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Kitchens

for the Rest of Us

From the Kitchen You Have to the Kitchen You Love



taking stock



above Shelving at varying heights and depths provides hidden storage in this pantry that was remodeled on a budget.

e **VERY SUCCESSFUL KITCHEN REMODELING PROJECT** begins with a good understanding of what works and what doesn't. Look at each specific part of your existing kitchen (cabinets, appliances, countertops, backsplashes, sinks, faucets, floors, paint colors, windows, lights, and furnishings), and then consider how all of the pieces work together. You may want to preserve or duplicate some things (a handy pantry, for example), or you may want to eliminate or change other things (such as an inconvenient doorway). This process helps you understand how much to change, and the actual importance of each change. Create a wish list, then prioritize it, figuring out which things you really must have and which things you can live without.

With this balance sheet of goals and desires in hand, outline a rough budget. The cost of a kitchen remodeling project can be anywhere from \$50 to \$400 per sq. ft., depending on what you want, where you live, and who you hire to help you. Or to put it more concretely, for a typical 10-ft. by 12-ft. kitchen, new cabinets could cost anywhere from a few thousand dollars for stock cabinets from a discount store to tens of thousands of dollars for custom cabinets made with expensive materials. Appliances cost from hundreds of dollars each to several thousand for the highest-end products. Add more floor area or throw in some major physical alterations or posh materials, and the cost will quickly climb. Figure how much—if at all—you want to expand, and research the relative costs of the appliances and cabinets you would like. Then do the math.

Two rules of thumb: You should not spend more than 10 percent of your home's value on a new kitchen, and, when you sell your home, expect to get back only 80 percent to 90 percent of what you invested.





above If it works, keep it. This remodeled Philadelphia kitchen uses the hanging pot rack from the old kitchen that the homeowner found to be a great organizing tool.

reality check

■ When drawing up a balance sheet of the assets and deficiencies of your existing kitchen, remember to include these general elements of kitchen design:

Size. Is the overall space enough to fit your needs and desires? Are specifics like the refrigerator, stove, and storage spaces as big as you'd like?

Function. Does your current kitchen allow for good flow, storage, work space, lighting, and windows? Can you find everything easily?

Looks. Do you like the way your kitchen looks? If so, how can you replicate that feeling? If not, what can you change to get the look you want?

Comfort. Do you feel at home in your kitchen? Can you cook with ease? Do you and others want to spend time there?

Features. What specific features do you want most? A pro-style range? Gas burners or electric? Wall ovens or a range? An island? A breakfast bar? A walk-in pantry?



left In order to afford the special cabinets for this baking center, the owners decided not to tear down and rebuild the curved wall it abuts.

OUR PROBLEM

“The first renovation just didn’t work”

THE SOLUTION

A multipurpose space that’s great for hanging out

THE ORIGINAL KITCHEN IN THIS DOWNTOWN Philadelphia residence was the result of the makeover the owners did when they bought the top-floor apartment 18 years ago. “The kitchen was the one mistake we made,” they admit. “It was too small, and we ended up with a series of chopped-up spaces.” Working with architect Neil Sandvold, who had helped them with their previous renovation, the couple was committed to getting it right.

This time the plan was simple: Combine several functions in one shared space instead of walling them off into separate rooms. By reworking what they had, the owners were able to create an open kitchen and family room with much more usable space. The effect of combining the rooms has transformed the way they live in their kitchen area, especially now that their children are grown. They find themselves spending much more time just being together in the newly expanded kitchen.

One big benefit of the expanded kitchen is that the couple can now share the space while cooking,

BEFORE

The pot rack from the old kitchen, seen here during construction, was kept in place while everything but the stove was demolished.

AFTER

A tightly organized cooking area anchors the beautiful new space that resulted from the renovation. Room for the work island, which doubles as a gathering spot, is one bonus of the open plan.







Defining Your Space

When this couple redesigned their apartment, they knocked down the walls between four small rooms: the original kitchen, a den, a sauna, and a storage closet. In addition, by eliminating a wall of closets in the old kitchen, space for a larger island was created. This island, together with the more efficiently organized cabinet system, actually created much more storage space. The former den became the sitting area of the new kitchen, while the sauna and storage closet became the new den that is also open to the kitchen space. By sharing a single space, these three functional areas—the kitchen, the kitchen sitting area, and the den—remain close enough for easy conversation. They are spacious enough to handle a crowd of friends yet provide privacy when needed.



quickfixes

A traditional hanging pot rack works beautifully—it's convenient and the shiny cluster is an interesting counterpoint to the clean, uncluttered design of the cabinetry.

eating, reading, working, or even just watching television, something they previously did in separate rooms.

