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For a beachy vibe in this remodeled kitchen, designer Gianna Santoro mixed textures and materials, including sandy-color cabinetry and similarly hued hardwood floors. "The cabinets pick up the darkest tone of the floors," she says. "The goal isn't to exactly match woods, but rather to make sure their tones work together."

ensemble ACT

Neutral finishes and organic details soften the modern lines of an always-busy kitchen.



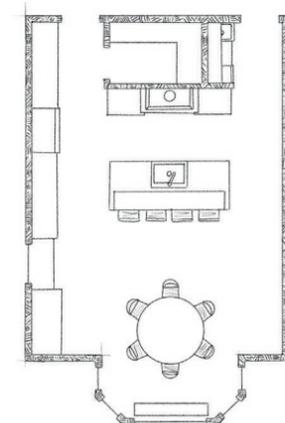
HOW DO YOU DESIGN A KITCHEN THAT EASILY ALLOWS A FAMILY TO COMFORTABLY CONGREGATE, HOST GUESTS, AND COOK ALL IN THE SAME SPACE?

It's a question every designer asks and one that Gianna Santoro of Deane Inc. considered as she approached a gut renovation for clients who'd recently downsized. "They love to entertain, but their new home didn't have a separate dining room," Santoro says. "While their kitchen was meant to be a very functional space, it also needed to be where everyone would gather."

To make the kitchen feel larger without expanding its square footage, Santoro made the most of auxiliary space and stowed small appliances and utensils in a walk-in pantry behind the range wall. That extra storage eliminated the need for wall-hung cabinets and created space for decorative touches more synonymous with a living room, such as floating display shelves, a furniturelike hutch, and a charming window seat. Santoro selected paneled appliances (including a refrigerator and freezer that flank a desk nook) to give them the look of cabinetry.

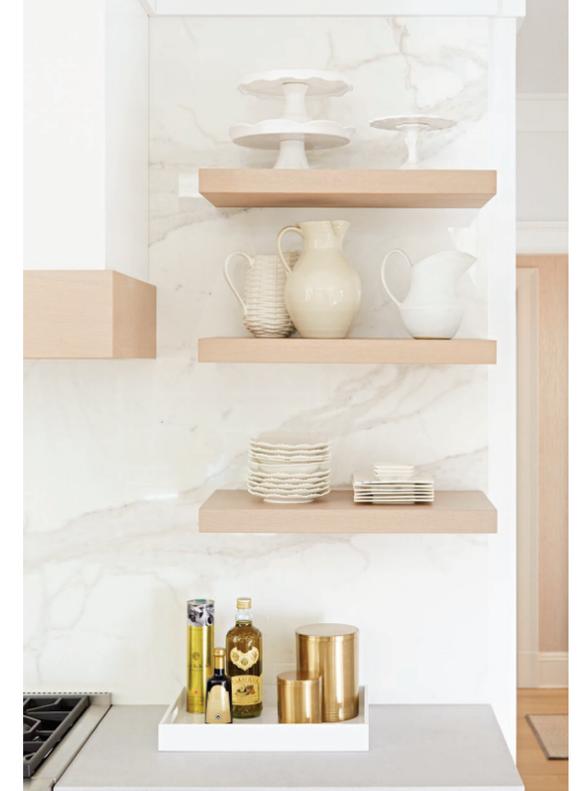
Santoro selected light finishes and surfaces to further soften the easygoing kitchen and create a relaxed, almost beachy palette. "There's a lot of texture," she says, noting the riftsawn white oak cabinetry, the dining area's woven light fixture, and the woven-rope stools at the island. "But nothing here is fussy. The white cabinetry is frameless. The porcelain backsplash is a single slab. Everything is simple and works well together; nothing is meant to make a big statement."

