



Twice as Nice

A traditional kitchen grows in space and elegance while honoring the home's existing style

CLIENTS WHO HAD WORKED WITH Kowalske Kitchen & Bath on a renovation of their bathroom returned to the remodeling company with a much bigger project. They wanted to update and expand their kitchen by taking over the adjacent dining room, which sat behind a wall.

Designer Kim Anderson led the kitchen remodel on behalf of the Delafield, Wisc.-based company, although she had not handled the previous bathroom project. In addition to creating a much larger layout, she was challenged with designing a more updated space that would blend with the rest of the 1990s home and especially its traditional style.

COHESION CONUNDRUMS

Although everyone agreed that the wall between the kitchen and dining room needed to come

down, connecting the two rooms brought a variety of unusual challenges. First, the exterior wall along the kitchen and dining room was not a straight line—in fact, the kitchen was 24 inches wider than the dining room. Additionally, the windows on that wall were not aligned—the original kitchen window sat above the sink, while the dining room had a lower and larger box seat window.

“Trying to make it cohesive was a challenge,” said Anderson. “We had to work out how to connect the cabinetry and treat the uppers to make it all look like it was meant to be that way.”

Each wall now has lower cabinets, but those in the former dining room come out 2 feet farther than those in the original kitchen area. To visually join them, Anderson added a curved lower cabinet

ABOVE Closing in a doorway where the refrigerator is now located may have seemed counterintuitive in the days of open-concept spaces, but designer Kim Anderson of Delafield, Wisc.-based Kowalske Kitchen & Bath knew the back wall was the only option for the cooktop and hood feature she wanted to create. To keep the flow with other areas of the home, she added an arched doorway with oak trim along a side wall, a shape she repeated in the cooktop backsplash.

By **CARRIE WHITNEY**

with open shelving at the walls' meeting point. She abstained from including upper cabinets around the sink on the narrower section of the wall and created interest with sconces. The look of the cabinetry, countertop and backsplash is seamless, and the differing room width appears intentional.

As for the window issue, she decided to keep the box style but raised it to counter height then made sure the new window trim matched the oak used in the kitchen and throughout the home. She said with the stain chosen for the new walnut cabinets, it all blends in beautifully.

Combining the two rooms had one more curveball to throw at Anderson. The clients loved the walnut and maple inlay flooring in the dining room and wanted to continue it into the kitchen. Making it cohesive was not easy thanks to the different widths of the two spaces and even more difficult because Anderson knew she wanted to center the two islands within the flooring's pattern.

The long line that goes along the pantry cabinets and the short sides were easy because the walls are straight on those sides. But on the sink wall side, she had to add a corner bend to increase the width of the pattern within the former kitchen area.

"I thought about doing a curve to mimic the curved countertop, but there was not enough room for a curve on the floor," said the designer. "We didn't want any mistakes with the pattern."

ADJUSTED ENTRANCES

With so much focus on opening rooms to gain space, one of the most important changes was closing a doorway that was located at the far end of the dining room and led into the living room. Anderson wanted to create a focal point in the kitchen with the cooktop and hood, so she needed full use of the back wall. There was no other good option for incorporating this feature, which meant the doorway got filled in.

Anderson might have closed one doorway, but she opened another – a new 52-in.-wide arched opening that provides easy access to the living room from the kitchen. It replaced a passthrough window between the front door and the former dining room. Now it offers a spectacular view straight through the kitchen window to the lake.

STYLE CONSIDERATIONS

With the new layout of the kitchen determined, Anderson needed to bring in design elements that would mirror the style of the rest of the home. The primary bathroom the firm had previously completed for these clients was traditional



ABOVE With so much space in this kitchen, Anderson was able to include two islands. The smaller one is designed for food prep, while the larger island has plenty of storage and room for gathering. Additional seating is available in the dinette area at the end of the kitchen – a must after the homeowners gave up their formal dining room.



ABOVE A too-small kitchen no longer met the homeowners' needs, and with a little-used dining room adjacent, there was plenty of space available to expand, but the remodel would need to maintain the traditional style of the home.



ABOVE The curved cabinet visually joins the two kitchen widths and allows the countertop to continue seamlessly.

with walnut cabinets, a look the homeowners wanted to carry through the kitchen.

“For me, that would have been a lot of walnut,” said Anderson. “I suggested they consider a two-tone kitchen with the walnut they loved mixed with painted cabinets.”

She chose a taupe, mushroom-like color for the upper cabinets and smaller island, which has a furniture-like look, and stained walnut for the base cabinets, large island and upper cabinets in the beverage area, which makes it look like a buffet. On all cabinets, the doors and drawers are Shaker with an angled bevel that adds softness.

Neutral quartz countertops with natural-looking chocolate brown veining complement the walnut cabinets. The sink wall features a warm Carrara marble herringbone tile, while white subway tile on the cooktop wall keeps the lines clean. For a bit of drama, Anderson added the marble herringbone tile inside the arched niche. She incorporated detailed cup pulls and cremone bolts to give the space a vintage feel.

“The clients have a lot of antiques, and I wanted to honor that,” said

the designer. “The hardware was a huge consideration in doing so.”

As seamless as the kitchen looks now that the renovation is complete, some of the changes Anderson suggested, such as closing the dining room/living room doorway, may have seemed counterintuitive. But she learned that her willingness to think outside the box was what had gained her the client. The homeowners had met with another designer but came back to Anderson because of her creative suggestion.

“The other design left the box window and the doorway leading to the living room where it was,” she said. “My design involved more dramatic changes while still staying true to my clients’ style, and for them, function and beauty were more important than not taking a risk.” ●

SOURCES: **DESIGNER:** Kim Anderson, Kowalske Kitchen & Bath; **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Kyleen DzPloch Photography • **KITCHEN BACKSPLASH:** Daltile & MSI; **BEVERAGE COOLER:** Zephyr; **COUNTERTOP:** Vadara & John Boos & Co.; **CABINET HARDWARE:** Hardware Resources & Signature Hardware; **CABINETS, HOOD & ISLANDS:** MKE Cabinetry; **COOKTOP:** Monogram; **DISHWASHER:** KitchenAid; **FAUCETS:** Kohler; **LIGHTING:** Kohler & Pottery Barn; **OVENS & REFRIGERATOR:** LG; **SINKS:** Blanco; **VENTILATION:** Vent-A-Hood