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Kitchens for the Rest of Us



Real kitchens
for real people.

Most of us think "break
the bank" when we hear
"kitchen remodel." But
as home design expert

Peter Lemos proves

in *Kitchens for the Rest of Us*, it is possible to make over a ho-hum kitchen into the cooking center of your dreams. In this inspiring and practical guide, Lemos walks readers through 20 challenging kitchen remodels, all modest in size and budget. Using a template of five basic steps, from taking stock to finding your style, to working with pros, to defining your space, to making it happen, Lemos shows how homeowners make the most of their resources, choose wisely when it comes to splurges, and ultimately find a way to realize their dreams. In the process of demystifying this often complicated experience, Lemos serves up a wide variety of design solutions for kitchens that represent a range of styles from across the country.

Kitchens for the Rest of Us

LEMOS

Taunton



PETER LEMOS

Kitchens for the Rest of Us

From the Kitchen You Have to the Kitchen You Love



working with pros

ONCE YOU HAVE A GENERAL IDEA of features, styles, and cost, start talking to architects, contractors, and designers. In fact, it's best to talk to several if you have time. Bear in mind that good kitchen professionals tend to be booked up months in advance. You want to be on their radar as soon as possible. It's a good idea, too, to pick their brains before you become too wed to one strategy or another. These conversations can also help provide a preliminary check on time and cost considerations.

Even if you are considering doing the remodeling work yourself, it's still a good idea to talk to some experts. You may discover that they can save you more time and money through their professional connections and discounts and their familiarity with the work than you can by doing it yourself. Some may even let you do certain parts of the job, such as demolition, sanding, tiling, or painting.

Start by getting recommendations from friends. Equally important, find out who they may have avoided and why. Be wary of kitchen-remodeling shops that hook you up with someone who is mainly a salesperson and who wants to talk immediately about estimates and contracts. Deal with somebody who starts with ideas and options. Be especially wary if they offer to arrange financing for you. In most cases, you will

end up paying more than if you arrange financing yourself. In any case, it is simply better to keep these aspects of your renovation separate. This is important: *You want to control the money so you can control the job.*



above Paint colors are a cost-effective way to add pizzazz to a kitchen. An inexpensive consultation with a color designer yielded this multi-hued cabinet color scheme.

counter choices

KITCHEN COUNTERS MUST BE easy to work on and to clean. They also add almost as much to the look of the kitchen as the cabinets. Here is a quick overview of the most common materials.

GRANITE For natural good looks, durability, and hardness, granite is a top choice. It comes in several finishes: polished (high gloss), honed (matte), and flamed (rough) and in many colors and patterns. However, granite can chip and crack, and is available only in 8-ft. to 10-ft. lengths (longer counters require seams).

SOAPSTONE A popular choice for those who want a warm and traditional stone counter. Like all real stone, soapstone will crack and chip, and must be seamed in long counters.

CAST CONCRETE For those who want the warmth of soapstone in a wider choice of colors, cast concrete is an excellent choice.

QUARTZ COMPOSITE Made of 90 percent to 95 percent quartz powder in an acrylic resin, composite countertops look like real granite but can be installed without seams and can be repaired. Major brands are CaesarStone®, DuPont® Zodiaq®, Cambria® Quartz, Silestone®, and Formica® Stone.

SOLID SURFACE OR ACRYLIC Acrylic counters can be installed without seams, can have custom edge treatments, can be repaired if scratched or burned, and are available in a huge selection of colors.

LAMINATE Durable plastic sheets that are glued to wood or fiberboard substrates, laminate countertops are the least expensive and have the widest choice of colors and patterns.

STAINLESS STEEL Sleek, durable, and easy to maintain, stainless countertops work well and look great in clean, contemporary-style kitchens.

BUTCHER BLOCK This time-tested material works well as a complement to other countertop materials, such as stainless steel or granite.



above This basic natural black stone has a soft, warm appeal.



above Granite is available in a variety of finishes, including this rough-textured "flamed" finish.



OUR PROBLEM

"A cramped kitchen that was cut off from the house"

THE SOLUTION

A flexible entertaining space that spills into a backyard

AFTER

The new kitchen locates the principal cooking activities within a small footprint, allowing more area for dining and entertaining. The casual yet sophisticated breakfast bar visually separates the kitchen from the living area.

THE SIMPLE, MODERN KITCHEN that came with this bungalow when Norm Page and Jacqueline Bibeau bought it a few years ago had little to do with the charming style of the house or the way the couple saw themselves living in it. The fact is this couple had big dreams. Like most people, they wanted a new kitchen with a lot of function, but they couldn't spend a fortune to get it and had only the existing space of their first floor to work in. The couple longed for an indoor/outdoor space that would not only accommodate their love of cooking but also would let the kitchen communicate seamlessly with a new living/dining area and, even more importantly, with their large backyard, allowing them to entertain for business and for pleasure.