There are, however, quietly dramatic moments. That high-gloss backsplash is a scene-stealer; the



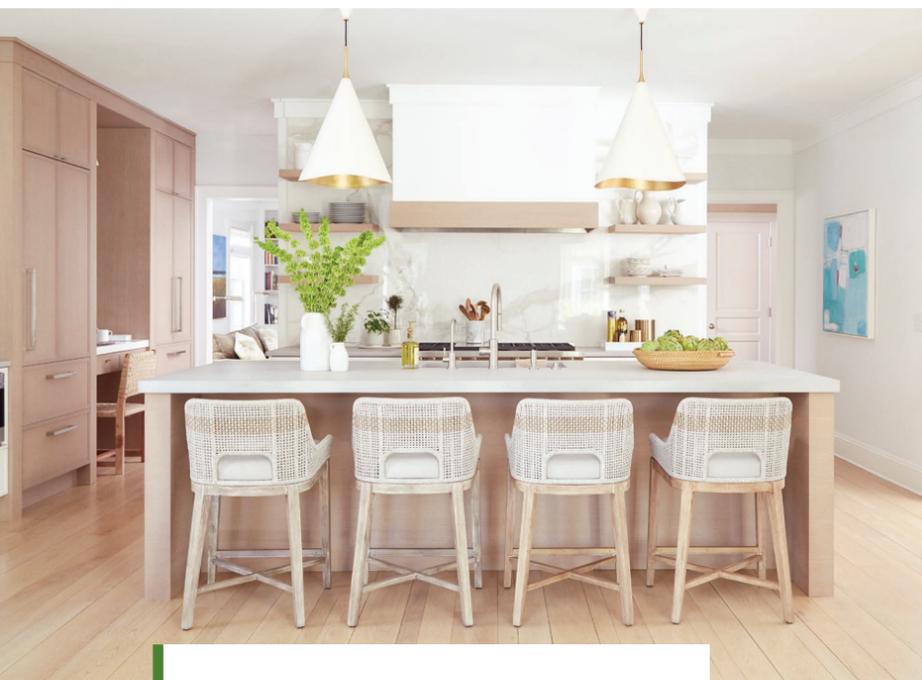
the plan

A walk-in pantry behind the range wall boosts storage capacity to keep the kitchen free of upper cabinets. The island sink is just a swirl away from the range, allowing the homeowner to easily toggle between the stations.



OPPOSITE: A custom range hood and floating cerused-oak shelves distinguish the cooking zone. **TOP:** Illuminated for drama, the floating shelves grace the cooking zone with decorative style. **ABOVE:** Thoughtfully chosen accessories corral necessities atop the bar's quartz counter, which has the look and texture of concrete.

“Negative space allows people to comfortably gather, even when they’re not fitting at the table or the island.”
—GIANNA SANTORO, DESIGNER



DESIGNER INSIGHTS: HOSTING DUTIES

A hospitable kitchen must first be an efficient one. Here’s how designer Gianna Santoro streamlines function so dinner guests feel like company and not a crowd.

- **Create a compact work zone.** “Everything the cook needs should be right there in the work zone, so they don’t have to travel through the kitchen or people to get things,” Santoro says. Pots, pans, utensils, spices, and oils should all be stored within easy reach.
- **Place the refrigerator at the edge of the main cooking zone.** Guests can grab what they need without getting in the cook’s way.
- **Create counter space** beside the refrigerator to use as a buffet, a bar, or for coffee service.
- **Designate a separate bar area,** complete with its own sink, to enable guests to help themselves and encourage conversation, away from food prep action.

concrete-looking quartz blanketing the countertops materials is another. Mixed metals (brass pendants and satin-nickel hardware) beckon the eye. So, too, does a glass-enclosed, humidity- and temperature-controlled wine storage room, which has unsurprisingly become a dinner party must.

Santoro kept those gatherings in mind throughout the design process. Today, when guests file in, they can find a perch at a dining table, a function-packed island, or a bar, and they can just as easily maneuver between all three. “We made sure to leave enough room for people to mingle,” Santoro says. “This kitchen is where everyone wants to be.”

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ABOVE LEFT: A tight work zone relegates cooking activities to one side of the island while guests linger on the other side. A desk sits between paneled refrigerator and freezer columns. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Woven-jute dining chairs and a sea urchin-shape light fixture, hand-woven from natural raffia, convey the kitchen’s organic sensibility. The dining table is crafted of reclaimed elm. The adjacent glass-enclosed room houses well-stocked shelves of wine—ready for guests.



THIS PHOTO: The bar gains a glamorous touch courtesy of mirrored doors on the upper cabinets. “We wanted them to be opaque but interesting,” Santoro says. A divided drawer below organizes bar gadgets while lower pullouts hold liquor bottles and cocktail napkins.