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Today's Timeless Kitchen

After a day of working on the computer, picking up and dropping off the kids at soccer practice, and attending the PTA meeting at the middle school, we crave a sanctuary to return to. As we continue to move through a fast-paced world, we want spaces—including the kitchen and bath—to be comfortable and welcoming.

One of the biggest trends in kitchen design continues to be the open floor plan—albeit with a timeless look. Homeowners still gravitate toward traditional spaces with period inspired cabinetry and hardware, natural materials, and a neutral color palette—yes, shades of white are still a favorite. Hand-crafted range hoods and pot racks are also popular, adding visual interest and personality.

Transitional kitchens, a mix of old and new, also continue to be of interest. And great storage—in the way of cabinets, drawers, cupboards, and pantries—is always a must in the kitchen. Bathrooms have become spa-like rooms outfitted with everything from soaking tubs to steam showers to double vanities.

This issue of New Old House is dedicated to all things kitchen and bath. We speak to architects and designers creating traditional kitchen spaces that are cheery, comfortable, and beautiful—and above all functional!

We visit the ultimate cook's kitchen in Rye, New York. Architect McKee Patterson creates a classically detailed space that is functional for a busy family of five. Taking cues from the open concept, the kitchen adjoins a breakfast room. It's truly a working kitchen with high-tech appliances and loads of surfaces to prep food.

Rafe Churchill renovates an outdated kitchen in Connecticut into a pretty country kitchen with simple Shaker cabinetry and freestanding pieces. Churchill minimized the use of upper cabinets and instead used a pantry for storage, creating a bright, clean space.

Historical Concepts designs a spacious kitchen in Georgia, with elements of a traditional camp-like setting. Cabinet details are simplified to make it appear more rustic, and a deep green is used as an accent color on the center island. It's the kind of kitchen where the cook can prep food while visiting with family and friends.

Nancy E. Berry
Editor

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Editor-at-Large Russell Versaci is a residential architect who has spent two decades designing traditional houses. He attended the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in 1973 and received his graduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts in 1979. He has designed traditional country houses, cottages, and farmhouses, as well as restorations and significant additions to period homes. Versaci is also the author of Creating a New Old House and Roots of Home (Taunton Press).

Mary Grauerholz is a freelance feature writer who focuses on sustainability, architecture, health, and food. In her previous career as a journalist, Grauerholz won many awards for project management, editing, and writing. Since then, she has written for a variety of magazines, newspapers, and websites, including The Boston Globe, Cape Cod Home, Spirituality & Health, and Suffolk University Alumni Magazine. She lives on Cape Cod.

Michael Weishan is host emeritus of PBS’s The Victory Garden and has shared his design tips, expert advice, and trademark sense of humor with gardeners of all levels. In addition to heading his own design firm, Michael Weishan & Associates, which specializes in historically based landscapes, he has written for numerous national magazines and periodicals and authored three books: The New Traditional Garden, From a Victorian Garden, and The Victory Garden Gardening Guide. Weishan lives west of Boston in an 1852 farmhouse surrounded by three acres of gardens.

For more than 30 years, Eric Roth has been capturing life through the lens, which has guided him on local, national, and international journeys. He has shot for such publications as Traditional Home, Metropolitan Home, Elle Decor, and Coastal Living. He lives in Topsfield, Massachusetts, and has two lovely daughters.
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Originally designed to accommodate the limitations of small houses, built-ins and breakfast nooks have maintained favor over the years, independent of home size.

BY KILEY JACQUES | PHOTOS BY ERIC ROTH

"The nook works," says Tim Counts, a writer on the subject of bungalows. "It is, perhaps, the nexus between historical authenticity and the modern expectation that the kitchen function as the center of family life."

The rise in popularity of the built-in breakfast nook—also referred to as a breakfast alcove, a breakfast bay, or a breakfastette—is traceable to the American bungalow's heyday. It was
Built-in benches are the perfect space-saving solution for kitchens. These built-ins are painted a gunmetal gray to reflect the soapstone wood stove to the left.

Rafe Churchill
TRADITIONAL HOUSES

a design idea developed in response to the limited square footage of the average bungalow, which did not comfortably accommodate a full-size dining room and set. In contrast to the Victorian era, during which the kitchen was considered the domain of servants, the early 20th-century kitchen lent itself to casual family dining and conversation.

Today, notes Vermont–based ar-
DRAFTING BOARD

Drafting Board architect Sandra Vitzthum, “The formal dining room has become a very large hallway for a lot of people.” Whereas, the nook—whether a simple free-standing table tucked into a corner or built into a window area—tends to draw people in. Part of the reason for this is they are oftentimes located near windows (preferably east-facing, for morning light). “People like them because they are a place to sit and look outdoors, whereas a formal dining room is more inwardly focused,” says Vitzthum.

Christian Gladu, founder of the Oregon-based Bungalow Company, also views the breakfast nook as “a place of observation.” As such, he often designs them to include a step up to “command a better view of the surroundings.” He sees them, too, as intimate spaces that promote togetherness, noting: “The breakfast nook is a unique seating arrangement, where you often sit with your back to a window or wall on two sides providing a cocoon-like experience—couple this with the aromas of food and you’re in the heart of the home.”

In terms of design, many are reminiscent of those built during the bungalow’s height, when nooks were situated in a corner of a rectangular kitchen, the back of one bench against a wall while the back of the other was exposed, perhaps housing extra cabinet space or drawers—something Vitzthum likes to include, too. Also common at that time was the building of nooks into alcoves that jutted out beyond the house’s primary walls, sometimes accommodating a rear entryway or back porch, as well. A separate, narrow room containing a nook was yet another configuration, though not one Vitzthum touts, noting that people tend to want to be at least near the kitchen, better yet, in it. “That’s the secondary function of a nook: one person can sit at the table and relax while someone else is cooking. That’s really an important part of it.”

