



KITCHEN Uncovered

An eclectic remodel is equal parts original character and selective upgrades

BY CAROLINA CANTU

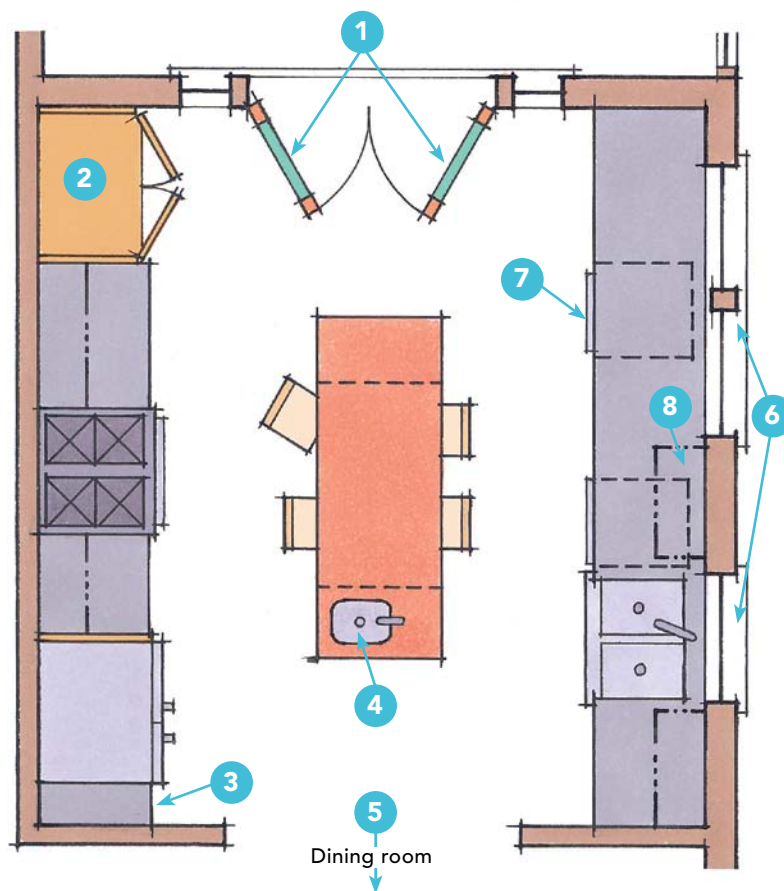
KEEPING WHAT WORKED AND REWORKING WHAT DIDN'T

The homeowners and architects agreed that the kitchen's floor plan mostly made sense. A few slight changes to the plan made it even better.

1. Original Double doors were repaired and painted to connect the kitchen to the new screened porch.

2. Upgrade A full-height pantry stores food items on the cooking side of the kitchen, where they're used.

3. Original The broom cabinet and wine rack are used regularly by the homeowners and were deemed worth keeping.



4. Upgrade A prep sink added to the island allows the cook to fill a pot or to clean hands without crossing the kitchen.

5. Original The wide cased opening connects the kitchen to the dining room and creates a spacious feel on the first floor.

6. Upgrade Three large new windows bring natural light and views to the kitchen.

7. Upgrade Located under the counter, the new microwave is convenient and safe for the homeowners' young boys to use.

8. Upgrade Open shelving replaces upper cabinets to make the kitchen feel larger while still offering storage for commonly used items.

Grace and Dan hired the Austin, Texas, architecture firm I work for to remodel their house, a 1250-sq.-ft. bungalow with two bedrooms and a single bath. With two young boys, they knew they'd soon want more space. The existing kitchen was in good shape, so they planned to leave it as it was.

As the project progressed, however, Grace and Dan had two realizations. First, their kitchen has always served as a central hub for the family. Not only do they use it to prepare meals, but it's where the boys do their homework and where guests inevitably gather. Second, the existing kitchen was going to look and feel out of place in the remodeled home. We decided to add the kitchen to the scope of the remodel but to preserve what we could, including the general layout,

most of the cabinetry (it's amazing what a good paint job can do), and the white-oak floors. We also chose to highlight an original detail of the house that was hidden until demolition began.

