

Handcrafted accents emphasize the beauty of simple design while keeping this kitchen on budget


BY KILEY JACQUES

When Arthur “Art” Psychev, principal of Novoya Design + Construction, was asked to helm the interior gut remodel of this 1930s bungalow located on a corner lot in Sacramento’s highly desirable Elmhurst neighborhood, he knew budget would be a driving factor on this flip. What he discovered was a floor plan that was choppy and cramped—or, as Psychev puts it, “The house was a maze, and very claustrophobic.” The key would be to rethink the interior, bringing it into alignment with the straightforward design and structure of the exterior.

Situated between the living room and dining room, the size of the kitchen was compromised. The first big move was to take down the dining room and living room



Wood



**SWEAT-EQUITY
SUBWAY TILE**
Although classic subway tile was the original plan, the carpenter chose to cut angles on the end of limestone tiles, creating a chevron-patterned backsplash.

on White



SHELVES ON A SHOESTRING

In an effort to balance custom details with affordable accents, the carpenter decided to make these floating shelves using Ikea brackets and site-cut 2x12 shelves, all stained to match.

walls, which cramped the kitchen, and replace them with LVL beams. To delineate the dining nook, Psychev dropped that section of ceiling and added tongue-and-groove accent walls. On the living room side, a peninsula separates the kitchen from the living room without obstructing the flow.

White-oak butcher-block-slab countertops set atop painted cabinetry serves to warm the

bright interiors of the compact kitchen, and that combination of wood tones and whites is carried throughout the rest of the house, even on the exterior.

Much of the kitchen's appeal is owed to the custom, handmade wood elements and true stone tile. The team voted against upper-wall cabinets in favor of open shelves to enhance the clean and breezy feel. Originally, the plan

for the backsplash was standard subway tile, but ultimately Psychev decided on 3-in. by 9-in. limestone tiles, which he cut on-site with a 45° angle on both ends to create a chevron pattern—a tricky task. "Limestone is generally a very frail material and crumbles easily," he explains, "so not only did we add the extra step of making hundreds of cuts prior to installation, but half of the



BARN DOOR, BUILT ON-SITE

The 36-in. by 80-in. pine barn door came together quickly on-site, and serves as a decor piece that complements the chevron tile; but it is also fully functional, providing privacy for the office space.

CUSTOM DETAILS ON A TIGHT BUDGET

PAINT Kelly-Moore in Swiss Coffee (cabinets, walls, and trim)

BACKSPASH Maravilla limestone tile in Serene Ivory
Mapei Flexcolor CQ grout in Light Almond

SHELF BRACKETS, CABINET KNOBS, SINK, AND FAUCET IKEA

RANGE HOOD Zephyr **APPLIANCES** GE

TOWEL BAR Glacier Bay **LIGHT FIXTURES** West Elm

BARN DOOR HARDWARE National Hardware

pieces broke at the sharp edges. It took up a ridiculous amount of time and labor, and we ended up throwing away at least a third of the tiles.”

But the end result paid off. “My favorite design element is really subtle: the repeating diagonal lines. They are seen in the chevron backsplash tile, the chevron-pattern barn door, and the butcher-block accent carvings,”

Peychev says, explaining that those carvings are the result of an accident (see photo p. 50). “At the end of a long day, I decided it would be a good idea to cut a piece of plywood with a circular saw on top of a butcher-block counter, which was already glued and installed. I ended up cutting right through the counter. After pacing back and forth and mocking myself, I got an idea. I proceeded

to make 10 more cuts as everyone stood there, completely speechless and appalled. I filled the cuts with wood filler, sanded and stained the counters, and gave it a few finishing coats. It ended up being one of the most complimented design accents.” □

Kiley Jacques is design editor. Photos by Stephanie Russo.