“The key dimensions are based on what you are trying to accomplish,” says Gladu, noting that it is easy for them to be too narrow. His designs typically allow at least 30” of space per person for seating.

Generally, his seats are sloped a few degrees back, as he believes this makes them most comfortable; additionally, they usually reach 18” above the finished floor (accommodating cushions). “We have experimented a lot with nooks,” says Gladu. “I like to place the leg in a position that allows for a chair...”
Breakfast nooks were popular in 1920s bungalows. A cozy built-in corner bench can serve as both a reading area and extra dining seating. Bench seating is perfectly placed under a row of windows in an alcove.

to slide in at the end. Sometimes building the bench five to six inches behind the nook table and excluding an armrest makes it easier to get in and out.

Advertisements from the bungalow era illustrate the most common decorative scheme was simple—white-painted furniture and straight lines—though curvilinear elements and more colorful details can certainly be seen as well. Through-tenon joinery, common to Arts & Crafts furniture—also popular at the time—showcased the solid craftsmanship of the first built-ins. Some bench seats opened to reveal additional storage space; and tables were finished in materials common to kitchen countertops of the day, some of which included varnished or painted wood, linoleum, and enameled metal.

Contemporary built-ins typically include a window on at least one wall.
and often a plaster arch above the opening—considered a simple way of creating intimacy. Vitzthum notes they are sometimes located by a fireplace, furthering the cozy appeal. “There are all kinds of variations depending on how big the kitchen is and whether there is another table on the first floor,” she notes, adding that “by definition, they are cozy and usually [built] for two to four people.” She also stresses the importance of an attractive lighting fixture as another welcoming element. Gladu likes to drop the ceiling a little and hang a pendant light with a dimmer. He suggests that the table’s supporting leg offers an opportunity to add detail, noting, “it can’t be too bulky, but it can reflect the detail language of the house.”

One of Vitzthum’s projects featured a breakfast nook built into a bay window—one with fairly low sills, which dictated the height of the seating so as to avoid the sills hitting people in the back. She opted for built-in seats in a half circle with a round table; she suggests tables can be less than four feet in diameter, noting a 36” table accommodates up to four people. The table size, she says, dictates everything else.

Traditional breakfast nooks remain tried-and-true to this day. However, spin-offs can be seen in the form of breakfast bars, semi-fixed dining booths, and arrangements that include chairs along one side of a table and a built-in bench along the other. Vitzthum has noticed, too, that the modern-day nook is being used more and more a makeshift desk for paperwork and computer work. In response to that shift, Gladu sometimes incorporates a bookshelf for reference materials and conveniently located plug-ins. No matter the activity, the nook has a knack for bringing families close together.

Kiley Jacques is a freelance writer living in Massachusetts.
When interior designer Barbara Elza Hirsch bought her 1880s farmhouse in Acton, Mass., she knew certain rooms required revamping, and the master bathroom fit the bill. “It had been renovated but in a way that clashed with the home’s architecture,” Hirsch explains. “It was modern and cold, with flimsy materials,” she adds.

An interior designer and principal of Elza B. Design Inc., Hirsch is adept at infusing newly built spaces with vintage appeal. “I’m a big proponent of mixing old and new. That’s what we do in Europe,” she relates, noting her French heritage and dual citizenship. “I wanted to create something that felt steeped in history but didn’t want to replicate a period bathroom. I’m interested in living in my time.”

Stripping the room back to its bones allowed Hirsch to start from scratch with materials and finishes of her choosing. Her largest hurdle was finding a vanity to match the one she envisioned in her mind; “I couldn’t find what I wanted anywhere, so I sketched some ideas,” she says. The builder on the project, Somerville-based Morse Constructions, fine-tuned and executed her draft.

Painting the vanity an interesting color—Benjamin Moore’s “Smoky Mountain,” which Hirsch describes as “the color of the ocean when there’s a storm”—contributed to the room’s organic farmhouse feel. A discreet bead lends a quiet elegance to what would have been Shaker-style door panels while clear glass knobs err on the side of refinement.

Hirsch surrounded this statement furniture piece with a variety of old-world design choices, including the Carrara marble countertop, slate flooring, and rustic weathered wood-framed mirrors from West Elm. One of her favorite finds was the Schoolhouse Electric bronze double sconces, complete with hand-blown funnel-shaped glass shades.

Brizo sink faucets with cross handles and thoughtfully selected accessories complement the room’s farmhouse personality. “They all have different meanings,” says the designer. “I found the tea cup at an antique store. My son bought the glass bowl that I fill with cotton balls at a garage sale when...
A simple wood framed mirror adds a rustic touch to the bathroom.
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(Shown above: Ceiling Panel No. 213 & Shield No. 2958)
he was a boy. And the handheld mirror is an antique that my mom used when I was little.”

For the walls, Hirsch picked Benjamin Moore's “Stoneware,” which "has a tiny bit of sun in it but in no way looks yellow," she describes. “It’s like a creamy white with a hint of butter.”

True to her word, Hirsch also embraced modern amenities and opted for TOTO's sustainable Aquia dual-flush toilet and a spa-like shower experience. Overhead, a rain showerhead employs Delta's H2Okinetic technology, which provides the indulgent feel of more water while using less through larger droplets and enhanced stream control.

The frameless glass shower reveals an accent wall of recycled glass tiles in hues of robin's egg blue, pale greys, and stormy greens. "The evanescent colors create a very restful, very Zen environment,” she contends, while adding, "A glass walk-in shower is a great way to give the impression of a larger room.”

Hirsch’s ability to play with materials, colors, and textures, without jarring or overcrowding, is evident throughout the space. “My design work is all about see-sawing between old and new and creating an equilibrium that works,” she summarizes. “It’s about finding just the right balance.”

Jennifer Sperry is a freelance writer living in Massachusetts.

