



Three sets of glass doors marry Jacque Bibeau and Norm Page's remodeled kitchen with their backyard.

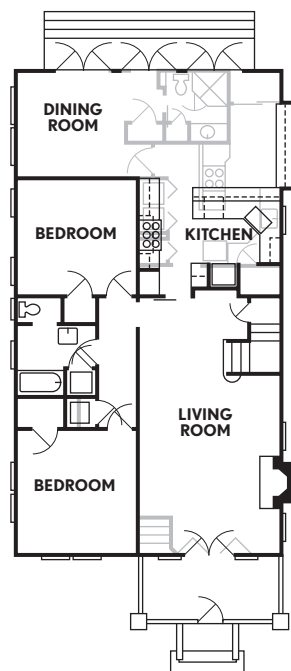
# COTTAGE MEETS MODERN

A California couple who love cooking, entertaining, and the outdoors blended their passions and crafted their ideal kitchen and gathering space.

BY MARIA STRESHINSKY PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES CARRIER STYLING BY AARON J. HOM



Natural and durable surfaces, such as slate floors, soapstone countertops, and unstained maple cabinets, make the kitchen (left) both attractive and hardworking. The floor plan (below) shows how the old layout (in gray) was reconfigured to create open entertaining space at the back of the house.



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Every Friday afternoon Jacque Bibeau sifts through the box of organic vegetables that's delivered to her door. "Saturday is my day to figure out what to do with what's in the box," Jacque says. "I don't like to waste anything." On a recent Saturday, the house is filled with the scent of a hearty soup.

Jacque and her husband, Norm Page, are dedicated cooks; they have guests for dinner weekly, and they host numerous parties. Which is why, when the couple moved into their century-old cottage in San Anselmo, California, remodeling the kitchen was paramount.

"We had wanted to buy a place that was finished, where we wouldn't have to do any construction, but we walked into this cottage and it felt right. Except the

kitchen was horrible—it had blue particle-board cupboards, and the washer and dryer were next to the stove."

The couple interviewed a number of architects before hiring Michael Mullin. "He said 'Tell me about your day from start to finish.' He really got a feeling for us," Jacque says. The plan was to transform a warren of rooms in the back of the house—a hallway, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen—into a large open space for entertaining. "The tiny rooms that filled the back of the house didn't suggest any kind of relationship to each other or the backyard," says Mullin, "nor did they present any gracious areas for formal dining, gourmet cooking, or relaxing."

The new configuration includes a well-appointed kitchen area separated by a raised counter from the long, opened-up space across the back of the >> on 152



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house that now includes a bar area and dining room. The whole rear exterior wall was replaced with three sets of glass doors that flood the room with natural light. “The doors unify the indoor-outdoor feeling,” says Mullin.

The couple lived in the house for six months before the renovation began. “It helped to live there first, because we learned what we liked and disliked,” says Jacque, whose tastes tend toward comfortable and cozy. Norm prefers sleek, modern lines, but they found ways to compromise. Both wanted to retain the house’s cottage character, and they favored natural surfaces. Jacque adds, “The house is positioned so it is sunny all day in the kitchen.” All summer long—and here that means April to >> on 154

**A tiny bedroom and bathroom were removed to make way for the new dining room; Mullin was able to save an original window. Jacque fell in love with this large hardwood table, made from reclaimed wood. The couple chose a striking painting by Mark Beck as a single large element to complement the simplicity of the design. “The light in the painting changes with the changing light in the room,” says Jacque.**



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October—Jacque and Norm throw open the glass doors in the morning and don't close them until nightfall. Juniper-color slate flooring creates a seamless transition from the kitchen onto the patio.

At Jacque and Norm's house, comfort—whether it is in the form of a gracious kitchen, a welcoming patio, or a warm winter soup—is essential. 🍷

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Slate flooring flows from the kitchen across the patio (*above left*) to the edge of the lawn. Jacque (standing) and Norm (at center right) consider the garden part of their daily living space and frequently entertain friends outside. The two are wine aficionados, so a refrigerated wine cellar (*above right*) is part of the room's design. Jacque and Norm retained the original charm of their cottage (*left*) when they remodeled.