A well-connected plan

When we started the design, Grace and Dan's kitchen was already situated nicely between the dining room and a backyard deck that was to be transformed into a screened porch as part of the remodel. Double French doors with sidelights and transoms opened to the deck. On the dining-room side, a beautiful arched passageway connected the rooms. Because these transitions provide connection and daylight, it made sense to keep them intact. The kitchen itself was

GOOD BEFORE,

FOR COOKING

On the kitchen's south wall are the fridge, range, and pantry—everything the cook needs. Upgraded with new appliances, a fresh coat of paint and new hardware for the cabinets, a subway-tile backsplash, and two glass upper cabinet doors, the cooking zone is clean and convenient.

Before



DETAILS Prep-sink faucet Delta Trinsic Collection • Backsplash Heath Ceramics 2x4 Stone White tile • Pendant lights Barn Light Electric

essentially divided into three zones: the refrigerator and the range on the southern wall for cooking; the sink and the dishwasher on the northern wall for cleanup; and the island, used for food prep, homework, and socializing. The only problem was that the path from the cooking side to the sink could be challenging, particularly when there were people gathering. The solution was fairly simple. We modified the island to incorporate a prep sink. Having lived in this house for many years before the remodel, Grace says that the new prep sink has made all the difference.

We also decided to switch the microwave location from an upper cabinet on the cook's side of the kitchen to a base cabinet on the cleanup side. This new location keeps the family out of each other's way, and the new drawer-style microwave is safe for the boys to use.

Adding storage and light

The north side of the kitchen is on an exterior wall, a perfect place for windows in our hot climate. The existing kitchen, however, had only two small windows. We decided to remove the upper cabinets and countertop pantry, replace the two existing windows with larger units, and add a third window. Not wanting to lose the storage that these upper cabinets provided, we installed open shelving along this wall. In this way, we kept some storage but created a lighter feel. The open shelves make the kitchen feel more spacious and open than before.

Of course, we couldn't give up the pantry altogether. We added a floor-to-ceiling pantry to the cooking side of the kitchen. Not only did Grace and Dan gain storage space, but it's now located closer to where they use the items it holds.

BETTER AFTER

FOR CLEANUP

In a hot southern climate, a home's northern walls are ideal for windows and daylight. Here, new and bigger windows and open shelves create an airy, open space. The apron-front stainless-steel sink and dishwasher make this wall the cleanup zone. The new pecan island top and original wall paneling are the kitchen's showpieces.

Before



Main-sink faucet Kraus single control • **Range and hood** KitchenAid • **Contractor** Burnish & Plumb Construction

Old and new finishes

When we began to remove the drywall, we were surprised and delighted to find that shiplap longleaf-pine paneling was beneath the surface. Grace and Dan liked the original look of the paneling and decided to keep it uncovered in many parts of the house. We mostly painted it white except for one of the kitchen walls, which we left unfinished to bring warmth and texture to the room.

For the cabinets, we used a color called Pepper Tree from Devoc Paints. Grace and Dan fell in love with this color in a restaurant in Hawaii, and I like the idea of them having a great vacation memory tied to their home. Another memory they may have is the trip we took together to choose the pecan slab that would become their new island countertop. Once you've decided to use wood for a countertop,

it's worth taking the time to make sure that it has interesting and beautiful grain. We replaced the remaining countertops with dark sandstone, which has proven to be durable and easy to clean.

The kitchen was updated with a few other materials as well. The stainless-steel apron-front sink, island pendant lights, new cabinet hardware, and touch-sensitive sink faucets add a modern edge that Grace and Dan were looking for. In the end, this kitchen is an eclectic blend of the home's history and the family's modern sensibilities. □

Carolina Cantu, an associate at Clayton & Little Architects (claytonandlittle.com) in Austin, Texas, was the project manager for this kitchen remodel. Photos by Brian Pontolilo, except where noted.