

chef's choice

HUSBAND-AND-WIFE
ARCHITECTS OPEN
UP AN OUTDATED RANCH
HOUSE FOR A SLEEK
GREAT-ROOM KITCHEN

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The new center island features a cantilevered counter of black quartz resin atop teak cabinetry. On the far wall behind the range hood is a fiber art hanging from Mexico.



OPPOSITE: Framed by the teak cabinetry, the Gaggenau oven is the only appliance readily visible in the kitchen. Above the oven, a cabinet storing a microwave and a toaster could later be converted into a space housing a steam oven, Amy says. **BEFORE:** The bland cabinets and old appliances dated the house.

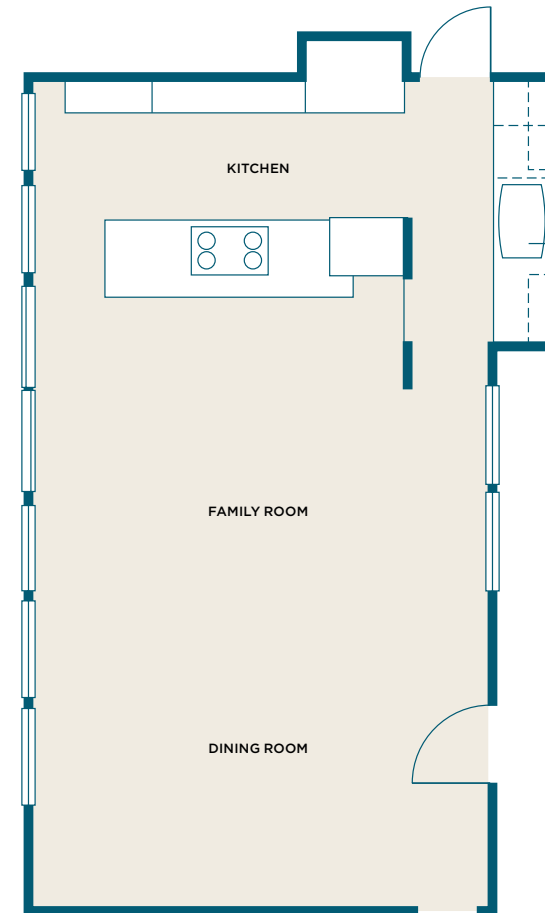


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WHEN BOTH MEMBERS of a couple are architects, decision-making for their kitchen renovation might seem like a quick and easy process. But Amy Alper and Mark Hummel took their time when planning this makeover to their home in Sonoma, California. “We settled in and lived here for a number of years before we decided exactly what we wanted to do,” Amy says. “We explored every option, including a bigger expansion, but ultimately decided to work within the existing footprint of the house.”

The original kitchen of the 1960s ranch was an enclosed area in the corner of an open-plan living and dining room. With disjointed work surfaces and doorways in three of its four corners, “it didn’t serve for much more than preparing simple meals,” Amy says. She and Mark knew they wanted to update the look and efficiency of the kitchen, but establishing an open, direct relationship with the adjacent living and dining spaces was also a priority. “My husband is hard of hearing, so when he was working in the enclosed kitchen, he was disconnected from family or friends convening in the adjacent spaces,” Amy says. “This renovation is not just about design, but about serving personal needs.”

The original 110-square-foot kitchen (which had no bar counter or eat-in space) was gutted, and its walls removed. Red oak flooring was extended into the kitchen from the living room—replacing outdated linoleum. To gain more space, the adjacent dining area was incorporated into the kitchen, with the table moved to the other end of the newly opened great room next to a freestanding fireplace. A new teak-veneered island, topped by a black quartz resin countertop and fitted with sleek stools, became the focal point of the new room. The couple has an 8-year-old son, “so 90 percent of the time the three of us eat at the counter,” Amy



FLOOR PLANS: STEVEN STANKIEWICZ

ABOVE: The open kitchen, expanded from 110 to 230 square feet, now makes the living and dining areas function as a great room, perfect for entertaining. The dining table was moved to the opposite end of the space.



TOP LEFT: The Miele dishwasher is faced with a white panel to blend in with the rest of the cabinets.



TOP RIGHT: The new single-hung window has a geometry that aligns with the cabinetry.

The sink is white granite.

OPPOSITE: The new kitchen's combination of white perimeter cabinets and teak-encased island gives the space a play of light and dark.

BELOW: The side-by-side refrigerator, also faced in white panels, was extended into the garage to make it flush with the cabinets.



says. "It also makes a great serving buffet when we place a butcher block atop the island cooktop."

The perimeter of the kitchen is fitted with white European cabinetry to maintain a monochromatic, seamless look flowing into the great room's walls. The appliances, including the refrigerator and dishwasher, were masked with white panels to integrate with the surrounding cabinetry. The perimeter is organized for storage, wet prep and cleanup. Cabinetry facing the kitchen side of the island is also faced in teak. All of the cabinets have aluminum bar pulls for handles.

Since it was a priority for the couple to hide dirty pots and pans from view while entertaining, a partial-height wall perpendicular to the island screens the après-meal sink area. The living room side of the partition is used to display a glass collection atop a half-round hutch, while the utility-facing side hosts coat hooks and a cork board for family notes. This partial wall was also a nice way to add an architectural presence to the teak-faced oven tower, which it frames. Counting the barstool side of the new counter, the kitchen now measures 230 square feet.

In terms of appliances, materials and construction, the project was a balance between cost and utility. "We didn't go high-end on everything," Amy says, "but we are very pleased with how things turned out. The new layout is working well, which is gratifying considering the number of design options we developed along the way." ■



improving the flow

These homeowners took their time and got the "feel" of the house before they decided to revamp their kitchen. Instead of adding on to the house they worked with what they had, but took steps to integrate the remodeled kitchen so the rooms would flow better from one to the other. Here's what they did:

- **EXTENDED** the red oak flooring from their living room into the new kitchen.
- **CREATED** an island topped with black quartz resin for a focal point, just the right size for family meals.
- **MATCHED** the cabinetry to the walls in the adjacent family room.
- **HID** the appliances by covering them with the same finishes as the cabinet doors.