

PORTLAND'S HOME GARDEN AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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Architect TIM SCHOUTEN unveils
a sustainable modern masterpiece

WHAT'S HOT NOW!

Creating a coastal garden hideaway
SPECTACULAR KITCHEN &
BATH RENOVATIONS



76 pages of
STYLISH INTERIOR
DESIGN

MODERN MIXOLOGY

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THE COHEN FAMILY'S KITCHEN was big in all the wrong places. It had a lot of space, but much of it was wasted. "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink" is how designer Robin Fisher describes the "before" version. "They had tons of counter space, but no place to work," says Fisher, a Certified Master Kitchen and Bath Designer for Neil Kelly Design/Build Remodeling.

Tall appliances interrupted what would have been functional countertops, she says. The cooktop was jammed into one end of a skinny island, leaving no room to set things down on either side. A large walk-in pantry left a big square of dead space in its center, while the laundry room was so narrow the Cohens couldn't open the washer or dryer doors without banging a wall. Also, the island and walk-in pantry jutted into the kitchen's limited walkways, impeding traffic flow.

"Before, cooking together was too hard," says Roberta "Bert" Cohen, who designs custom jewelry and sells it at the Beaverton Farmer's Market and online. "We used to have to get out of each other's way. But now it's become more of a team effort." Even Bert and Paul Cohen's sons Ryan, 20, and Alex, 17, are more interested in cooking now.

Because of the company's reputation for quality, the Cohens contacted Neil Kelly Design/Build Remodeling, who sent them Robin Fisher. Fisher came to the home and looked around, took pictures and notes and asked, "What do you want to get out of this kitchen?"

The Cohens said they needed it to be functional, with a prep area and more space near the cooktop, and more room to walk. They wanted it to look nice, but function was more important. Another goal was to get stuff off of the counters. Fisher accomplished every goal, plus incorporated several things the Cohens hadn't originally considered, such as great lighting, thoughtful storage cubbies and open display shelving for their handmade pottery and serving pieces.

"Robin's good at picking up on who you are and what you like and don't like," Bert Cohen says. "We'd bring her clippings from magazines and she'd say, 'That's a great idea for this space' or 'You don't want that. I've put that in kitchens before and people aren't happy with it.'"



A custom Oberboden, which means "to gain height," was created to minimize a three-foot ceiling height difference, as well as house lighting. The strong, dark, horizontal band helps draw the eye downward.

The kitchen mixes together four different countertops, including stainless steel, butcher block and two colors of Caesars-stone: Blue Ridge and Canyon Red. The cabinets are natural maple accented with an espresso-stained alder.

The island functions on all four sides. A coffee bar houses a beverage refrigerator and custom-built syrup storage. The sink end serves as a prep area. Opposite is an eating bar for two. A second oven is out of view.



The Cohen family's kitchen combines a mix of materials, including four different countertops, three wood types, and blues, reds, copper and stainless steel. The space also performs multiple functions, including prep-cooking, cappuccino-making, baking and entertaining. But the overall effect is soothing and seamless. "Some people want all surfaces to match exactly," Bert Cohen says. "I think that's kind of boring."

"I like to cook and make big things, like big cheesecakes," she says. "I have a habit of buying a 25-pound turkey even just for the four of us. But then you need a place to put a 25-pound turkey," which is why they chose a huge Viking refrigerator/freezer that spans 66 inches.

The Viking 36-inch refrigerator/30-inch freezer is a necessity for a family who entertains and cooks big meals as often as the Cohens do. Custom cabinets and shelves create nooks for cookbooks, an under-microwave warming drawer and an appliance garage. ✦ A 21-inch-deep pantry covered in a Zebra wood look-alike laminate stores canned goods, linens and serving pieces. It also houses a Lumitron Graphic Eye that controls preprogrammed lighting settings such as "cooking" or "entertaining."



Paul Cohen, a recent Intel retiree who is starting an online travel business, says their first idea was not to rip out the kitchen. Initially they just wanted a bigger refrigerator and a second oven. But as they examined their kitchen's wasted spaces and explored possibilities of a dream kitchen, they wanted to do more.

"At first the kids were skeptical," Bert Cohen says. "They kept asking, 'Why are you inconveniencing us?' and 'What's wrong with our old kitchen?' But now they know where everything is. They come down here at midnight and make food. They said, 'I guess you didn't do so bad,' which is a real compliment coming from kids that age."

The Cohens are thrilled with every element Fisher incorporated into the remodel – things they don't know how they ever survived without. Paper towels and knives are mounted under cabinets, keeping counters tidy. A warming drawer helps create the illusion of perfectly timed meals, even if one dish finishes cooking before another.

"When they started ripping stuff out, we got a little nervous," Paul Cohen says. "But every detail is just so. Plus they were very responsive, very there for you."

"Everything turned out so well," Bert Cohen says. "Robin is a big part of that because she is so experienced. She knows what's worth it and what's not. I could not be happier with this kitchen."

PROJECT TEAM >>

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Cabinetry: Décor Cabinets; Kitchen Plumbing Fixtures: Chown Hardware; Lighting: Lux Lighting; Range/oven/warming drawer: Basco Wolf; Range hood: Basco Dacor; Refrigerator/freezer: Basco Viking; Countertops: Montavilla; Sheet Metal, Caesarstone, FSC Certified Hard-rock Maple; Backsplash: Montavilla Sheet Metal.

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