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Light AND Bright

Add one part traditional, one part modern and mix in sleek lines, whimsical accents and bursts of bright accent colors as the ingredients to the perfect **entertainer's kitchen.**

BY MARGIE MONIN DOMBROWSKI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY C.S. NELSON PHOTOGRAPHY

THE MOST INVITING KITCHENS welcome sunlight and have plenty of casual character. When interior designer Leslie Huntley of Roost Interior Design in Asheville, North Carolina, interned at a contemporary-kitchen-cabinet company five years ago, the business owner suggested Leslie give her own kitchen a makeover as "practice," and Leslie accepted the challenge. She began by removing a wall between the kitchen and dining room to open up the space, and tore out the old cabinets and flooring. "Once I started, there was no turning back," Leslie says.

Her kitchen project unfolded over six months' time, as she installed new cork floors, gleaming white cabinets and subway tile, quartz countertops, stainless-steel hardware and appliances, and pine floating shelves. The resulting stylish, contemporary kitchen preserves some of the traditional details and vintage charm of her 1915

Colorful accesories and similar materials and finishes give this combo kitchen/dining room a pulled-together look.



DO IT YOURSELF!

Tie your materials together to give adjacent spaces a cohesive look. Here, the traditional pedestal table is offset with silver mid-century modern dining chairs to mirror the mix of historic and new material in the kitchen.



Style File

TYPE OF HOME: 1915 Arts and Crafts Foursquare bungalow.

DESIGN ELEMENTS: Combining contemporary and traditional design elements make the space noteworthy. Modern stainless steel and white lacquer finishes and fixtures matched with antique furniture and vintage-looking subway tiles create a stylish, timeless look.

DESIGN CHALLENGE: Previously two dark rooms, the separate kitchen and dining room felt cramped and disjointed, and bringing light into the tightly enclosed space posed a challenge.

INNOVATIVE IDEA: By maximizing and streamlining her smaller kitchen, Leslie puts the focus on the decor rather than the size and opened up the space by tearing down a wall that once divided the kitchen and dining room and utilizing space-saving cabinetry. The kitchen and dining area is now one open and cohesive entertaining area.

Arts and Crafts Foursquare bungalow, while also making it an open kitchen/dining area ideal for entertaining. "I call it contemporary meets traditional with quirky details," Leslie says of her sunny and bright kitchen with blue, green and red accent colors. Here's how she pulled the traditional and contemporary furnishings and materials together:

MAKE IT TIMELESS BY MIXING OLD AND NEW

In Leslie's kitchen, you'll see vintage-style white subway tile beside a sleek stainless-steel cooktop and contemporary cabinets with minimalist hardware, giving a contemporary feel but a sense of nostalgia for the home's history. The dining area, which centers around a white painted antique dining table and chrome mid-century-modern Harry Bertoina reproduction side chairs, also features a china cabinet that once belonged to her grandmother. Incorporating family pieces in the décor mixes the old with the new but also makes it personal.

Leslie avoids getting too trendy by juxtaposing contemporary elements with historical details for a timeless style all her own. "I wanted to be able to mix the contemporary with the traditional," Leslie says. "It's an older home, so I wanted to marry the two."

CONTAIN CLUTTER FOR A STREAMLINED LOOK

Having a smaller kitchen required Leslie to maximize her floor and vertical space, so she strategized her cabinet storage. "I took out a wall and a bunch of wall cabinets," she says. "The challenge was trying to fit in storage where I was taking out storage." In the peninsula located between the kitchen and dining area, Leslie doubled her cabinet storage by placing more cabinet space behind the floor-mounted cabinets. Floating wall shelves by the sink make extra room for showing off neatly displayed dishes, adding to the kitchen's casual vibe and open feel.

MAKE IT POP WITH ACCENT COLORS AND PATTERN

Light and airy kitchens are quintessentially cottage style, but Leslie's accent colors and patterns bring whimsy and rhythm into the space. The kitchen features an accent wall in a soft-but-energetic green hue, which is repeated in the fun blue, green and white checkerboard floor-tile rug. The checkered motif also appears in the dining chairs, subway-tile backsplash and original diamond-framed kitchen windows, subtly tying the modern and vintage elements together.

5 TIPS for a stylish kitchen REDESIGN

Remodel your kitchen with these cost-saving design tips from interior designer Leslie Huntley of Roost Interior Design.

WORK WITH WHAT YOU'VE GOT

Your kitchen may already have spectacular original architectural details, like Leslie's fireplace and mantel, that you can preserve and update instead of replacing, which can save you money.

STRATEGIZE YOUR SPACE

Plan where you'll place every fixture so they will function best for your needs and you'll get more space for your buck. "Think about how you use the kitchen, what drawers you reach for, where you store stuff. Be methodical about it," Leslie says.

FOCUS ON THE FINISHES

Quality finishes = a standout kitchen. Antique handles with patina, modern stainless-steel appliances, subway or glass mosaic tile are high-drama materials and finishes that create a high-end look.

SET YOUR OWN TRENDS

For a wow factor, select furnishings and finishes from different time periods and design aesthetics, skipping the trends. This adds immutable style that will stretch your investment for years to come.

TAKE YOUR TIME WITH THE PROJECT


TV shows make it seem like kitchen makeovers happen in a weekend, but the reality is that it takes months. Allow time for potential problems or a change of plans to avoid costly mistakes. Once your dream kitchen is unveiled, it will be worth the wait.

Subway tiles give a nod to the home's age while vibrant green paint and natural wood shelving give this space an earthy vibe.





LEVERAGE LIGHTING TO HIGHLIGHT KEY FEATURES

This open floor plan makes the most of natural light with many reflective surfaces, such as several windows and white components, such as from the white lacquer finish cabinets and subway-tile backsplash, dainty window coverings and soffit. Other shiny details such as the stainless-steel appliances, quartz countertops and the overhead lighting create even more light, showcasing the kitchen and completely transforming the once-dark rooms. Now, Leslie says, "It's a fun, entertaining, sunny, happy kitchen." 

Customized carpet tiles and Bertoia-style chairs give this room modern flair.

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