

This Old House

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{ before }

before White laminate cabinets and countertops had a sterile look. **after** Sunny painted cabinets and a warm wood island give the kitchen a more traditional feel. Painted cabinets: Smith River kitchens

When a space feels uncomfortable, it's not always easy to pinpoint why. To Peggy Sousa, owner of a 1,500-square-foot shingled cottage in East Hampton, New York, it seemed odd that she didn't want to hang out in her kitchen. Everything worked, and a skylight provided plenty of light. But meal prep was no fun. "I just wanted something that was warmer and cozier," she says.

Enter architect Erica Bröberg Smith, who quickly diagnosed the problem. "The ceiling was one long diagonal slope," she recalls. "It was too severe and too tall." So Bröberg Smith kept the slope with the skylight but added a second one to create a false gable that peaks in the center of the room, yielding a sheltering effect. A soaring 16-foot range hood duct highlights the room's new symmetry and injects a bit of drama, too. The relaxed setting, finished with vintage-look cabinets and a soft palette, is now Peggy's favorite place to entertain. "When you have a kitchen this beautiful, it motivates you to cook more," she says. "I've made some amazing meals here!"

After a little tinkering overhead, a plain white box becomes a seductive spot for cooking and entertaining. By DEBORAH BALDWIN + Photographs by TRIA GIOVANNI

From bare-bones to cottage-charming

before + after: kitchen

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN F. SCARFONE / STUDIO FIVE ARCHITECTURE