After bumping into each other for nearly a year in the original space, the couple was ready to make those dreams come true. In their plan, the first thing to go would be the extra bedroom and bath at the back of the house that blocked the kitchen from

BEFORE

The original kitchen was not only small and plain, but was too far from the backyard to satisfy the Bibeau's vision of a roomy, flexible space.



Defining Your Space

To get the little space they had to accomplish many things, Norm and Jacqueline intentionally left the boundaries within the kitchen, dining, and living space loosely defined. The only clear edge here is the breakfast bar that separates the kitchen's work area from the open space. This strategy allows each part of the room to borrow visual—and, if necessary, physical—space from all of the other parts. For example, the dining room, which sits at one end of the room, feels much larger because it shares visual space with the rest of the kitchen. Also, when it needs to be turned from dining space into a work area, that activity can easily expand into the adjoining space. None of these things would happen if the boundaries were too clearly defined.



the warm California sunshine just outside. Getting rid of these would create more room and make possible a wall of glass doors that would open onto a spacious new patio.

Into this open space, they wanted to put a kitchen that could easily shift gears from quiet haven to work area to party mode, intimate enough for the two of them to enjoy when they were alone but big enough to handle a crowd. Since Jacqueline, who is a partner in a small ad agency, works at home, she also needed the kitchen to work occasionally as a businesslike gathering space for meetings that might overflow from her upstairs office.

They worked up a plan to turn the back half of their first floor into a friendly, multitasking space with San Francisco architect Michael Mullin. By simply demolishing a few walls, Mullin's design created a spare, open space with intimate charm and wide-open energy and did it within the couple's tight budget. Although the demolition required Norm and Jacqueline to move out of the house for three months, the results proved worthwhile. The new kitchen/dining area includes a large, open space spanning the back of the house with room for a small reading corner and designated dining area, all of which spill into the backyard through three wide pairs of glass doors.

A Hardworking Kitchen

The working heart of the kitchen is a well-laid-out, well-equipped space with lots of gear, counters, and storage designed into a surprisingly small footprint. The kitchen has lots of clever storage ideas squeezed cleanly into out-of-the-way places, such as the small pantry closet that just fits under



above The wide glass doors swing out to transform the kitchen and dining alcove into an open, welcoming, indoor/outdoor space, perfect for parties and enjoying the California sun.



left Although the working part of the kitchen is relatively small, it now benefits from the increased space and sun exposure in the dining area.

ADDED INGREDIENTS

indoor outdoor floors

■ Slate tile was used for the floor here for a variety of stylistic and functional reasons. First, it is weather resistant enough to use outside as well as in, allowing Mullin to create a continuous

floor surface that covers the kitchen and dining area then moves outside onto the patio, with no interruption but a piece of weather stripping. Second, in this kitchen the slate picks up the black horizontal lines of the soapstone counters. Finally, it is an ideal transmitter of the radiant floor heating used here. But slate is a popular choice in any kitchen because its soft and porous texture feels warm and comfortable under-

foot. This texture, though, means that it needs to be sealed on installation and resealed every year or so.



the stairs. It's also loaded with hardworking equipment such as the six-burner, pro-style cooktop, double wall ovens, a beefy refrigerator, a farm-style sink, and a professional-grade electric mixer. Typical of the thoughtful organization at work here, the mixer sits on a swing-up shelf that can be pulled out quickly or stowed invisibly back in its cabinet. In fact, all of this well-designed efficiency frees up the open spaces of the room to be simply, well, open.

The clean, custom maple cabinets are done in a spare Shaker style. Soapstone countertops and slate tile floors provide a warm, traditional nuance, while they create a contemporary-looking horizontal expanse of black stone to offset the light cabinets. Such vintage touches as an apron-front farm-style sink are accompanied by just enough stainless steel in the form of appliances, the vent hood, and the backsplash to keep the look up to date.



left The kitchen was designed with a six-burner cooktop and a pair of wall ovens close together with counter space in between to keep the cooking activity all within one area.

below The wall of glass bricks above the counters lets in sunshine but maintains the couple's privacy.

before & after

In the old plan, the prime real estate on the first floor was occupied by a bedroom and bath that the couple was happy to trade for a bigger and better kitchen. The remodeled plan includes the wall of glass doors the couple desired while delivering enough space to handle activities from breakfast to work to entertaining.



An Elegant Alcove

A breakfast bar separates the kitchen from the open space that includes an ample area for mingling, a small but elegant dining alcove, and even a place to sit and read. It also includes a counter fitted with additional upper and lower cabinets for storage, which, in effect, serves as an extension of the kitchen itself. The counter also has a small sink and two wine chillers—one for white and one for red—so that it easily turns into a bar when the occasion arises. The dining alcove at the



far end of the open area is furnished with an intimate dining table and eight upholstered chairs.