For Resources, see page 72.
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Old House Journal's New Old House 23
Jewett Farms + Co. has but one goal: to deliver the most exceptionally crafted cabinetry, soapstone, and flooring imaginable.

BY KILEY JACQUES | PHOTOS JUSTEN PETERS

Sometimes starting small and growing slowly leads to big things. Such has been the case for Matthew Lord and Mike Myers, co-founders and owners of Jewett Farms + Co. From Lord's "one-man shop" on a dirt road in York, Maine, to a nationally recognized company, it has stayed true to its New England roots and traditional craftsmanship.

It was 1999 when the two men teamed up to create a cabinet shop devoted to the highest level of industry standards—one that was born of the desire to make works "relevant to today's economy," according to Myers. Their idea was to buck the trend of turning to off-shore sources for production, while also avoiding the big-box mentality. They stayed the course, and have persevered in building timeless, hand-crafted interior elements.

"We wanted to be part of creating and rejuvenating the craft of furniture making," explains Myers. "We don't have different quality levels that we build at, we always build at the highest quality level possible." Thoughtful details, balanced proportions, and the lasting durability of their work are apparent with every project. "We are going to use furniture joinery on our exposed panelized ends," says Myers, as way of example. "They feel like furniture pieces, not cabinetry boxes. They fit straight into the home and with each other." Myers refers to the Shaker style, which stresses the simple, the elegant, and the timeless, as one that informs their approach.

In time, the business partners doubled their workspace, eventually...
**Old House Journal's New Old House**

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moving the company to Dover, New Hampshire, where a 15,000-square-foot space—formerly the Somersworth Machine Co., which manufactured woodworking equipment in the 1890s—was remade into a state-of-the-art cabinet shop and company headquarters.

Lord's background in furniture and cabinetry design, as well as woodworking in combination with Myers's own background as a carpenter—a trade he practiced to finance college and graduate school—and his business acumen earned from a decade in the software engineering industry have equipped the pair with a well-rounded skillset, one responsible for their renowned reputation. "I wanted to do something that was more passion-based," says Myers of his career change. After all the work-related travelling he had done, he was also "ready to do something more local."

Upon meeting, the two felt a connection sparked by a mutual admiration for superior craftsmanship. "The aesthetic we go for is really design-based," says Myers. "We definitely look to pay homage to the craftsmanship that comes out of New England, which is outstanding. The whole concept of simplicity and timelessness run throughout everything we do." Those qualities go hand in hand for Myers and Lord—their work aims to stand the test of time and remain as beautiful in decades as it is today. "Our whole goal is to build something that outlives all of our clients."

Though New England–based and focused, they ship flooring nationwide, while their soapstone products are used regionally, reaching a bit into New York and Pennsylvania. "We don't market ourselves heavily across the country," notes Myers, though they do make exceptions when local clients have second or third homes elsewhere that they would like Jewett Farms & Co. to have a hand in designing.

Though they have remained small, with artisanship at the fore of all they do, they have managed to grow a bit...
Every year. Today, the company has approximately 25 staff members, all of whom are committed to the hands-on design/build mission. "That means the most to us—designing and building phenomenal pieces for every one of our clients," notes Myers.

As a business model, they adhere to a "non-segmented work flow," whereby project managers are responsible for all internal drawing and drafting and the shepherding of projects to the on-staff cabinet makers, who take "raw, rough materials" and craft them into ready products for finishing. Once finishers have completed their work, the pieces are returned to the cabinet makers for quality inspection and fittings. "Non-segmented" refers to the fact that the cabinet makers have their hand in every aspect of the work—the antithesis of an assembly line-like process. That kind of volume-based and cost-effective production is not the Jewett Farms way. One or two people are building a given cabinet or furniture piece. "They work in the true style of New England cabinet makers," says Myers. "They know every aspect of their craft."

In addition to bringing their combined expertise to the table, they make every effort to understand their clients' ideas. "We don't want to only do the type of work we are interested in and that we think is beautiful," he says. "Our goal is to help create spaces that people's lives happen in, where some of the greatest moments and the saddest moments and everything in between happens. That forms our design." He and Lord both believe it's about creating something together, and that the best designs come out of that "synergistic" approach.

Typically, everything flows from that dialogue with the client; the design follows, and materials are chosen. Occasionally, however, materials steer the program—perhaps a reclaimed barn board or re-sawn oak or a tree of sentimental value starts the non and the design unfolds from there. "Our bias is to work with materials made in North America, [especially] the Northeast," says Myers, not-
Above: This pass-through is finished with upper glass-front cabinets. The column affords storage.

ing they are not opposed to working with materials sourced from beyond our shores. “But we have such great resources in the United States.” They do have a fondness for reclaimed and antique wood. “The grain structure and the colors of those are just amazing, and they don’t exist anymore.” Working in various historic districts, they are most comfortable working in old homes. “We started our careers in old homes,” notes Myers. “It’s second nature to us.” In fact, their niche is being able to “fit” old homes with the right pieces—they never look like anachronistic add-ons, they always make sense. “Working in old homes is not difficult for us, it just requires a different mindset.”

With their headquarters in Dover, New Hampshire, a cabinet shop in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and a new showroom at the Boston Design Center, Jewett Farms + Co. is as steeped in New England as one of their traditionally crafted works.

jewettfarms.com
Just the Right Light
Illuminate the home's most intimate spaces with style and refinement.

BY ANNABEL HSIN

1. Authentic Designs
The original of this simple yet elegant two-arm pendant was designed by the Shakers of New England. Handcrafted in their rural Vermont workshop, Authentic Designs' historically accurate version is offered in eight finishes. Shown here, the Special Pewter finish with optional waxed candle sleeves displays how the patina will naturally darken over time. For more information, visit authenticdesigns.com.

