



AFTER

NEW COUNTERTOPS, FIXTURES AND APPLIANCES UPDATE A COUPLE'S KITCHEN



AFTER

AFTER: From Fisher & Paykel, stainless double dishwasher drawers function easily with the proximity of the nearby island and save energy and water by allowing one drawer of dishes to be washed at a time.

Adios, Eighties



BEFORE

AFTER: (Above) New stainless appliances, a farmhouse sink and bridge faucet, scored bead board backsplash, mismatched stained butcher-block and marble counters update this once-tired kitchen. Paint brightens the walls and sets off the existing white cabinets and moldings.

BEFORE: (Left) Too many accessories, hard-to-reach cookbooks, busy floral curtains, charcoal Corian countertops, tile backsplash and dated appliances were spoiling this kitchen's possibilities.

Judithe and Les Little called me to assist them

with their kitchen redo after helping them with their dining room makeover. As a result, I understood their likes and dislikes.

“When I began seeing my kitchen appliances in reruns of ’80s television shows, I knew I had to do something,” Judithe says with a laugh. She had lots of ideas, but she wasn’t sure how to actually get it done. The couple felt the kitchen layout was good, but the countertops and appliances were dated. They also were considering switching to a gas range and wanted to create open shelving to show off glassware and dishes Judithe had admired in magazines.

PRACTICAL COUNTERTOPS

She showed me pictures of kitchens she liked. All had vintage styling: bead board walls, a farmhouse sink and bridge faucet, stainless appliances and butcher-block or white marble counters. Because of their three children and busy lives, I tried to discourage the use of marble and proposed Okite nonporous manmade marble instead.

tip> Real marble etches and stains with acidic foods like cranberry juice, tomatoes, limes, lemons and wine.

Instead, I suggested she use more practical, inexpensive Ikea stained butcher-block counters on the main countertops in the kitchen and splurge on a marble look-alike for the island. Because she really wanted natural marble and went into it with eyes wide open, Judithe selected white Carrara marble on the island with an ogee edge installed by River Oaks Marble & Granite.

tip> Ikea butcher block can be stained using “Ebony” Minwax stain and sealed with General Finishes’ Arm-R-Seal in “Satin,” a wipe-on urethane from Rockler Inc. It takes several coats of each.

They wanted a blue and yellow kitchen and selected Benjamin Moore’s “Wythe Blue” for the walls and “Palladian Blue” for the ceiling. The nearby breakfast room is painted Pratt & Lambert’s “Golden Straw” with the same “Palladian Blue” ceiling.

NEW APPLIANCES

I explained to Judithe that since counter-depth refrigerators are narrower but taller, this could mean sacrificing the narrow cabinet above the refrigerator. A real built-in would require work on the furdawn, which would add to the cost of the project.

After research, Judithe knew she wanted a stainless Jenn-Air refrigerator (from The Great Indoors) to “look” built in. After measuring carefully, I gave her the correct size to buy and suggested she build in flush wine storage above it in place of the old cabinet.

Since she wanted to make the switch from an electric to a gas range, I explained the microwave vent system she was using would be inadequate for the heat of a gas cooktop and that she would need to run a gas line to the new range. By moving the microwave to the side in the existing cabinet, I offered her a couple of options: She could install either a more powerful, under-cabinet Broan vent or buy a Jenn-Air dual-fuel downdraft pro-style range with a stainless back guard, venting it to the outside window wall.

Judithe already had decided on new stainless Fisher & Paykel dishwasher drawers, so the couple chose to replace their microwave with a new matching stainless GE Profile microwave, all of which came from K&N Appliance Sales. She ordered a new Rohl Shaw’s Original ►



trade secrets

- **Think outside the box.** With a little dark wood stain and elbow grease, prefab IKEA butcher-block counters can mimic solid mahogany slabs.
- **Do your research** before you buy appliances. One site, www.consumerreports.com, costs \$4.95 per month and is an excellent place to start.
- **Think "green."** Existing kitchen cabinets can be painted and doors removed, instead of discarded.
- Sometimes the most effective strategy is to not gut your kitchen, but to **rethink the cabinets that are already paid for.**

AFTER: Simply removing the existing cabinet doors created inexpensive open shelving to display the owners' collection of white ironstone. An inexpensive, \$6.99 "Grundtal" pot rack from Ikea displays the owners' pots and pans on the new, scored bead board backsplash.

BEFORE: The owners' collections were hiding inside cabinets and the white microwave was crowding the range top. The busy ceramic tile was the same color as the cabinets.



tip> By simply removing the doors from the existing cabinets on the stove wall, her open storage wish was fulfilled.

ON BUDGET

Ultimately, Judithe and Les were able to achieve their dream kitchen on budget. "We really love our kitchen," Judy says. "I still look at it and think about how much I love it. Left to my own devices, I probably would have made expensive mistakes, but I look around and I see no flaws."

Fireclay Apron Sink (#RC2418) white farmhouse sink and Rohl Tuscan Brass Bridge Tap (#ROH-A1419) at a discount from www.qualitybath.com, which changed the entire look of the kitchen.

STORAGE SOLUTION

Since Judithe desired a place to hang her pots and pans, the solution was to remove the upper cabinet over the range and purchase an Ikea pot rack that mounted to the bead board wall. Judy also wanted open storage to display her glasses and dishes.



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