

Blending Styles in a



A MINGLING OF OLD, NEW, AND IN BETWEEN

Different styles in this kitchen are evident immediately in the painted cabinets of the cleanup area and the rich oak of the food-preparation area (photo above). A closer look reveals a more subtle mix of styles. Oak cabinets (photo right) echo Victorian elements that are found elsewhere in this



Kitchen



1880s house, but they are presented in a built-in style that speaks of the late 20th century. On the other hand, the sink cupboard (photo right) has the look of fitted furniture painted in colors from the colonial-revival period. The door panels mimic radiator covers from the early 20th century, while the base disguises a 21st-century toe-kick heater.

Elements from different eras combine for a comfortable kitchen that looks like it evolved over the past 120 years

BY CAROLYN MURRAY

Roxanne and Mark wanted a kitchen where friends and family would feel comfortable, welcome, and at home. But the kitchen that came with their 1885 home had been “modernized” in the 1980s with white-laminate cabinets, vinyl flooring, and ceiling-mounted light fixtures that didn’t provide enough light. The space was chopped and cramped, with no relation to the rest of the house; in a word, it was soulless.

As the kitchen designer, I had the challenge of bringing back the character of the Victorian/colonial-revival period in which the house was built, but in a way that made sense with the new appliances and conveniences Roxanne and Mark wanted.

I saw three distinct choices. The first was to hide and disguise everything new, creating a kitchen entirely in the style of the original architecture. I call this choice convolution. The next choice was revolution, accepting and announcing that a new kitchen had been born of an old house, but this strategy could have turned out to be a variation on what occurred when the kitchen had been updated 20 years ago.

Instead, the choice we opted for was evolution, recognizing that change is both inevitable and healthy. Our goal was to create a kitchen



A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING, IN STYLE

With the space at a premium, no square inch is wasted in this kitchen.

1. A freestanding painted-wood armoire is the perfect spot to hide the microwave oven and a cook-book library. **2.** A system of sliding shelves brings the dark recesses of a blind corner cabinet into the light of day. **3.** Cabinets over the refrigerator pull out to put even seldom-used items close at hand. **4.** Pull-out wall cabinets keep all condiments and spices at the cook's fingertips.



that contained elements reflecting the various phases of its life span, from its inception in the 1880s through the advancements of the 1900s and into the present millennium (top photo, p. 68).

Layout? Think circles.

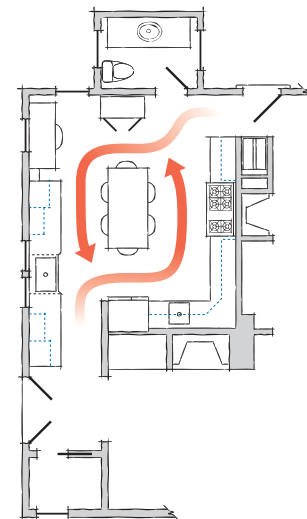
My first task was to determine the general flow of work and traffic through the space. In a well-designed kitchen, this movement should be circular as you unload, store, prepare, cook, serve, then clean up after the meal (photo above; floor plan, facing page). Rather than crisscrossing the space a zillion times, there should be a logical flow from one area and task to the next.

In Roxanne and Mark's kitchen, I separated the functions of food preparation and cleanup so that there is room for everyone to participate in the meal together. The table in the center of the room establishes the circular pattern of movement, and it feels more at home as the place for everyday meals than an island would.

Once we had the general layout in order, we worked on storage. Everything Roxanne uses and stores in her kitchen was inventoried and its location designated, based on storing things as close as possible to where they are used the most. These factors were critical for establishing the optimal placement of drawers, cabinets, shelves, roll-outs, and pantries. To find a place for everything, we had to use every square inch of space. We worked with the cabinetmaker (Blanchard Woodworking; 508-429-7210) to create several ingenious storage systems, including a series of roll-out trays that provide access to the deepest recesses of a bottom corner cabinet (photos left).

Restoring the kitchen's soul

My next job was to weave the ambience of the kitchen seamlessly into that of the house. To make the visual transition in the back entry between the dining room and the kitchen, I chose simple painted moldings and light walls. The light walls and ceiling extend through the



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cleanup area, where the cabinetry also is painted. Its soft green color leapfrogs Victorian sensibilities, speaking more to colonial-revival and contemporary tastes.

In the food-preparation area on the other side of the kitchen, the stained quartersawn oak cabinets resemble the woodwork in the front entry, only lighter in color. The panels on all the cabinet doors are lined with a molding that duplicates the front-door panels on a smaller scale. We mixed and matched Victorian and classical cabinet hardware to reflect the transitional nature of the house.

Contributing to the impression that this kitchen has evolved over time, the cleanup area resembles a butler's pantry, an element common to the gracious homes of the early 20th century. This secondary work area would have served both the dining room and the kitchen. Here, I designed the cabinets to appear unfitted and furniturelike, as they might have looked in the original house. In contrast, the oak cabinets in the food-preparation area have a built-in style that reflects a 20th-century convention.

I even blended period details within a single element. For example, I borrowed the design for the cabinets in the cleanup area from a Victorian pantry, but used a furniture base from the colonial-revival period to hide a contemporary toe-kick heater. And the panels in the sink cabinet mimic radiator covers from the early 20th century.

Appliance treatment also shows both sides of the style coin. The microwave oven is hidden behind cabinet doors in a freestanding painted armoire, and an integrated panel on the dishwasher eliminates the impact of its contemporary features. The modern refrigerator and range are presented without apology.

Materials continue the evolution

Roxanne and Mark wanted surfaces for the food-preparation area that would be durable and easy to clean, so green granite and tumbled-marble tile were selected. The colors and textures in the granite and

tile echo the color scheme of cranberry and soft green that imbues the entire first floor. Granite also covers the counters in the cleanup area, giving the kitchen a visual unity, but instead of tile, I chose beadboard for the backsplash for more of a pantry look.

The stainless-steel sinks speak exclusively to the 20th century; this material was introduced for domestic use in the 1940s. There's a sort of cha-cha going on in the material and style of the faucets. Polished chrome came into use in the 1930s and is still in style. But the spout style on the faucet at the prep sink comes from the earliest days of indoor plumbing.

Casting the kitchen in the right light

With all this attention to detail, the kitchen still would have felt out of sync without the right lighting. To anchor the evolutionary feeling, I chose reproductions of late-Victorian gasoliers as the main fixtures for the kitchen area. The entry light is a variation on a schoolhouse fixture, widely used after 1920.

Low-voltage halogen lights hidden under the upper cabinets provide ample task lighting for the food-preparation area without trumpeting their contemporary nature. I kept recessed ceiling fixtures to a minimum, using them only where there was no opportunity for hidden or period lighting, such as over the sink. The lighting completes the warm and welcoming patina of a kitchen that has evolved gracefully over the past 120 years. □

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