

11/16

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FALL BATH REMODELING REPORT • 46

MASTER BATHS GET PERSONAL

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE • 54

Software Offers
Tools of the Trade

PRODUCT TREND REPORT • 60

Countertops Spotlight
Strength and Style

Simple Details Update 'Historic' Kitchen

BY KIM BERNDTSON

This Minnesota designer revisits a house she once painted, creating a new kitchen that calms the busyness with clean lines and surfaces, and adds a sense of timelessness.

MINNEAPOLIS — Kate Roos' connection to this Minneapolis house dates back much further than the recent kitchen transformation she completed as a designer with Casa Verde Design. The kitchen and bath designer – who now owns her own firm, Kate Roos Design in Minneapolis – had her first encounter with the home during a former career as a decorative painter.

"I did a lot of painting in the house, as well as in the kitchen, for a former owner," she says. "I have been passed down from homeowner to homeowner, and was passed again to this client.

"I have history with this kitchen, and have seen many phases of it," she continues, including one that featured a compartmentalized Southwest design theme and another which opened up the space, but still left inefficient

nooks and an over-the-top design that included an indoor pergola and swinging bench seat, multiple surfaces with lots of movement that were hard to keep clean, and general busyness. "They had lived with it a long time, and they wanted a new space that was calm and simple with clean lines."

This transformation takes on a Belgian theme...a bit more European with a warm, modern aesthetic, Roos says of the new kitchen, which was built with the help of Quality Home Transformations. "We really simplified a lot of the detail," she explains. "Surfaces are clean and the space is very tranquil, yet warm. It has a sense of timelessness."

The kitchen's foundation is built upon custom painted and cerused quarter sawn white

oak cabinetry and Bianco Lasa Oro marble. Ashley Norton hex pulls in a light bronze finish complement the Waterworks unlacquered brass kitchen faucet at the Kohler sink.

The cabinetry style/countertop material combination ties together several areas, including the L-shaped main kitchen area – with the island, refrigerator/freezer and range – to the pantry/desk/bar area around the corner. "There is no big shift in materials to make the rooms feel connected and cohesive, and to allow the spaces to speak to one another," she says.

Napa Bianco 5"x32" porcelain plank floor tiles that run throughout the kitchen and bar area also provide consistency between the spaces. The herringbone pattern adds a layer of texture, while heat offers comfort during the winter.

SPECIAL ELEMENTS

Several special elements vie for attention, depending on the vantage point, mentions Roos. Three antique pendant lights from Belgium – found by the homeowner on 1stdibs.com – hover



COOKING NOOK

Serves as a focal point, showcasing a reclaimed wood mantle and deep navy La Cornue range

ANTIQUE PENDANT LIGHTS

Purchased from Belgium to support a European design aesthetic

CUSTOM, HAND-TUFTED BANQUETTE

Provides seating for breakfasts and casual dinners

Photos: Andrea Rugg Photography

over the island, flanked on one side by stainless steel Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer columns that frame a smoothie/coffee bar. A unique cutout along this wall was a remnant of the previous design, although it was reconfigured in the new design to allow more room for the refrigerator/freezer. The cabinetry and countertop below it were squared off from the previous angle to clean up the design as well as create more countertop space and accommodate the Wolf oven.

The other side of the island showcases multiple stately arched windows and a door leading to the terrace. The windows created a bit of a challenge since they weren't changed from the previous kitchen. "Working around existing elements can be challenging," she says. "When it came to the banquette area, the client wanted a piece of freestanding furniture that would sit right in the corner and provide a comfortable place for breakfast or a casual dinner with friends. The windows extend further down, below the furniture, and originally it was a concern, but it all turned out well."

The custom, hand-tufted banquette's striking color ties in with the kitchen's main focal point, the cooking nook, which includes an oak mantle crafted from reclaimed lumber that sets off the deep navy La Cornue range.



■ The bar/desk area became 'found' space in the new kitchen since previous owners always left it unused. The homeowner can now serve food or drinks from the bar, or work at the desk area.

The cooking nook includes an oak mantle crafted from reclaimed lumber. Symmetrical open shelves give the homeowner easy access to cooking supplies while the handmade Pratt & Larson glazed tiles provide a neutral backdrop.





Symmetrical open shelves give the homeowner easy access to cooking supplies such as spices, olive oils, etc. Handmade 5"x5" Pratt & Larson Watercolor Collection glazed tiles provide a neutral backdrop.

"The deep navy range adds color to the space," she says. "Without it, it's very neutral with the grays and creams, but the bold color gives the kitchen some interest."

The bar/desk area also serves as a focal point when viewed from the dining room. In

former kitchen designs, the space always sat unused, since it contains an awkward obtuse angle. "Previous owners always struggled with what to do with that area," she says.

For Roos, it became clear that the once overlooked corner could become a focal point, especially given its relationship to the dining room. "It now has a sense of purpose and is an inviting space to use," she says. "Its proximity to the dining room means she can easily serve drinks or food from the bar, and the desk area

■ A unique cutout was a remnant of the previous design, although it was reconfigured in the new design to allow more room for the refrigerator/freezer. The cabinetry and countertop below it were squared off from the previous angle to create more counter-top space and to accommodate the Wolf oven.

A smoothie/coffee bar is nestled between the refrigerator/freezer columns.

gives her a place to sit and do a bit of work or peruse recipes. It also gives her additional storage, including a place for cookbooks."

A single, adjustable sconce allows flexible lighting for mixing drinks at the bar, or for working at the desk. "She liked the idea of some asymmetry," notes the designer.

Cerused oak base cabinets match the kitchen island. Roos also repeated the Bianco Lasa Oro marble, adding a custom shelf, and an ornate backsplash and corbels. "It wasn't a straight 90-degree cut; the fabricator and I had to work hard to get just the right angles and cuts," she says. "In order to show the full corbel on the one side, it had to basically be doubled up so you could see the profile. Otherwise it would have been lost in the backsplash. It was a tricky puzzle to put together." ■



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