2. Oxshott Collection
Part of Oxshott Collection's Opaline Lens series, the Ariadne light features opaline glass—a French decorative glass that gained its popularity during the reign of Napoleon III in the 1850s and 1860s, and was once the signature glass of the oldest town on Cape Cod. The Ariadne can be made to order in a French bronze finish with either floral or cross chain. For more information, visit oxshottcollection.com.

3. Rejuvenation
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4. Rejuvenation
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5. Oxshott Collection
Oxshott Collection's chandeliers, lanterns, pendants, sconces, and table lamps are all carefully handcrafted using traditional methods and time-tested materials—the Square Pendant is no exception. Part of their transitional pendant series, this fixture is fabricated in nickel-plated brass and hand-cut glass; it is available in two finishes. oxshottcollection.com

6. Authentic Designs
Authentic Designs' Georgian Trumpet Arm Pendant fixture is fabricated of American sheet copper, brass, or terne-coated copper, depending on which one of the six finishes is selected. All of the firm's hanging fixtures include 2' of solid brass chain and wire, 5" diameter ceiling canopy, and all mounting hardware, making it a breeze to install. This particular design can be made as a three- or five-arm fixture. authenticdesigns.com
KITCHEN HISTORY

A couple from the United Kingdom preserves a home’s antique charm while bringing it into twenty-first century living.

By Charlotte Roth | Photos by Michael J. Lee
Located in historic Newbury, Massachusetts, on the former site of the town’s original 1635 meetinghouse, this 1740s farmhouse offered a great deal of rich history and antique charm—but before the United Kingdom-based homeowners could make the home a more permanent stateside residence, it would require a large-scale renovation by a team of expert architects and designers at Carpenter & MacNeille, headed by lead architect Michael Gray. “Our clients are history lovers and antique collectors—their goal was to work on the property and bring it up to modern standards without compromising the historical elements of home,” says Gray.

Inside the home, Gray discovered a kitchen with promise but a dated design. “The kitchen became a priority as we expanded the project,” says Gray. “It had last been renovated in the 1970s or 1980s—it was cramped and isolated from the family room and the rest of the home. The homeowners wanted to open it up, make it lighter, more spacious, and more functional.” The project involved a near-complete gutting of the kitchen area to remove sagging floorboards, rotted beams, and a variety of other structural concerns that frequently accompany a historic home.

The first great challenge—and opportunity—came in the form of the kitchen’s 18th century pine-boarded fireplace. The team briefly discussed the possibility of removing the large structure, but for Gray and the homeowners, preserving the home’s historic
Clockwise from top left: Blue and white china is displayed in the pantry. A wine cellar is decorated with old wine boxes and a bistro table. Paneled walls reflect original detailing. A breakfast nook offers high bench seating.
The center island cabinets have divided lights, which mirrors the interior window in the space.
elements wherever possible was a priority. "We chose to work with the fireplace, making it one of the room's focal points by sprucing it up and blending it with new, more functional custom cabinetry," says Gray.

The success of the fireplace inspired Gray to design the room around a series of eye-catching focal points: "Our overall goal in the kitchen was to create distinct areas of visual interest that can easily pull together as one space." A two-tiered center island draws the eye to a portion of the homeowners' impressive array of antique china and glassware, displayed in glass-front cabinets on the elevated side of the island, while the more functional side of the island gives the homeowners a clean workspace with a sink and marble countertop. The stainless steel range and the curved hood are another area of architectural interest, both decorative and functional. Gray and his team imported a head-turning slab of marbled petrified wood from Italy, likely millions of years old, for the backsplash behind the range. "It's a feature element in an otherwise soft, traditional kitchen," he explains.

Gray worked another conversation piece into his design with the addition of a classic pantry hidden by a space-conserving pocket door. "The design of the pantry was initially practical," says Gray. "The homeowners needed a space for extra storage and to display more of their china collection. But the realization in three dimensions turned out to be a great historical element." Antique, wavy glass in the pantry's door and window add to the home's historical feel while avoiding the common pitfall of a dark, closet-like pantry.

Interior designer Hattie Holland considered all the details, from the subtle paint tones all the way down to the light switches. Holland suggested neutral paint colors in the kitchen to allow the stand-out pieces to shine, adding subtle changes throughout the room to avoid a monochromatic feel. "We were
looking for a soft, understated mood; the kitchen should look as though it could have been in the home all along," she explains. Vintage-style push-button light switches enhance the antique feel, and, says Holland. "They're unique to this project. Most homes, even old homes, have modern light switches, so you don't see the push-button kind much anymore."

The team at Carpenter & Mac-Neillie took equal care to preserve the home's historical character and its modern conveniences while renovating the master bath. A freestanding slipper tub adds a classic element to the design, while the built-in marble shower and facing water closet bring the room up to date. Gray also added an adjacent dressing room that can be entered from the hallway or the master bath. "We wanted the bathroom to feel bright and new, but also to blend in with the traditional design of the existing home," he says. To maximize light and space, Gray designed the built-in vanity with double sinks, and added an interior window to the small water closet. "The homeowners found an incredible leaded-glass window at a salvage yard that could bring light to the space," Gray adds.

The quirky salvaged piece pairs with Carrara marble floors to bring, in Hattie Holland's words, "an old-world feel." She explains, "Above all, our goal was to pay homage to the time period of the home, while making the room clean, functional, light, and classic. We found some of our best accent pieces in the homeowners' antique collection." To that end, Holland chose pearl-blues, greys, and calming neutrals as a palette in the bath and dressing room, with the added benefit of maximizing Gray's spacious design. The bath's quirky sconces were another find from the homeowners' collection, and Holland scaled the mirrors to complement the "found" look of the room's other accent pieces.

Both Holland and Gray stress the homeowners' role in the success of the project. "It was wonderful to work with clients that have real style," says Holland. "Their eye for antiques and their incredible collection really made the project." Gray adds, "The homeowners had so many creative ideas, and they worked with us and our ideas as well. A client can really make or break a project, and these clients made it."

