

INTERVIEW WITH BUFFY GOODWIN, DEANE, INC. | PHOTOGRAPHER PAUL JOHNSON

Perfect Fit

A redesigned NEW CANAAN KITCHEN tastefully blends FORM AND FUNCTION



The chestnut flooring was custom-stained to resonate with the walnut elements incorporated throughout the space.



When you connected with these clients through the Deane showroom, what were they looking for? They're a family of five, and they wanted a more user-friendly, accessible kitchen with an open floor plan. Their house is relatively new, and while the existing kitchen had a lot of pretty finishes, it didn't function well. It was a big space, but it didn't act like one; it was broken up into pieces, with a main kitchen and then a big living space and breakfast area sectioned off by a wall with a small archway through it. Even though there were windows, the space felt dark. The island was another issue—the two tiers truncated it, and with room for only three barstools, there wasn't enough seating for the whole family. Storage for daily dishes and glasses was relegated to this single hanging cabinet far from the cooking and eating areas, and the dishwasher and primary sink were at the end of the kitchen, which wasn't convenient.

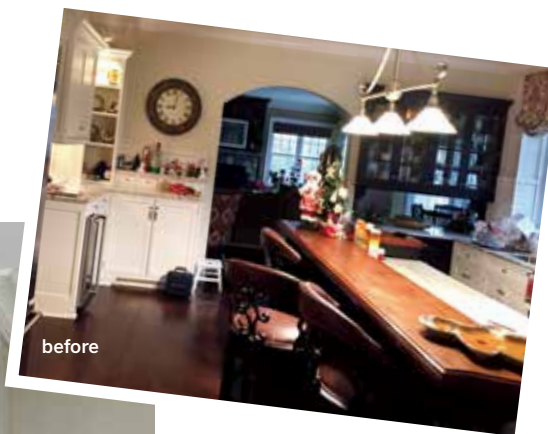
How did you remedy some of the sore spots in the layout? Our first thought was taking down the wall, and that's what we ended up doing. It's unbelievable how much lighter and brighter the space is now. We moved the primary sink closer to the cooking area so the clients can clean pots and pans as they use them, and we put the prep sink where the primary sink used to be, though not as far down. We put a dishwasher next to each sink, since any kitchen this size needs two dishwashers, and we added a

three-drawer stack that houses several sets of cutlery immediately to the right of the primary sink. That was the wife's idea, and it was genius—so convenient. The family's three daughters are still in school, so we put a breadbox and refrigeration drawers on the working side of the island to keep things for school lunches and snacks that the kids can readily get without having to go to the big fridge.

What overall look did you want to create? Soft tones were used throughout the rest of the house, so we definitely wanted a soft white, nothing harsh; we chose what we call our "showroom" white. We then selected Taj Mahal stone. This particular lot was really beautiful, with soft greige tones, and it kept this large kitchen from feeling severe. This lot was also very hard, which meant it would be really durable. We used it everywhere—built up to a two-and-a-half-inch edge for the whole perimeter and used as full-height backsplash behind the hood and behind the area to the left of the refrigerator.

The bar on the one end is new. How did that space come together? The clients wanted a beverage center, so that functions as both a bar and a coffee/tea station. It's equidistant to the kitchen and the living area, so when they're having a party and people are in the family room, their

kitchens



left: A smoky mirror back-splash softens the bar's elevation. The oval window to the right was added during the renovation, offering views of the gardens in the front of the property. **right:** The bar's integrated walnut sink boasts a water-resistant marine finish. **below:** The island and the built-in bookcase in the family room are both painted Benjamin Moore's Revere Pewter.



guests have access to drinks and coffee without having to go into the main kitchen space. The walnut we incorporated into the countertop, integrated sink, interior of the cabinet and floating shelves ties into the fireplace and the back of the built-in bookcase in the family room. It made this large space cohesive—wherever your eye lands, there's an element reminiscent of another part.

Did you encounter any challenges? The stone wall was the biggest bear. It runs front to back through the house, and it's massive. We had to etch around and chip away part of that wall and do a flush wall board behind it to hang the cabinetry and a full-height stone slab before we hung the hood. We had to custom-carve trim pieces out of slab to integrate the cabinetry, countertop and full-height slab to that rough wall and marry those surfaces together. That was all really tricky. The herringbone tile backsplash along the back wall that faces the pool was another challenge. There are inverted corners to the left and right of the door on that wall, and because it's a herringbone pattern, each piece of tile had to match.

What do you love most about this space? I love that there's something of interest on every wall. On the back wall, there's that beautiful herringbone tile and the windows. You have the beautiful bar area on the other side,



the stone fireplace in the family room on one end, and on the other end, the hood elevation is like a piece of jewelry or artwork. For as large of a space as it is, because of the softness and the details, it feels intimate.

—INTERVIEW BY LAUREN FETTERMAN

Resources:

Designer: Buffy Goodwin, Deane, Inc., Stamford; 203-327-7008; deaneinc.com
Contractor: Tom Watson, Home Renovation & Design, Trumbull; 203-650-2945
Interior designer: Kathy Yates Interior Design; 203-522-6113