Along the back of the house, the glass doors open onto a terrace that is built to the same level as the kitchen floor and uses the same slate tiles, so that on warm evenings, of which there many in this part of the world, the life of the kitchen flows easily in and out without interruption.



above To add storage to the new kitchen, this shallow pantry closet was created along a wall of the back hall, making good use of otherwise wasted space.

upclose



1 Pantry closet



2 Pull-out shelves



3 Integrated shelves



4 Oversized pot drawers

although no larger than the old kitchen, the working space of the new kitchen is filled with features that pump up its usability.

1 In the recess under the stairway, Mullin carved out a pair of storage cabinets with shelves that pull out for easy access.

2 Pull-out drawer shelves make the small storage cabinet beneath the microwave easy to use.

3 The stainless-steel backsplash between the cooktop and vent hood features integrated shelves to keep spices and utensils handy.

4 Beneath the cooktop, two large pot drawers offer easy storage for bulky cooking equipment.



OUR PROBLEM

“A workhorse of a rental that was beyond run-down”

THE SOLUTION

An old-fashioned kitchen loaded with modern amenities

tHE KITCHEN OF JASON PORTER'S Oakland, California, apartment was the result of a renovation that combined four small apartments in a landmark Victorian building into one large, two-story unit. From the start, Jason knew that he wanted the space to have more in common with the original 1870 home than it did with the well-worn kitchen it replaced. The once-magnificent structure was a single-family home before being subdivided 100 years ago into small apartments. While Jason respected the historic nature of the building, he didn't want (nor could he afford) to re-create a grand Victorian confection. His goal was a well-functioning kitchen, no bigger than it needed to be, which possessed a style that lay somewhere between period reproduction and modern efficiency. An important part of his plan was to use fresh, lively colors that would be in keeping with the past.

Bringing in the Light

Since the kitchen faced south, Jason also wanted it to take advantage of the sunlight. There was just a

BEFORE

The original kitchen, covered with dark blue tile, was fitted with basic equipment that was far beyond its prime and added to the room's dinginess.

AFTER

A careful mix of classic design, sunshine, and bright color gives this traditional kitchen an infusion of style and elegance that makes it the centerpiece of its newly remodeled home.



COOK'S CORNER

out of sight

■ By adding a roll-out shelf, the storage area above the refrigerator becomes an ideal place to stow light appliances that are seldom used. The small, 60-in.-high refrigerator makes this an easily accessible storage solution, which it might not be in a kitchen with a tall refrigerator. Here the shelf is a clever use of underutilized space.



quick fixes

When redesigning a vintage kitchen, consider mixing original details and historic woodwork with state-of-the-art appliances to give your kitchen a feeling of richness and authority.

utilitarian kitchen window to brighten the room. As was the fashion in its day, the kitchen had been walled off from the dining room with nothing but a single door passing between them. As a result, the dining room was even darker. One of Jason's primary goals was to redesign the kitchen so that it and the remaining interior living spaces received as much light as possible.

Jason's renovation plan, which was developed with architect Michael Mullin of San Francisco, was to extend the kitchen into space previously occupied by a bathroom, stretching the 12-ft.-long kitchen to 17 ft. At the same time, Mullin designed exterior windows and a glass door leading out to the deck. On the newly extended interior wall, Mullin added a second doorway, and at



above This new triple window replaced the original single one. The faucet is a 100-year-old design that is still made by the manufacturer—proof of its enduring style.

facing page A new deck and glass door leading to it extend the kitchen into the sunny outdoors. A transom window above the door enhances the connection.





