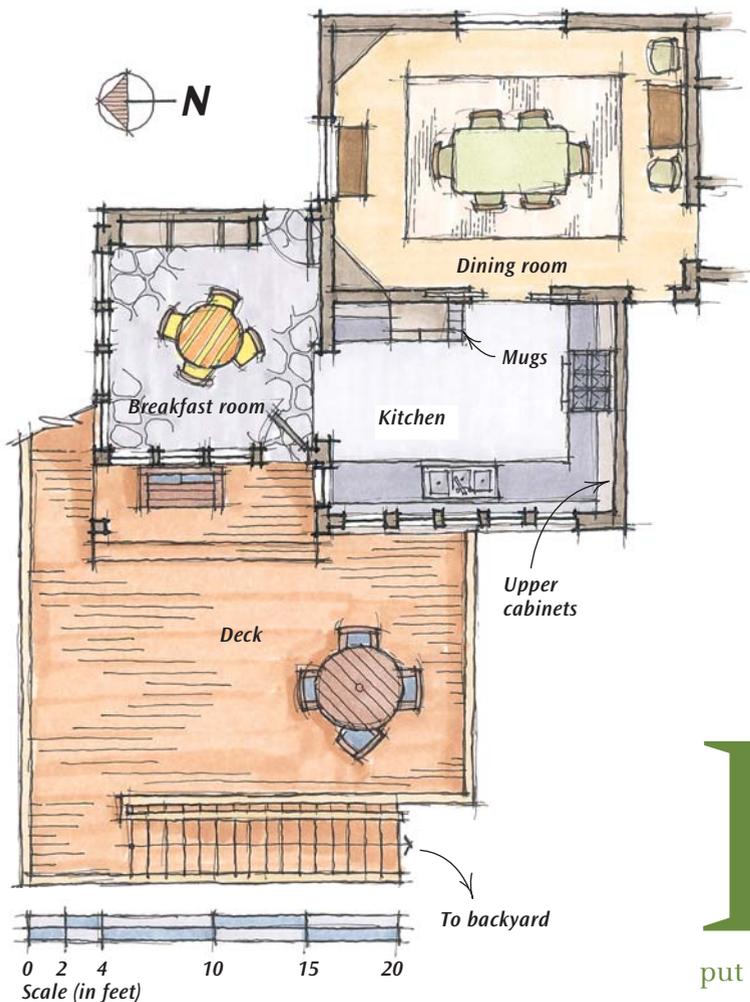


The Green



A CREATIVE USE OF EXISTING SPACE

The homeowners started with a small, dark kitchen. They opened it up to the dining room, connected it to a little-used carport, and added a spacious deck. The result: a completely transformed cooking and eating space that was thoughtfully designed to respect the environment and suit the family's everyday needs.

SIMPLE AND SUSTAINABLE *Ginger Peabody says she never wanted a trophy kitchen; she was more interested in function than in form. But she says David couldn't help making it beautiful any more than he could help making it green.*

Like holiday dinners, the best kitchens are often the result of collaboration. In this case, a serious cook and an architect inclined toward green building put their heads together to design a practical, appealing space that would please them both.

Ginger: Twelve years ago, when we moved into our house in Alexandria, Va., our kitchen had a certain mid-century charm: painted cabinets, boomerang-patterned Formica counters, a rounded peninsula, steel casement windows. As time went on, the task of putting meals on the table had become a source of pleasure for me. So we updated our appliances, but the room remained cramped and impractical. After 10 years of hard use, it was a sorry spectacle of loose floor tiles, a ceiling filmed with greasy dust, dismal lighting, and jammed cabinets. After more than 20 years of marriage, I yearned for a good, working kitchen and a pleasant place for my family to gather.

David: The project was driven by the fact that our children were growing up, and we wanted to enjoy a new kitchen with them. I had been leaning toward sustainability for some time, so I wanted to make the renovation as green as possible.

