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Award-Winning Bungalow Kitchen



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Bungalow Kitchen Wins Design Award

Integrating multiple functions, the island/dining table also unifies the room with its more appropriate scale.

By Stacy Green

Think back on some memorable moments in your home from the past 10 or so years. Chances are many of them have been in your kitchen. In mine, I've not only cooked, eaten, and entertained, I have made my first candles, had pivotal conversations with my daughter, and watched our border collie pup delight in her first Thanksgiving turkey ("Look, Ma, I can reach the counter!").

A kitchen demands special attention when it comes to remodeling, and even more attention when it's the heart of an historic or vintage home.

Beyond fulfilling the typical requirements, the vintage kitchen should fit seamlessly into its surroundings. Such a remodel generally requires a design with historic specificity and a designer who gives equal attention to the desires of the home's owners.



Recessing the fridge into an underutilized wall alleviates traffic jams in the work zone.

BEFORE



A too-strict adherence to the "golden triangle" of sink, stove, and fridge can hinder function.



A large portion of the kitchen was occupied by a small dining table, limiting functionality of the space.



This crowded wall of cabinetry was replaced by a pass-through and its airier effect (see photo top right).



Besides kitchen items, the pass-through admits additional natural light, a view of this beautiful kitchen, and a wealth of Craftsman details.



Clever design maximizes storage in the central island, with a built-in microwave, a niche for cutting boards and kitchen towels, and toe-kick drawers that hide a pet-feeding station and stepladder.

A Winning Example

A local remodeling firm proves the point with a kitchen remodel that just won a 2011 national Chrysalis Remodeling Excellence Award. The 1908 Arts & Crafts bungalow kitchen, looking dated from a 1990s remodel, had traffic issues, a poor layout, and insufficient storage and workspace.

The homeowners came to Craftsman Design and Renovation to address these issues with an upgraded kitchen that was truer to the home's character. They also wanted a kitchen that retained a dining area, was more conducive to entertaining, and accommodated a variety of family activities.

In the pre-existing space, food preparation was shoved to one side of the room, while a casual dining table occupied the other. As a result, the work areas in this good-sized kitchen felt cramped, yet much of the overall space was underutilized, says project designer Chelly Wentworth.

Consolidating the former table and cook-top zones solved multiple issues with storage, traffic flow, lack of scale and focus, and the seemingly competing functions of food preparation and dining. Where separate preparation and eating areas once fractured the room, a large central island now unifies the room with a more stately scale and provides a handsome focal point with its walnut plank surface.

The furniture-like island, with its smooth, durable tabletop, can serve for food prep, informal dining, party buffet, and various tasks from homework to crafting. A pulley system allows the overhead light fixture to be raised or lowered accordingly for ambient or task lighting.

Traffic Issues

A too-strict adherence to the "golden triangle" of sink, stove, and refrigerator was more a hindrance than a help in the pre-remodel layout, says Wentworth. Accessing the fridge, which was only feet away from the cook top and sink, virtually guaranteed interfering with the kitchen's major functions.

The solution was to move the refrigerator somewhere independent of any work zones, but still conveniently accessible. Finding a place for the much-frequented appliance was challenging, but Wentworth recessed the fridge into space found under the stairs opposite one of the walls.

A new pass-through between the dining room

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A sliver of wall next to the fridge was maximized with a pull-out pantry that takes advantage of a narrow but deep space.



A toe-kick drawer for kitty keeps kibble in place, and out of sight when not in use.



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and kitchen is part of the traffic solution. Both the counter and cabinetry are mutually accessible, as the cabinet doors open to both rooms. The built-in offers additional benefits with greater storage, and natural light and sight lines are shared between the adjacent rooms. It also significantly adds to the period impression with its Craftsman lines and ogee detailing.

Cabinet Considerations

Cabinetry makes the major statement in virtually any kitchen, so it's important to invest wisely in it, advises Wentworth. The previous cabinetry and tile had a generic Craftsman style and probably seemed expedient at the time. But, as Wentworth explains, a large part of the appeal of early-20th-century housing stock is the built-ins, moldings, and trim.

"When those details aren't carried through the house, the space will ultimately look dated. Keeping to the house's overall style can save money in the long run because, if done right, the room will have a classic look that doesn't have an expiration date."

For that timeless impression, the room boasts stacked cabinetry, glass-fronted upper cabinets, a paneled hood cover, and end panels. To confer a built-in look while keeping to the clients' budget, the semi-custom cabinetry was installed and painted to match the surrounding woodwork and trim.

Budgeting Beauty

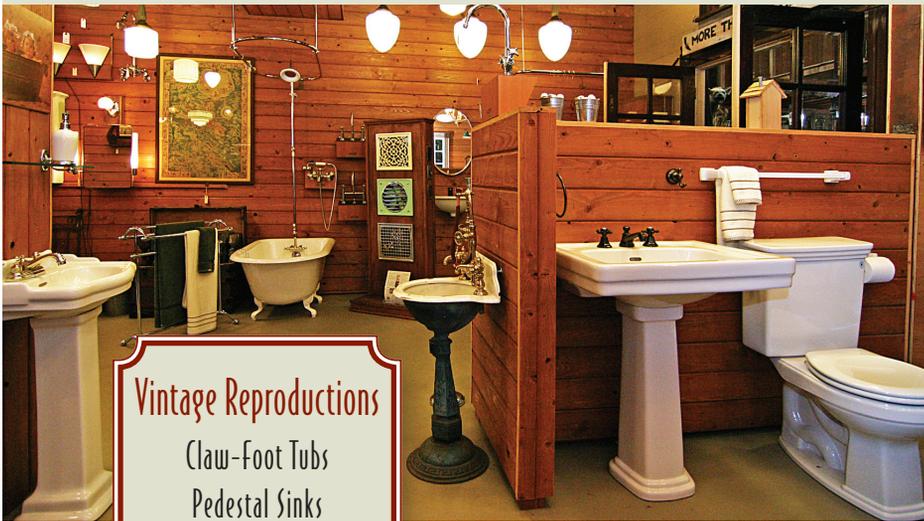
Like most of us, the clients wanted a high-end product while minding a budget. To keep costs down, Wentworth stayed within the room's footprint, worked around existing door and window placement, and focused on the best quality cabinets money allowed.

Semi-custom cabinetry with simple melamine interiors are an affordable alternative to custom cabinets and are in keeping with this vintage kitchen. The simple white tile with contrasting grout adds to the classic look, and contributes textural and visual interest without breaking the bank. Using a locally sourced, "smart wood" certified walnut plank countertop is not only environmentally friendly, it's also a lower-cost alternative to the marble countertops in the rest of the kitchen.

The resulting period-appropriate renovation not only claimed top honors on a budget, but also reclaimed the kitchen's stature as the hub of this beautiful home. ■

Stacy Green is the writer behind Green Ink and writes about home improvement, small businesses, the environment, and travel. Contact her at sgreentag@aol.com.

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