Charlotte Roth is a freelance writer living in Massachusetts.

For Resources, see page 72.
CAMP Central
Deep in the heart of Savannah, Georgia, the O’Bannon kitchen serves as family headquarters.

By Kiley Jacques

Photos by Richard Leo Johnson

Equal parts refined and rustic, Obie and Ellen O’Bannon’s Lowcountry-style home at The Ford Plantation enjoys marsh vistas, views of Lake Clara, and glimpses of the Ogeechee River in the distance. Built between 2010 and 2012, the 3,700-square-foot, four-bedroom home was designed with the vision of a camp in mind. The waterfront locale lent itself nicely to the image, but the suburban neighborhood was slightly at odds with it—a challenge Historical Concepts architect Aaron Daily muses over today.
“Throughout the design process, they kept mentioning a kind of fishing camp—they wanted a camp-like setting,” recalls Daily. “We came away understanding that they wanted the house to be elegant and nice, but casually so, which is an interesting challenge.” For ideas he and his team turned to traditional camps along the southeastern coast, and ultimately created expansive interior spaces that charmingly open to the outdoors. Having struck a balance between sophisticated and comfortable, the O’Bannon residence does indeed convey the feeling of a tastefully appointed deep-woodsy lodge of sorts.

And the kitchen is camp headquarters. One way to achieve the elegant-casual balance in that room, explains Daily, was to use high-end but relatively simple cabinetry featuring flat rather than profiled panels with inlaid, flush face frames—instead of overlaid, which tend to have ornate profiles more appropriate for high-style rooms. The goal for this kitchen called for simpler detailing.

“You kind of take the essence of highly detailed cabinetry and then just simplify it—make it a little more rustic,” notes Daily, adding that the “fancier” elements can be introduced with selected materials, like stone countertops, which, depending on stone type and color, can either elevate the cabinetry to elegant casual or simplify it even more, making it more rustic.

Regarding the layout, the kitchen is associated with an adjacent eating area, which serves as a dining room, but is actually something of a transitional space, as it is part of the circulation for getting to a casual seating area overlooking the body of water at the back of the house. It serves the function of dining, but they don’t view it as a formal dining room—it is located in the space between the kitchen and the seating area. “It’s circulation and dining in one,” notes Daily.

Though the aim was to relate the kitchen to the eating area, the sitting area, and the view, they didn’t want it to feel like it was wide open to all of those spaces. Built-in cabinetry associated with the dining area simultaneously ties the rooms together and visually sets them apart.

In the kitchen space proper, Daily says, “We used the idea of the island to create two zones—the working zone and the social zone.” The majority of functional, cooking-related elements are on one side, while room for company is on the other. The kitchen is also part of the circulation across the front of the house—from the side entrance through to the living room. “The idea was to make sure we allowed for the circulation on the front half as well, without crossing the cooking portion.”

“We needed it to be extremely functional and an integral part of the house,” adds interior designer Robin Upchurch Allen, who worked closely with Ellen O’Bannon in determining furnishings and materials—many of which include pieces from her own line, Sysaro Furniture. Allen attributes the kitchen’s character to the client’s own sense of style. “She envision anything I put to her.” Two particularly eye-catching elements are the hanging rack over the island and the stainless steel stove hood made to look like aged zinc, both of which Allen designed and had custom built by a local craftsman. Add to that full-bodied granite countertops and backsplash, open shelving, Versailles-patterned ceramic flooring, commercial-grade appliances, and thoughtful circulation patterns, and it is the gourmet cook’s dream.

“She didn’t want a fussy kitchen—she wanted to be able to clean it up easily,” notes Allen, describing Ellen as someone who does a lot of cooking and entertaining. “You can sit in the kitchen and be part of what is going on in the rest of the house. The openness is a casual feature—it’s the kind of place where she is cooking and you are there participating.”

In short, it is the post from which all “camp” activities stem. In essence, says Allen of the O’Bannon kitchen: “It’s a room you always want to be in.”

For Resources, see page 72.
Roger and Sandy Wells create their dream kitchen in New Hampshire.

By Mary Grauerholz
Photos by Crown Point Cabinetry
When Roger and Sandy Wells decided to design their new home on Kezar Lake in New Hampshire, it was all about the kitchen. "We sort of joke about this being a retirement cottage—a kitchen that's surrounded by a little cottage," Roger says with a laugh. Sandy is a gourmet cook, so the kitchen, Roger says, "is the life center of the house." There is also a little joke about the "retirement" part. While they have officially retired—Roger recently retired as an architect and Sandy retired as the financial manager of his firm—the couple are very busy living thriving, active lives.

The couple's contemporary Cape home, in rural North Sutton, is the latest of Roger's designs. As a trained architect, he has designed five houses for family members, including historical renovations.

Keeping it all truly in the family, the Wells' daughter, Heather Wells, led the interior design of the North Sutton house. Heather, a Harvard-trained architect, now practices as an interior designer, as the principal of Heather Wells Inc. in Boston. As she says, "The three of us designed the house together."

All three knew they wanted Crown Point Cabinetry, in Claremont, New Hampshire, to design the kitchen shelving and cabinets. As Roger says, "We've used Crown Point for just about every house I've designed." That meant that the Crown Point cabinetry designer, Tedd LeBlanc, could be confident of good communication among the group, no small matter in a project of this size.

"The key thing with Roger is, he knew what he wanted," LeBlanc says. "That made it easy." Roger Wells had specific ideas about certain details, such as a desire to have the open shelves appear as if they are floating. LeBlanc delivered by having the shelving anchored into the wall. The area around the refrigerator was a bit of a challenge, LeBlanc says, because of the different dimensions the layout presented. LeBlanc's background in construction certainly helped. He also was a student in Crown Point's extensive training program, which includes classroom time, followed by a stint observing veteran cabinetmakers.