Adding more room without adding to the house

Ginger: I was relentlessly practical, at least in the beginning. I told David this was to be a kitchen for cooking,



A couple plans a renovation with family meals —
and the environment — in mind

BY GINGER AND DAVID PEABODY

ing of a '50s Kitchen



THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU LIKE TO COOK— AND HOW

One of the things I like best about my kitchen is how intentional it is. While planning it, I thought through my cooking habits and tried to picture my ideal cooking environment. In my mind I would stand by the stove, get a cast-iron skillet out of the drawer, the olive oil from the revolving cabinet, the garlic from the ledge under the cabinet. Salt and pepper were right in front of me, spatula and potholder in the drawer underneath. I went through this mental exercise with baking, breakfast, sandwich-making—every meal I could think of—to create logical work areas for different activities.

My strategy to banish clutter was to create a place for everything—all my pots, pans, tools, and utensils. I wanted everything to make sense, but some things were tricky: the water dispenser, my grandmother's wooden salad bowl, the juicer, the pizza peel, the 16x24 baking sheet. Most of these went on the interior wall, near the refrigerator, where the upper shelves were made extra-deep (for the salad bowl) and extra-tall (for the other things).

A wall of cubbies camouflaged the side of the refrigerator itself and gave me a great place to display my collection of ceramic mugs.

—G.P.



CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO THE COOK'S TOOLS Clockwise from top left: Custom cubbyholes hide one side of the refrigerator and show off a collection of ceramic mugs; frequently used spices and seasonings sit on a narrow shelf beneath the upper cabinets; drawers were customized to accommodate odd-size bowls and containers; baking sheets and pans are accessible to the immediate left of the stove.

A NARROW SHELF runs along the windows overlooking the yard. It gives the family a place to display a changing art exhibit without permanently altering the view.



OUT-OF-THE-WAY DINING The windowed breakfast room used to be a carport; it was designed to provide family members a place to sit and chat with Ginger while she cooked, but not be in the way.



not a showplace. I wanted it to be light and open. You entered the old kitchen from the carport, and its only interior door opened onto the basement landing. We needed more room.

David: I think the greenest thing we did was to resist the impulse to build an addition. Instead, we enclosed part of the carport and made it into a sunny breakfast room (photo above).

Ginger: We closed off the interior door and made a new opening into the dining room, with glass pocket doors to allow light and a view (bottom photo, p. 52). We decided against an island, to keep the kitchen open for circulation.

Looking for light in all the right places

David: The original kitchen had a couple of small windows, and we wanted to open the wall to a rather fine view to the east. This meant adding lots of glazing, some of it unprotected from the morning sun. We compensated by super-insulating the entire attic with recycled cellulose. We also insulated behind the original brick kitchen walls with recycled cotton and used high-efficiency wood windows.

WHAT MAKES SOMETHING GREEN?

Sustainable or “green” building refers to the use of materials that have been harvested so that a resource is not depleted or permanently damaged. Products are considered green if they achieve any of the following:

- ▶ Incorporate salvaged or recycled materials and are in turn capable of being recycled or reused.
- ▶ Reduce energy or water consumption.
- ▶ Serve as alternatives to more environmentally harmful products.
- ▶ Promote a healthier indoor environment.

Design cannot be good unless
it is also environmentally responsible.

—David Peabody



LIGHT FROM ROOM TO ROOM
Before opening up the space to the dining room, the only interior door to the kitchen led to a dark landing. Now both rooms are brighter, and pocket doors give the homeowners the flexibility to close off the rooms if they wish.

Keep the appliances, change the cabinets

David: We'd been replacing our appliances with professional-grade models and were not about to pitch them and start over.

Ginger: I wanted to keep the kitchen from looking too kitchen-like. I don't like the heavy, claustrophobic look of kitchen cabinets, so we installed very few upper cabinets and made them white, while the finish on the lower cabinets is natural wood. I store most things, including glasses and pots and pans, in drawers.