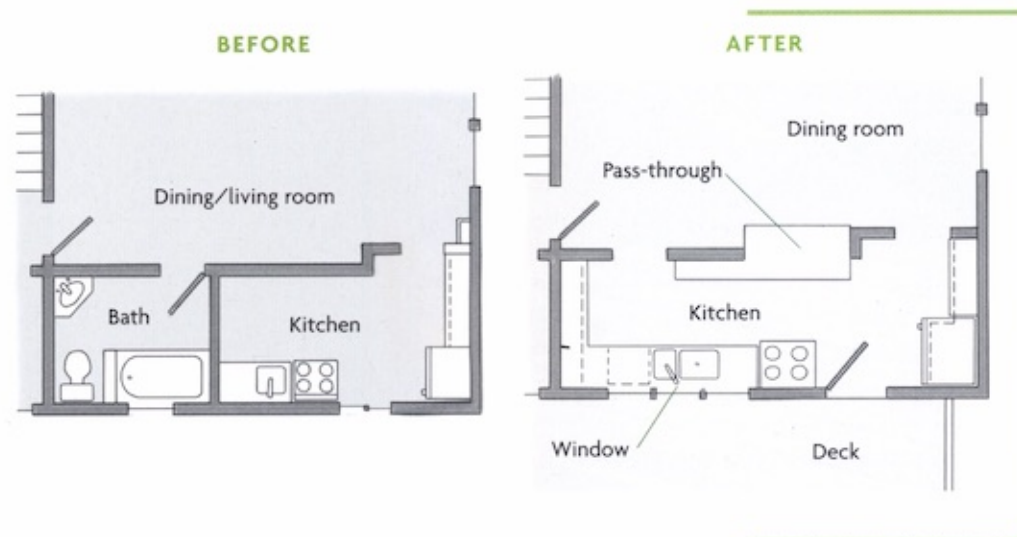
the other end of the kitchen, he took the existing door off its frame. The kitchen now had two entrances but no heavy doors blocking the sun. In addition, Mullin added a wide pass-through to the dining room that not only functions as a convenient way to serve food but also allows the sunlight to flood into the whole apartment. The result is a kitchen that works as a transition from the outdoors to the dining/living area instead of being the barrier that it had once been.

Jason also hired a professional color consultant to work out the palette he would use in the kitchen and dining room. Together Jason and the designer came up with a color scheme that matched the traditional style of the kitchen but would register with modern eyes. The dominant color they chose is a classic shade of blue that

left Pale yellow and blue tones are the perfect complement to the crisp white crown molding, extra-wide baseboards, and trim details in this Victorian apartment.

before & after

The old kitchen, designed for a one-bedroom rental unit, was too small, closed off, and dark. Despite its southern exposure, a single small window cut the bright sunshine to a minimum. In addition to annexing space from a bathroom, the architect added a glass doorway to the outside and an interior pass-through that lets light in.



hints at times past and was derived from the blue-gray of the flooring. A slightly darker shade was used for the base cabinets and the open shelving and then was cut with white paint to lighten it for the upper cabinets. This trick of shifting shades gives the base cabinets more heft and grounding, while it makes the upper cabinets seem lighter and less imposing. Even paler shades of this blue appear in the backsplash tiles. The walls are painted with fresh pale yellow that adds light to the small space.

Jason's new stainless-steel appliances, including the pro-style 30-in. range, dishwasher, vent hood, and refrigerator, add to the room's fresh, contemporary quality.

A Pleasing Mix

Trendy appliances aside, the new kitchen is stylistically a happy throwback to older, calmer times. The spare, custom-crafted cabinets are hand-painted with alkyd paint to give them a vintage sensibility. The upper cabinets are fitted with reeded glass doors that add to the feeling. Wherever possible, the original trim and detailing were maintained; where new molding and details were created, they were designed to match the originals.

Another nod to vintage style is the kitchen floor, which is covered in Marmoleum®, an affordable flooring product made just as it was 100 years ago from all-natural linseed oil, rosin (dried pine sap), chalk, wood flour, and jute backing. After disappearing in the 1960s, linoleum has been rediscovered, not only because it is considered an environmentally friendly product but also because it harkens back to the kitchens of our grandparents' era. It comes in 7-ft.-wide

Working with Pros

ESSENTIAL STEP

Assuming the role of general contractor, Jason Porter hired a construction crew, a cabinetmaker, a color consultant, an electrician, and a plumber. He did this in part to control the flow of money (in fact, he didn't save much) but also to be more directly involved in the process. He paid many on an hourly basis, a formula sometimes used for projects in old construction where accurate estimates are difficult but which can open up a homeowner to runaway costs. This system worked for Jason because he was able to tap into a network of young craftspeople who were less expensive and able to work to Jason's standards. There was only one negative: The role took up an inordinate amount of time. In the future, Jason says, he would treat it as a full-time job.



upclose

sheets, like what is used here, or as tiles for patterned floors, and it can be found through flooring retailers.

The mix of the old and new that grew out of this blend of carefully considered restoration, imaginative reinterpretation, and flat-out modern machinery has created a kitchen that is as eye-catching as it is comfortable and cozy.



1 Swing-out corner storage



2 Glass-front cabinet



3 Open shelving



above With the help of a color consultant, the kitchen and dining room were transformed into bright, charming spaces.

to fit a lot of utility into this small space, Jason used a combination of simple, old-fashioned storage solutions and clever new design tricks.

- 1 The hard-to-reach corner recess behind the dishwasher is turned into an efficient storage area with this swing-out rack system.
- 2 The reeded glass on the front of the cabinets discreetly hides the contents but, at the same time, gives the cabinets lightness and translucency.
- 3 Shallow open shelves below the pass-through are a perfect spot for storing spices and condiments without taking much space.