The solid maple cabinets, painted in the Farrow & Ball shade "Mouse's Back," are equipped with knobs with back plates and exposed hinges, "to give it a period look," LeBlanc says. The shelving's simple Shaker look, especially against the grooved board...
The kitchen offers a built-in work station for computer, keys, mail, and cell phones. Left: Beadboard walls enhance the period-inspired look.
The bathroom vanities are kept simple with sinks dropped into cabinetry. Opposite: The kitchen's center island is topped with wood and has a sink—the perfect spot for prepping veggies.

walls, are perfect for the cottagey feel. The results speak for themselves. The room has some contemporary details—notice the beautiful simplicity of the glasslike, stainless-steel range hood—which, as Heather Wells says, is “a touch of the modern, a bit of New York City,” the black granite countertops with a cool bumpy texture; and the stainless steel fridge. Still, the mood of the kitchen is homey and warm. Much of the warmth is due to the shelf that extends around the top of the room. Heather Wells explains that her mother wanted a nice place to display her antique crockery. It also makes the dishes easy to find. “For a small cottage, the kitchen is very big,” Heather Wells says.

“A really big island was important,” Heather Wells continues. “My mom wants the grandkids to be able to do crafts there while she cooks.” The island, measuring a whopping 60" deep and 84" long, looks right at home. Sandy also has a little work area with a computer in the room.

The new kitchen sets up Sandy for very pleasurable cooking sessions, which makes her family happy. Roger Wells, who is now an abstract artist (kezargaragestudio.com), gives his wife big points for bringing family and friends together around her home-cooked meals. Holiday dinners, including Thanksgiving dinner, will be served here for friends and family.

From the sink, which is located in the island, Sandy can look out toward the lake and woods. And after all, the entire project was driven by the site. As Roger notes: “This was a site to die for.”

Mary Graetolder is a freelance writer living in Massachusetts.

For Resources, see page 72.
Austin Patterson Disston Architects designs well-appointed space for a family in Rye, New York.

BY KATHERINE GUSTAFSON | PHOTOS BY TRIA GIOVAN

McKee Patterson of Austin Patterson Disston Architects of Southport, Connecticut, had the task of creating a classically trimmed house on a rugged site bisected by a ridge of rock in Rye, New York, near the water. He and his team situated the house on top of the rock to capitalize on views of wetlands, ponds, and marshes. The homeowners, parents of three girls, wanted the house to be classical in style but functional for a busy family. As in many houses, the kitchen would be the hub of family life and would need to be practical. Accordingly, Patterson situated it at the heart of the house.

"The kitchen is located between the family room and the dining room and the front hall and the back hall," he says. "It's the intersection of everything." He notes that the room is largely open to the family room on one side and also adjoins a casual breakfast room.
The space needed to be elegant and inviting—the couple enjoys hosting formal dinners, and the kitchen would serve as a functional extension of the dining room. Patterson designed a useful space with a perimeter of painted cabinets, centered on a large wooden island with a natural finish.

"It was driven by the aesthetic of the rest of the house—it's fairly classical," says Patterson. But even so, he adds, "it's the working end of the house," a step down in formality from the front hall, living room, and library. "By the time you get to the kitchen and the back hall, the trim has lightened up quite a bit." It has a coffered ceiling but no prominent crowns or heavy moldings.

"The idea was to really make it look and feel like a good working kitchen," Patterson says. And work it does. One wall contains the refrigeration and wall ovens, including one fridge and two freezers. The stove dominates another wall, and another side—open to the family room above the countertop—is focused on the sink.

The final side of the room is composed of a large dusty-blue sideboard, on the ocher side of which is the dining room. This is used to organize some of the materials needed for entertaining. Two tall cabinets that make up the side portions of the hutch have wire-mesh fronts and are designed specifically for hanging table linens.

"The cabinet is more about the table as opposed to the meal," says Patterson. "The idea was to make everything accessible."

But the specifics of the large hutch have design implications as well. The wire mesh adds an interesting texture that contrasts with the smoother surfaces around it—the adjoining glass-fronted cabinets, the polished running throughout the counter's white marble.

"I enjoyed screwing around with different textures and finishes," says Patterson. "We treated the marble counters as a continuous element and then kept shifting out what was going on below the counters—painted cabinets, wooden cabinets, wired mesh, patinaed hood, big hunk of stone behind the hood."

He compares the way the room came together with how kitchens used to be created in days before such organized interior design. In old-time farmhouses, for example, tables, sideboards, bins, and other useful pieces of furniture would be dragged in to accommodate the needs of the room, placed so as to be as functional as possible.

"I was fairly casual about how to organize it and keep it loose, and let each wall do the things it was supposed to do," explains Patterson. "The only common element is the coffered ceiling, which runs over the entire area, and of course the wooden floor."

Not to mention the feeling of warmth and welcome present in this functional, family-oriented space at the heart of this ridge-top home.

Katherine Gustafson is a freelancer living in Seattle.

For Resources, see page 72.
A large hutch is designed with wire mesh for an interesting textural component.
As a whole, the construction or renovation of a kitchen presents a challenging array of design decisions. Telling a comprehensive story of tradition—via styling, finishes, materials, and fixtures—will keep a kitchen true to history without compromising functionality, aesthetics, or technology.
A farmhouse sink is the perfect accent in this traditional kitchen setting. The cabinets are by Jewett Farms + Co.

KEEP IT CUSTOM
Cabinet style is a crucial consideration in a kitchen’s overall look. Architects and kitchen designers often rely on the experience of cabinetmakers to deftly blend new and old.

Custom cabinets by Jewett Farms + Co. in Dover, New Hampshire, celebrate centuries’ worth of skilled woodworking techniques. The company’s use of a single face frame style virtually eliminates seams between cabinets, creating the feel of a custom furniture piece. Custom paint mixes, applied in no fewer than four coats, allow for traditionally styled cabinets in a wide array of historic colors.

