



Character strengths

This kitchen melds seamlessly with its architectural setting – classic detailing and a furniture-like aesthetic both play their part



There are several ways to downplay the impact of a kitchen that faces open-plan living spaces. One approach is to blend the design into its surroundings; another is to tuck functionality clean out of sight.

This kitchen, in a traditional-style home dating back to 1886, forms part of a broader remodel by interior designer and owner Wendy LeStage Hodgson. The understated design occupies the footprint formerly taken up by the kitchen and mudroom, with additional space provided by the addition, says Hodgson.

“A new great room led the makeover and I wanted the kitchen to merge with this adjacent space. We set out to connect the rooms visually in a variety of ways.

“I introduced crown mouldings to the ceiling and custom range hood that match those found elsewhere in the home. The classic paneled cabinetry is echoed by wall panels in the living room.”

The modest island plays a pivotal role in assimilating one space into the other. Painted a contrasting color to the white perimeter cabinetry, it has the presence of

a stand-alone piece of furniture. Its turned legs and slender countertop, much like a tabletop, add to the effect.

“Building on this idea, we chose bureau hardware for the island and the wall cabinets. These are in two different styles. Opting for drawers over cupboards for the under-counter cabinetry helps tie these elements together,” Hodgson says.

The placement of an antique bureau and an oil painting in close vicinity to the island further blurs the line between kitchen and living space.

Attention to scale was important to establish a sense of connection between the dining table and chairs and the island, says the designer. Concealment was also part of the plan.

The convection oven, microwave and storage are tucked away in the pantry alley. The pantries and refrigerator are integrated with the cabinetry, and the cooktop is partly concealed by the island.

Some storage is relegated to another room – a crockery cupboard is set in the owner’s office, beyond the alley.

“New floors throughout the kitchen and surrounding areas are an important unifying element,” Hodgson says. “In fact, visitors often have trouble telling where the original house finishes and the addition begins. This flooring is in wide-plank pine, that has been distressed and oiled for a more antiqued look. The tung-oil finish is easy to maintain.”

The lighting is a combination of task spot lights and a traditional-style pendant lamp, to which the owner has added a few playful Christmas stars.

Preceding pages and left: This kitchen blends into its surroundings through architectural details. The front panels on the island are drawer fronts, but without tell-tale pulls, which would have signalled their presence.

Top: Carrara marble perimeter countertops are the same thickness as the wood countertop on the island. A chunky farmhouse sink was an apt inclusion.

Above: Pantries are set on one of three walls of cabinets that clad an existing chimney. Storage was maximised throughout the design.



Interior designer, kitchen designer and owner: Wendy LeStage Hodgson, Carpenter & MacNeill Interiors (Essex, MA)
Cabinetry: Painted wood, Farrow & Ball in Bone
Countertops: Carrara marble, honed
Floors: Pine, tung-oil finish, Carlisle Flooring
Doors and windows: Marvin
Cooktop, integrated refrigeration: Viking
Kitchen sink: Farmers sink, Whitehaus
Faucets: Barbara Wilson in polished nickel

Left: Living room walls feature panelwork which links to the ornate mouldings and cabinetry. The island's dimensions are on a similar scale to the dining table and chairs, drawing them together.

Above: This crockery display cupboard is in the owner's office, at the end of the pantry alley. Even the cupboard shelving boasts a miniature crown moulding on its edges. An idiosyncratic cutlery lamp offers an eye-catching feature.

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