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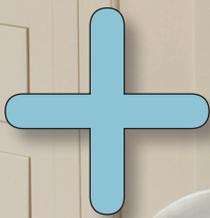
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**FREE**

## A Baker's Kitchen

Mid-Century  
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Old Barn New Life

The Mother-in-Law Garage

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# Zones Take the Cake in Custom Kitchen

By Stacy Green

**I**n the fall, what home cook doesn't feel a yen to bake? With the cooling weather, we're eager to fire up the oven, smell the spice of pies, and bite into still-warm cookies. While baking offers the sensory delights of kneading dough and browning crusts, working in an efficient, functional, and attractive kitchen is the real icing on the cake.

Maximizing the pleasures of baking, or any kitchen task, requires attention to how you work and what you love. It's personal. Do you prefer to bake solo, or do you enjoy a team effort in the kitchen? Are you "all business," or do you mix socializing with your culinary endeavors? While some of us are minimalists, others need extra storage for vintage mixing bowls or other collectables.

For one young Portland couple, the considerations were made more interesting by an atypical vision for their home kitchen. The husband is an aspiring pastry chef who eventually wants to use his kitchen to teach the baking trade to underprivileged youths. In addition, the couple is planning on a large family, loves to entertain groups of people, and enjoys DIY enterprises like brewing beer and making their own soda.

Designer Chelly Wentworth of Craftsman Design and Renovation (CDR), helped the couple navigate the many decisions

determining how their remodeled kitchen would look and function.

"This is their first home, and they wanted a big kitchen that could serve for gathering space and participatory cooking," says Wentworth. The kitchen, she says, not only lacked capacity for groups but was also disproportionately small for the adjacent living and dining rooms. An addition was inevitable.

Wentworth says she immediately noticed that the kitchen lacked a good connection to the adjacent yard and needed more counter and storage space. A bathroom took up valuable real estate. She addressed these issues by relocating the bathroom and stairway and creating a mudroom that provided an entrance to the yard as well as pantry storage and a discreet place for a built-in cat box.

While some design issues are readily observable, says Wentworth, some probing is required to learn how a home cook will actually use a space. Closely collaborating with the clients, she designed several zones for the couple's specific interests and cooking styles, including a baking center, cooking zone, main preparation and cleanup area, and a second prep area.

"At the heart of any good kitchen remodel is efficiency," she says. "You want to minimize the motions for any kitchen task by considering factors like where things are stored in relation to where they're actually going to be used and creating work zones that integrate activities in a fluid and efficient way."

For these home bakers she designed a baking center that includes an electric oven (secondary to the main cooking area's gas oven), deep custom drawers to hold large containers of flour and other

Above: In the main cooking zone, the colonial-style hood and cabinetry tie the kitchen's character to the rest of the home.

Wide aisles enable free-flowing traffic through the various zones, including the main prep and cleanup area (rear wall), main cooking area (right) and baking center with peninsula (left).

ingredients, and open shelf dividers built to fit commercial baking sheets. The large peninsula, accessible on three sides, was designed to accommodate small groups of bakers, whether family or students. Additionally, a marble-topped counter is perfect for rolling out dough.

The other zones likewise group items which logically function together. The cooking area includes a large counter with abundant storage below and a professional gas range. Similarly, the main prep and cleanup area incorporates a built-in fridge, recycling station, dishwasher, and sink. A second prep area includes an under-counter refrigerator and smaller sink.

Efficiency and personal use informed not just the kitchen's layout, but also decisions about specific features. For instance, in the prep/cleanup area, a recycling bin pulls out next to the sink, so rinsed-out containers are immediately disposed of. The small fridge keeps beverages and often-used refrigerated ingredients, like butter and cream, close at hand.

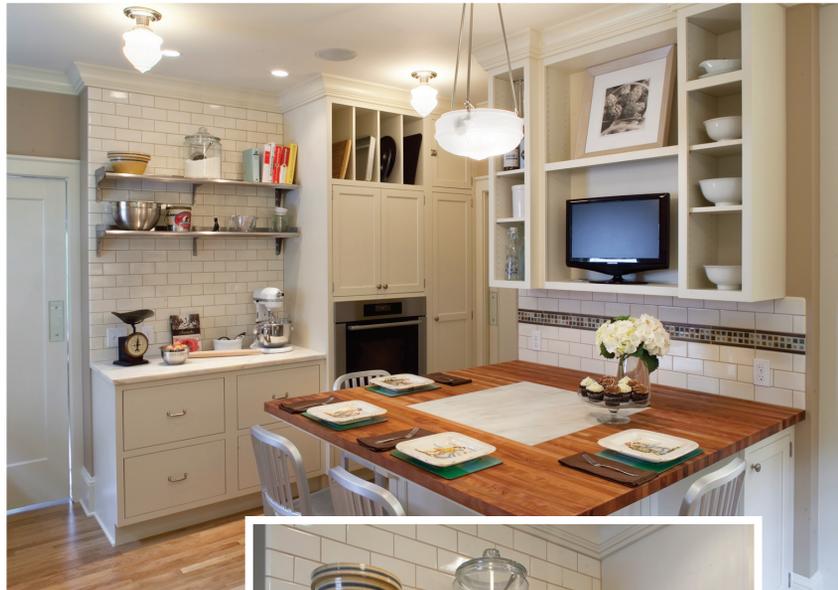
Customization, says Wentworth, is central to not only how a kitchen functions but also to how it looks. "We work best in an environment that reflects our personalities," she claims. To that end, she works closely with clients, especially novice remodelers, to help them pinpoint their personal styles.

While she recommended durable, easy-care materials for these home bakers' hard-working kitchen – including quartz countertops and cabinets with a baked-on "conversion-varnish" finish – she also took into account the clients' affinity for nature-inspired materials. Incorporating organic elements into the space, CDR sourced a beautiful, sustainable madrone for the peninsula countertop and a marble remnant for its center. Oak flooring adds warmth and ties into the house's other hardwood floors.

The couple truly personalized their kitchen, with Wentworth's help, in their choice of tile for their backsplashes. On a tile-shopping trip, Wentworth and her clients found a mural that reminded the couple of a Notre Dame cathedral window they had admired on a recent trip to Paris. Tying the kitchen together, Wentworth created a palette of accent tiles that pulled together the brown tiles of the mural and the particular shade of blue the clients chose for their range.

The clients now have a kitchen that evokes fond memories while fully equipped for making new ones. ■

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The table-like peninsula anchors the baking center, which boasts a second, electric stove preferred by this home chef for baked items.



Marble provides the perfect surface for working with dough, while extra-deep drawers below hold sufficient quantities of ingredients for the serious home baker.