counters. A formed lip around the edge of the island top prevents water running off.

Reflective tin inserts are another key feature of the cabinets.

“Because I wanted full-height cabinets, but at the same time did not want these to overwhelm the space, I added these decorative reflective inserts to the doors along the top,” says Brettler. “The pressed tin catches the light and provides plenty of sparkle.”

Preceding pages: Vintage light fixtures set the tone for this remodeled kitchen in a 1920s house. Architect-owner Linda Brettler had several walls removed to create one large kitchen-family living area that flows seamlessly to a breakfast room.

Facing page: The long island runs parallel to the cabinetry, with the main clean-up area positioned along the outside wall. There is a separate prep sink on the island, which has a Carrara marble countertop with a formed lip around the edge.

Above: At one end of the island, a lowered table top helps to reduce its apparent bulk.



Above: Cabinetry in the family living area matches the perimeter cabinets in the kitchen. To create a bold contrast to the mainly monochromatic look of the cabinets, the architect chose to paint all the walls in a warm vibrant red. The arched opening leads to a butler's pantry and a vestibule – a small bathroom can be glimpsed through the doorway.

Facing page: A double-sided glazed overhead cabinet forms a transparent partition between the living area and the breakfast room.

Story by Colleen Hawkes
Photography by Tim Maloney

For visual continuity, white cabinetry in the family room echoes the kitchen cabinets. It incorporates open shelving, a niche for the television and a brown leather-upholstered bench seat.

Brettler says the cabinetry creates a very monochromatic palette, so she experimented with a variety of different colours for the walls throughout the kitchen, sitting area and breakfast room.

"The entire family living area needed a punch, and I could see that red would set off everything. It works with the black and

white, and also with the woodwork and the vintage light fixtures. It even sets off a large art work to good effect."

Wherever possible, the architect likes to recycle materials and incorporated vintage items into her interiors. This kitchen features vintage light fixtures. The range hood and backsplash were recycled from the original kitchen.

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