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comforts of home

Low-key looks with high-powered amenities make this kitchen a standout

Summertime for Kevin and Maureen Mirabile and their three children means hanging around their vacation home in the seaside town of Montauk, New York. It also means spending lots of time with family and friends. "Almost every single night someone's coming over," Maureen says. With all that entertaining, the kitchen needed to churn out a lot of nourishment and embrace visitors, too. Their kitchen did neither.

Untouched since the 1980s, the room lacked the amenities and user-friendliness appropriate for a family with two teenagers,





The new space conveys the bright, breezy style of a beach house. To balance the dark hues of the cherry floors, additional recessed lights were installed in the ceiling and modern pendant lights added over the island.



KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

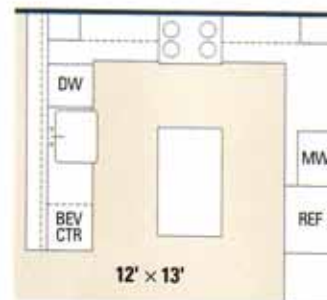


ABOVE: Away from the work area, a beverage center stocks a ready supply of drinks. "I don't have to clutter up the main fridge," says Maureen Mirabile.

RIGHT: The furniture-style island includes pull-out cabinets designed to hold canned goods. Its butcher-block top, free of sink and cooktop, makes a great landing area for grocery bags.

a 6 year old and a mom who likes to cook. "We do a lot of grilling, and we have grilled vegetables all the time," she says. Another family favorite—not surprisingly, given the location—is seafood.

Maureen desired a kitchen style as fresh as the food she likes to cook. "I knew going into the project I wanted something completely different from the traditional kitchen we have at our other home," she says. "I wanted to walk in and immediately feel like I was somewhere new." To bring Maureen's dreams to fruition, architect Erika Broberg and designer Scott Smith, of Smith River Kitchens in East Hampton, New York,



FLOOR PLAN: STEVEN STANKIEWICZ

ABOVE: What used to be a galley kitchen is now a much more useful C shape, and it includes both an island and a peninsula, the latter of which has a split-level countertop.

raised the ceiling and reworked the existing galley layout to create an open plan twice the size of the original. As their inspiration, they used the cottages of another Northeastern seaside area, Nantucket.

An expansive bilevel peninsula with a farmhouse sink and a dishwasher visually anchors a C-shaped configuration and provides a generous swath of counter space for prep and cleanup chores. "The peninsula was a critical component of the design," says Smith, explaining how, in addition to defining the room's boundaries, it allows the cook to interact with guests without them moving into the work zone.

A butcher-block-topped island with deep storage drawers on both sides functions as the nerve center of the 160-square-foot kitchen. "An island was at the top of my wish list," Maureen says. She vetoed the idea of a second sink or cooktop in the island; she wanted to keep the surface as uncluttered as possible. As designed, the island is an essential part of the work triangle, serving as another prep station, a staging area and a convenient landing spot for groceries. "I wanted the island to be versatile, which meant basically keeping it as simple as possible," she says.

Wood cabinets painted a soft, buttery color team up with the honed black granite



SEE BUYING GUIDE FOR DETAILS



KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

countertops and cherry-stained floor. “I love the contrast and the warmth of the colors, especially in the morning light,” Maureen says. Plumbing fixtures and finishes throughout reflect a contemporary aesthetic, including the range hood’s clean industrial design and the stainless steel on the appliances and above the tiled backsplash. Fuss-free lines and sophisticated style carry over to the cabinets as well,

with their half-paneled glass doors and brushed-nickel hardware.

During the summer, the sun-washed space serves as a natural gathering spot for friends and family. “We like to entertain, but in a very relaxed way,” Maureen says, and having the kitchen open up to the living room and the dining room really helps. “People can be in every space and still be spending time together.” ♦

design points



THE TILE FILE The backsplash runs around two walls of the open-plan kitchen, providing a small-but-mighty unifying visual element to the space. The design blends classic and contemporary: Scaled-down subway tile sports a thin stainless steel liner that picks up on other silvery accents in the room.



TOP DRAWERS—AND MORE Diverse storage works well and looks snappy. A pair of three-drawer units escape their customary home in the base cabinets and sit bridging the countertops and the hanging cupboards. Open shelves are ideal for display, and glass doors break up the solid plane.



IN THE DETAILS The relaxed atmosphere and seaside location of this summer home invite the use of country-inspired fixtures and fittings. An apron-front sink recalls farm kitchens; the pump-style pewter faucet makes a perfect stylistic partner. Inset drawers with understated pulls complete the casual feel.



COUNTER INTELLIGENCE Using a dark color for the counter surfaces not only gives the eye a resting point in the mostly light-colored kitchen, but it echoes the rich wood floor in tone. Made of black granite, the heavy slabs were honed on-site; a yearly application of sealant maintains their matte finish.