Maine-based Kennebec Company specializes in period-inspired cabinetry and uses traditional woodworking techniques, including mortise-and-tenon joinery and dovetailing. Its team prefers hand planing, which tears the grain and creates an uneven texture for a natural antiquing effect. They even match the grain in a succession of drawers by cutting each drawer head from the same board.

Meanwhile, many technologies and storage solutions are possible behind closed doors. Ease-of-use features that don’t affect historic appearances include soft-close drawers and full-extension runners. Crown Point Cabinetry in Claremont, New Hampshire, offers touch-push technology, whereby a cabinet door opens with a simple tap on its top. This feature is also ideal for trash and recycling units—a quick push with a knee saves cabinet fronts from dirty hands.

MIX AND MATCH
Historically, kitchens were made up of freestanding elements such as stoves, dry sinks, chests, cupboards, and tables and chairs. In order to mimic the look of individual furniture pieces and appliances, designers create “pieced-together kitchens” by mixing cabinet designs and finishes. A kitchen island or a pantry cupboard, for example, can have a different finish or even hardware than surrounding cabinets.

Furniture-style details, such as supports for upper cabinets, legs for islands, and feet under toe kicks (all decorative) add to this “freestanding” visual effect.

LAYOUT
Oftentimes, designers try to avoid the predominance of upper cabinets, which can give a kitchen a distinctly modern
Glass-front upper cabinets offer a timeless look. Narrow cabinets are ideal for spice storage.

Left: Glass-front upper cabinets offer a timeless look. Right: Narrow cabinets are ideal for spice storage.

look and also make it feel closed in. Instead, open shelving, plate racks, or display cupboards lend authenticity and create the feel of an older space.

If upper cabinets are required, designers recommend styling them to appear more like furniture pieces, with smaller openings, and also keeping them generously spaced from window trim.

**HARDWARE**

Crown City Hardware in Pasadena, California, is dedicated to period-appropriate hardware. Reproduction bin pulls, knobs, and cupboard catches add just the right amount of detail. Crown City’s Custom Architectural Services department can help maintain hardware consistency through a large renovation or new construction project.

**COUNTERTOPS & SINKS**

Countertops in historic homes typically were crafted from wood, slate, or soapstone—whatever was obtainable and affordable in a certain geographic area. Marble was much more prevalent in Europe where it was quarried but was sometimes found in more prosperous American households. It is luxurious and serene, with interesting veining patterns, but is susceptible to etching by acidic liquids and patinas over time.

Since it was quarried in the United States, particularly Vermont and Virginia, and is easy to shape and cut, soapstone was widely used in the nineteenth century for countertops and sinks and is one of the most authentic choices for these items today. A form of talc, it is held together by impurities such as iron and magnesium, is softer than both granite and marble, and was valued for its ability to retain heat. The application of mineral oil helps soapstone achieve its dark grey patina of age.

Soapstone sinks in particular offer the best of both worlds. They are historic in appearance but can be ordered and custom crafted to any requested size and depth. Vermont Soapstone Co. in Perkinsville crafts custom sinks from 1½” thick soapstone slabs, or can even carve a sink from a single block. Their custom creations satisfy any desire, from a single bowl, generously sized, to two bowls of differing widths, set at different heights.

Apron-front sinks are another vintage option. Also
known as farmhouse sinks, they have been manufactured from fireclay since the 1880s. Today they are still available in enameled cast iron or fireclay in single- or double-bowl configurations.

And let’s not forget the backsplash. Subway tiles, which gained popularity after their incorporation into New York City subway terminals in the early 1900s, are ideal for a prewar look; they are durable yet stylish and easy to clean. Illinois-based Subway Ceramics produces subway tiles in lines dubbed Bungalow and Cottage, as well as the prewar type, each with glazes (including a crackle finish), colors, and components appropriate to its period.

APPLIANCES
The Good Time Stove Company in Goshen, Massachusetts, calls its line of retro cookstoves “truly functional works of art.” Its vintage cooking stoves are originals, not reproductions, and can be custom converted to gas, electric, or a combination of both. Big Chill’s Retro Line of appliances (refrigerators, stoves, dishwasher, microwave, vent hood) features mid-century styling and vibrant color choices.

However, vintage appliances are not for everyone. While modern appliances don’t look “old,” they can be tempered by more standout traditional features, or even hidden behind cabinet panels. A range top, for example, protects the flow of base cabinets and leaves room for display shelves or storage beneath.

Since a historic kitchen in its entirety is not an ideal model, successful new-old kitchens focus less on the whole and more on the parts. Thoughtful details spread across cabinets, counters, backsplashes, and accessories communicate history without repeating it.

For Resources, see page 72.
Connecticut Country

Rafe Churchill, LLC, renovates an outdated kitchen in Salisbury.

BY ANNABEL HSIN | PHOTOS BY JOHN GRUEN
Cabinets are painted a mint green and a center island offers ample storage. Opposite: Rafe Churchill designed a country kitchen inspired by the past.
At his client’s housewarming party, Rafe Churchill connected with a couple interested in several renovation projects for their own 1930s Cape Cod house in Salisbury, Connecticut. As a third-generation master builder and well versed in traditional residential architecture, Churchill is more than qualified for the job.

His eponymous firm aspires to create the “new old house” and has developed a loyal client base over the years. Later that spring, Churchill and the couple worked together on creating a plan for new landscaping and an outdoor dining terrace. “I think what they really wanted was a new kitchen, but instead settled for an outdoor area serving the kitchen,” says Churchill. “Six months later, we started work on the kitchen.”

