

DRAMATIC IMPACT



Color and pattern in just the right doses give a classic Connecticut kitchen a cool refresh.

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THIS PHOTO: This reimagined and significantly expanded kitchen's fresh, transitional style honors the century-old home's history while anticipating its next chapter. Two 11-foot-long islands ensure plenty of room for the entire family to cook together. **OPPOSITE:** The sink's pull-down faucet—with a pulley braking system that prevents the handle from snapping back—has an unlacquered brass finish. "The homeowners loved the idea of a living finish that will patina over time," kitchen designer Ingrid Becker says.





TOP: The large French range includes two ovens, a warming drawer, and a cast-iron simmer plate; its brass accents inspired the kitchen's unlacquered brass faucets and lighting details. Behind the seven-burner cooktop is a backsplash of limestone tile set in a herringbone pattern. ABOVE: Becker found a new home for a pair of carved-wood lions that once supported one of the original kitchen's wood ceiling trusses. They are now stationed beneath the prep island's honed Calacatta Gold marble top.

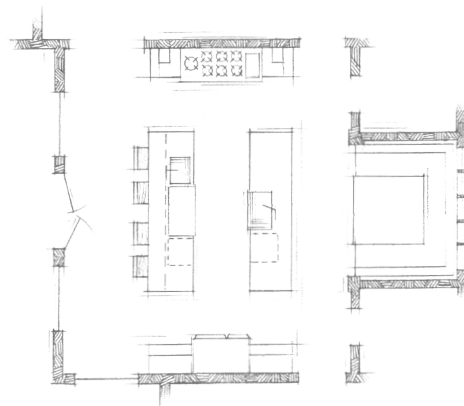
EACH WEEKEND, the couple who own this century-old Connecticut home escape the demands of their workday lives and get right down to business cooking for family and friends. For them, meal preparation is a team effort that often involves their two daughters. So when they were forced to demolish the home's original kitchen after the discovery of termite damage and black mold, they seized the opportunity to replace the small room with a grand new space that could comfortably accommodate four cooks.

Armed with a clear vision for their new kitchen and well-honed creative instincts—she's a fashion industry veteran, he's a creative director—the couple called on Artisans Home Builders, Charles Hilton Architects, and kitchen designer Ingrid Becker of Deane Inc. to bring that vision to life.

The design team began by expanding the kitchen's footprint, taking space from a garage to make way for a light-filled, high-ceilinging room with an adjacent dining nook. Becker then gave the kitchen a functional layout with four distinct work areas. A large range, crowned by a custom plaster hood, occupies one wall. On the opposite end of the room, cabinets that house small appliances and everyday dishware flank the refrigerator. Two 11-foot-long islands—one for food prep and entertaining, the other for cleanup—span the space in between.

White marble countertops and white-painted walls seem to float above the room's boldest design elements: rich blue cabinetry and a black-and-white concrete-tile floor. "Most clients are hesitant to use such a dark cabinet color, but because

the plan



Flooded with natural light, this expanded kitchen's roomy layout provides space for every cooking occasion. Two islands ease traffic flow and help designate tasks—the prep island offers cooks a view of the backyard garden through French doors; the cleanup island faces a cozy dining nook with a built-in banquette.

THIS PHOTO: The elegant design of the custom oversize plaster range hood was inspired by a photo of the kitchen in Tom Brady and Gisele Bündchen's Los Angeles home.







A stainless-steel professional-grade refrigerator sits between cabinets that display everyday dishware. Below the glass panels, a pair of countertop cupboards—with electrical outlets hidden inside—conceal small appliances.



DESIGNER INSIGHTS: STATEMENT FLOORING

There's an art to pulling off an eye-catching floor. Kitchen designer Ingrid Becker shares how to create a masterpiece.

- **Choose the right material.** For maximum impact with minimal maintenance, opt for durable, low-maintenance porcelain tile, which comes in myriad colors and patterns. To amp up the look of a wood floor—which Becker says is the most comfortable material to stand on—paint a pattern on it.

- **Make the surroundings subtle.** “When a floor is busy, everything else should be quiet,” Becker says. “You can incorporate other textures or patterns—like this kitchen’s elegant herringbone-pattern backsplash—but they must be subtle and neutral.”

- **Select the flooring last.** It might sound counterintuitive when the goal is to draw attention to the floor, but Becker chooses the cabinetry first. “It’s your biggest investment, and it makes the biggest visual statement,” she says. “Find the right style and color, then choose complementary flooring.”

we chose lighter floors and didn’t blanket the upper walls with cabinetry, it works,” Becker says.

Timeless details add polish to the look: unlacquered-brass faucets, cast-bronze cabinet pulls, and an elegant French range with a herringbone-pattern limestone-tile backsplash that was a true labor of love. The homeowners wanted tiles with an aged, tumbled look rather than sharp, square edges. So they got out a Dremel tool and a belt sander and ground down the sides of each tiny tile themselves.

From such subtle touches to more statement-making elements like the bright citron in the dining nook, this design is all about inviting details that make family and friends want to gather here. Investing in this kitchen, the homeowners say, was worth every bit of effort because they plan their days around making meals—and there’s no happier environment in which to do it.

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OPPOSITE LEFT: A 42-inch-wide walnut butcher-block cutting board, which Becker had inset in the marble countertop, is large enough to accommodate two cooks. The homeowners use it for prep before every meal—and for snacks in between. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Black-and-white concrete floor tiles give the room a graphic punch. “Most clients are hesitant to do such a bold floor,” Becker says, “but it’s very classic, which suits the style of the home.” THIS PHOTO: The dining nook’s citron-color banquette is a fun surprise. Anticipating heavy use, the homeowners had the seat upholstered in a durable faux-leather fabric; the back cushion is covered with an indoor-outdoor cotton twill.