David: The cabinets are made of veneered wheatboard, a water-resistant particleboard made from wheat straw. It's an agricultural by-product that would otherwise be burned. The cost was competitive with good-quality mainstream cabinets, the warranty is as long as any in the industry, and we used 60 percent less wood than we would have with conventional cabinets.

Countertops and floors had to be durable

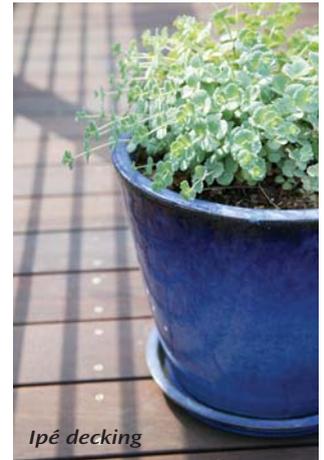
David: The quarrying and shipping of natural stone uses a great deal of energy, and neither of us wanted the shiny granite look, so that was out. Instead, we chose Fireslate, a man-made cementitious material that looks like a chemistry lab tabletop.

Ginger: I spend a lot of time on my feet in the kitchen, so I needed a comfortable kitchen floor.

David: We selected old-fashioned linoleum tile, reborn as Marmoleum. It's made of natural cellulose and linseed oil and sits



HARD AS IRON The Peabodys used ipé, a sustainable hardwood, for the deck, which extends living space beyond the breakfast room.



GLOSSARY OF SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

MARMOLEUM is a natural product made from linseed oil, wood flour, pine resin, jute, and limestone, to which a jute backing is applied.

Exposure to air hardens it and increases its durability over time. It comes in a wide range of colors, is hygienic and antistatic, and stands up well to foot traffic. After its long life, it is completely biodegradable.

FIRESLATE, manufactured from portland cement, silica sand, and water, is formed under 400 tons of pressure, then steam- and air-cured. It handles heat well and weighs 40 percent less than stone. Fireslate, however, is susceptible to staining.

RECYCLED COTTON INSULATION is made from 100 percent recycled material (cotton, other natural fibers, and trimmings from denim manufacturing). A fire retardant is added to the fibers before they are combined into cotton batts and backed with kraft paper.

COCOON CELLULOSE INSULATION is composed of 85 percent recycled newspaper. It is blown into wall cavities and attics, creating a continuous blanket of protection without the voids and compression typical of batt insulation. It does not cause itching and requires no special handling or labeling to minimize health hazards.

WHEATBOARD is made of wheat-straw fibers bound with resin, a process that uses no formaldehyde, so the finished product doesn't emit toxic fumes. It weighs about 20 percent less than standard particleboard, has a superior ability to hold screws and nails, and is more resistant to moisture penetration.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CERTIFIED IPÉ (or ironwood) is resistant to rot, insects, UV exposure, ice, salt, abrasion, splintering, and chemicals. It is more than six times harder than Western red cedar and has a life expectancy of 20 years or more without preservative treatment.

See Resources on page 94.

at the opposite end of the green spectrum from vinyl tile—a product associated with dioxin and petrochemicals. Marmoleum costs about three times as much as vinyl, but it's longer-lasting, attractive, and remarkably easy to maintain.

Green outdoor spaces

Ginger: For years we barbecued in the driveway and had our alfresco meals at a table set up in the carport amid the trash cans and bicycles. So we designed a roomy deck with stairs down to the yard.

David: The deck was our big splurge. We used nonarsenic pressure-treated wood for the new deck structure. We used certified ipé, or ironwood, for the decking. Ipé is a tropical hardwood grown in sustainable forests in Central America. I liked some of the recycled plastic woods, but nothing can approach the beauty of a nicely finished wood deck, and ipé is comparable in cost to cedar or redwood.

In every project like this, there are going to be some true victories and some well-negotiated compromises. Looking back, I'd say we had a few of both. **H**

David and Ginger Peabody and their three children live in Alexandria, Va.