The existing kitchen was part of a 1980s renovation from a previous owner. The home’s noteworthy details include walls of 1” x 8” tongue-and-groove paneling, exposed high ceilings and beams in the opened living and dining areas, and a large cased opening to the kitchen. These characteristics are what today’s homeowners search for in a contemporary farmhouse. Unfortunately, much of the charm was lost when coupled with dingy terracotta floor tile and a kitchen poorly equipped with failing appliances and factory-built cabinets and finishes.

The current homeowners wanted to retain the open floor plan while respecting the integrity of the original Cape Cod house that once stood alone on this secluded 40 acre lot. Their top priority was an efficient and functional kitchen fit for a professional chef, as the couple were once restaurant owners and continue to enjoy hosting dinner parties. “They had big plans for an addition and major changes to the open floor plan,” says Churchill. “Instead, my team suggested that the scale of the kitchen was appropriate and another addition may be the last thing this house needed. After helping them realize the success of the existing footprint and much of the layout, we reduced the scope of work to a simple renovation.”

First order of business was to remove all existing appliances, cabinets, and about 1,000 sq. ft. of terracotta tile that ran from the kitchen through the dining and living areas, which took about five days with small jackhammers. Influenced by the Cape Cod architecture, the design was kept simple with Shaker-style cabinets, closed toe kicks, freestanding appliances, a white fireclay farm sink, and industrial pendant lighting. The only departure from the traditional are the cabinets painted with Farrow & Ball “Green Blue” No. 84 “to add a more contemporary feel to the overall interior,” says Churchill.

Situating the 48” Wolf range with complementing hood and an equally sized glass door Sub-Zero refrigerator into the kitchen’s narrow footprint was a challenge. Churchill moved the range to an exterior wall so that it would be easier to vent the hood; the fridge was placed on the opposite wall for symmetry and an improved workflow.

Since the kitchen is located next to the sink, which Churchill designed so that it would appear more like a piece of furniture rather than a standard hanging unit. For additional storage, the maple topped butcher-block work island—its dimensions slimmer than usual to accommodate the large appliances—have deep drawers on one side and base cabinets on the other. An armoire-style china cabinet aligned with the refrigerator on the other side of the kitchen’s cased opening adjoins the breakfast seating area that overlooks the wooded landscape.

At the clients’ request, the team redesigned the living room fireplace with a contemporary stone surround—not the firm’s usual approach but the same Pietra Cardosa stone was used for the kitchen countertop and backsplash to bring together the two spaces. To further unite the kitchen and the open living areas, 5” rift and quarter sawn white oak flooring was installed throughout, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere perfect for the homeowners’ dinner gatherings.

“Of all our projects, this kitchen seems to generate the strongest response,” says Churchill. “Its simplicity and contemporary color work well together evoking a nostalgic association while appealing to a youthful interest in a fresh modern layout.”

Annabel Hsin is a freelance writer living in New York.

For Resources, see page 72.
A pantry and mudroom beyond are located off the new kitchen inspired by Cape Cod architecture.
Above: Horizontal board runs throughout the space. Opposite: A tray ceiling is also covered in horizontal planks. Large windows look out over the view.
WHITE WASH

Designers William Cummings and Bernt Heiberg create a gleaming master bath.

BY KATHERINE GUSTAFSON
PHOTOS BY KEITH SCOTT MORTON

White is the color of the master bathroom that McKee Patterson of Austin Patterson Disston Architects in Southport, Connecticut, designed for a formal, 11,400-square-foot house overlooking Long Island Sound.

White walls, white stone floors, white countertops. "Overwhelmingly white," says Patterson. "[The walls are] all semi-gloss, so it really kind of glows."

It's a stark and fresh look for a stylish bathroom, the inspiration of interior designers William Cummings and Bernt Heiberg. Patterson reflects that it was an enjoyable challenge using trim and angles to create interest and depth in a monochromatic space.

"The trimming was all about making shadows," he says. "When you paint everything white, you're not seeing a distinctive shape, you're just seeing shadows of things. It was fun doing a nice, clean, but trimmed-out space."

This nice, clean space is composed of a series of chambers that allows the homeowners to have common spaces in the bathroom—both using the shower and bath—as well as separate closets and toilet spaces.

The homeowners wanted adequate closets and they each wanted to have their own private areas, but didn't want entirely separate bathrooms; they still wanted to see each other in their joint intimate space.

"It was sort of a puzzle," recalls Patterson. "It was laid out so everything...was organized in these little chambers."

The dedicated bathtub space features a freestanding white Maax soaking tub beside French doors that open onto a small balcony with a view of the water. The tub area is connected to the shower, also in its own space, with a complete glass wall. Together these comprise 96 square feet of the 272-square-foot room.

Next in line are his-and-hers sink areas, providing separate private spaces, together totaling 80 square feet. The "hers" side of this space includes a wall of mirrors intersected by white horizontals and verticals, and a spacious white vanity opposite the sink. The P.E. Guerin knobs create subtle, silver-hued contrast with the white cabinetry.

The his-and-hers dressing rooms adjoining the sink areas are a total of 70 square feet, providing spacious and separate chambers for organization and privacy. The water closet is another 25 square feet.

As the master bath in a formal home, this room had...
to be proper, organized, and elegant. Separating the space into functional areas and keeping the palette simple were key methods of achieving this classy effect. The shallow-vaulted ceilings framed by crown molding also add some formality to the rooms, as well as a sense of height. The molding hides tape lighting that provides a glow off the ceiling in the evenings, creating a relaxing atmosphere for bathing and pampering.

The mix of joint and private areas in the area hit the right balance for the homeowners. "They are thrilled with it," says Patterson. "They love the house." NOH

Katherine Gustafson is a freelance writer living in Seattle.

For Resources, see page 72.
Period Architecture, Ltd.

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Period Architecture, Ltd. is an award-winning, full service architecture firm specializing in period-inspired residential design. The firm’s work seamlessly unites old and new by balancing traditional architectural precedent with contemporary lifestyle and technology.

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Sandra Vitzthum Architect, LLC

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