

CHANGE OF PLAN

West Side homeowner gets the kitchen makeover she needs

BY PHILLIPA RISPIN

PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON BROWN



SOMETIMES WE THINK WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT. This homeowner did. But then reality set in, and she was persuaded otherwise. What she wanted gave way to what she needed, and now she's happy not to have what she wanted.

"I had envisioned a country-type kitchen," she says. "But we didn't have that kind of space. The architects, David Battersby and Heather Howat, convinced me to go more modern and sleek and showed us a lot of pictures of what they had done. I slowly came around to that idea. Originally, I

wanted a very traditional kitchen, but I think how ours turned out is perfect for this space."

There's no doubt that some kind of a change was needed, says the homeowner: "The old kitchen was awful, horrible, outdated, unfunctional. For anyone who likes to cook, the kitchen was an absolute nightmare. It was more enclosed than it is now. It had the oven at one end; the sink was at the other; the fridge was way over there. It was ridiculous. There was a lot of moving around in that kitchen.

"I have a ton of kitchen knick-knacks, small appliances, tons and tons of stuff, and I wanted room and storage for all of that so that our space didn't look cluttered, like it did previously. The way BattersbyHowat designed it, we have that storage."

The new design involved removing some walls and extending the kitchen space (originally 100 square feet) into the old dining room so that the kitchen now covers 190 square feet. The entire condo was being renovated, so opening

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up the kitchen/dining/living area happened at the same time, facilitating the redesign.

Peter Streiling of Rockridge Fine Homes was the project manager. His original description of the project is “no problem,” but further discussion reveals some of the challenges, not necessarily large but still demanding attention. “Things such as plumbing were designed to stay in the same general area,” he says. “And we designed things to hide what we’d rather move but couldn’t.” A case in point is a plumbing

stack that runs between units so could not be moved. It was encased to provide a cabinet for a television and to divide the island into two distinct sections: one for food preparation and cooking, and one for eating, watching TV, and just generally hanging out—all the activities that occur in contemporary kitchens. 

Back-painted glass on the wall, stainless steel trim under the island’s Chroma Quartz countertop and Vancouver-made Bocci pendant lights all add subtle gleam to this calm kitchen.

Another small but significant adaptation involved the food preparation area, which has an unbreachable concrete ceiling. The Rockridge team created a dropped ceiling so they could install recessed lighting. For continuity, they clad the dropped ceiling in the same engineered oak that's on the floor and that also inspired the stain on the vertical-grain oak cabinetry.

The homeowner is thrilled with the design and execution of her non-country kitchen. "The attention to detail is great, and elements such as the stainless steel toe-kick add to the design," she says. "Even the trim on the doors is the same as the floor. It's a seamless look.

"I love the functionality of the room. It's very organized from a cook's perspective. There's a place for everything. Our counters are uncluttered; there's nothing on them; we have very clean lines. We look like neat and organized people now, which we did not look like before!"

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SPECIAL KITCHEN ISSUE

SPRING 2014

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