Forming Function

At the center of the new design is a large granite-topped work island that doubles as a breakfast bar with room for three stools—the perfect place for morning coffee or light dining. Wrapped around the island is an L-shaped kitchen area with a 36-in. pro-style range, a sink, a dishwasher, and additional counter space, all backed by a stainless-steel backsplash. Beyond the island, the activity flows immediately to a nearby desk made of matching cabinetry. Thanks to a small wine rack integrated into the desk, it also doubles as a serving area when guests come over. A sofa and chair focused on a 42-in. flat-screen television converts what used to be a detached den into a cozy family sitting area. To one side of this is a round breakfast table that the couple also uses as a casual dinner table. Another semiseparate but connected sitting area is just beyond the television screen and has sweeping views of the city.

Modular Work

The result is a room large enough to contain a variety of simultaneous functions, yet one that still works as a single, intimate space where every part feels connected to the rest. One reason for this sense of unity is the versatile European cabinet system the couple installed in their new kitchen. Its modular design allowed them to use it throughout the space in various configurations for the kitchen cabinets as well as for the desk, the pantry cupboard, the bookshelves, and an enclosure for the refrigerator. The effect is to strengthen the visual connection from one part of the space to another.



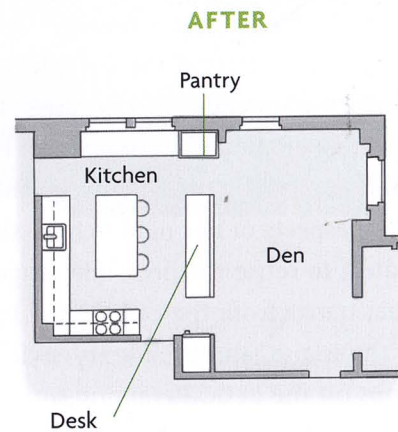
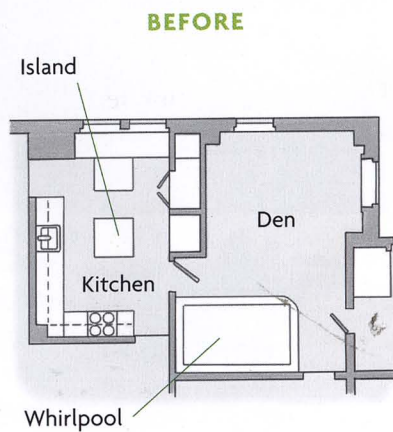
left With three stools tucked under, the island is easily converted to a conversation bar for guests.

below Although everything else is new, the couple saw no reason not to keep the range and the pot rack that had been essential parts of their old kitchen.



before & after

The old plan featured a claustrophobic collection of small rooms, the sizes of which limited the use of each. By combining the space of two rooms, the new plan allows each area to borrow from the other and create a greater whole.



WHAT WE WANTED

imported ingenuity

■ At the heart of this design is the German-made cabinet system that gives the kitchen an efficient, contemporary look. The system comes with a huge selection of design and storage options, increasing its flexibility and functionality and allowing the couple to pick exactly the features they needed. Also, since they chose a less costly laminate finish, the price was comparable to what they might have paid for a good domestic-built cabinet system.



The central work island doubles as a breakfast bar and hides handy refrigerator drawers. A pantry cabinet has roll-out storage and drawers for food staples, utensils, and

linens. The refrigerator is built into an identical cabinet. The system allows many cabinets and appliances to disappear into a cohesive style with the overall effect of a unified, clutter-free kitchen, adding to the sense of space.

Another kind of connectedness resulted from the wife's desire to keep parts of the old kitchen to which she had grown attached. Just because they were building a new kitchen, she didn't feel they had to throw out everything. Having lived with and loved certain aspects of her old kitchen, she asked the architect to reuse the pro-style range, the pot rack that hangs from the ceiling, the light fixtures above the island, and the library-style, swing-arm lamps on the desk. Retaining some of their favorite elements gave this modern space a sense of comfort and personality.

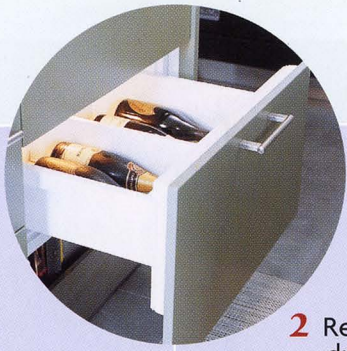
upclose



1 Tray storage cabinets

to get a lot out of a little space, this kitchen uses a few clever tricks.

- 1 Among the many handy storage features integrated into this cabinet system are the tray cabinets on either side of the stove.
- 2 A pair of refrigerator drawers not only provides additional cold storage space but also makes wine, vegetables, and other ingredients easily accessible to cooks preparing food at the island.
- 3 The desk sits between the working center of the kitchen and the sitting area and serves as a multipurpose surface for everything from reading to entertaining.
- 4 Clad in the same finish as the rest of the cabinets in the kitchen, the pantry cabinet is virtually invisible until you open it up to reveal two well-stuffed racks of storage.



2 Refrigerator drawers



3 Desk



4 Pantry cabinet

