



# Grand-Central

BY JUDY SELIN AND STEPHEN SELIN

**D**esigning the Kiernans' kitchen was a tall order. Because family, friends, and food topped their list of priorities, the Kiernans wanted the kitchen to be the central space in their new home. They wanted to be able to watch their children playing outside and to answer questions about homework while making dinner. They wanted the kitchen to hold lots of guests warmly in its fold. And most important, they wanted it to be a place where two people could cook at the same time without getting in each other's way.

### The kitchen took priority

Because the kitchen is the most important room to the Kiernans, we gave it the best location in the house. We dedicated an entire wing, with southern exposure, to the kitchen (floor plan right).

This location allows the kitchen to connect to important indoor areas as well as outdoor spaces. From the kitchen, there are views across the living room and into the office and music room. There also are views of the screened porch, a stone patio, flower gardens, and the Green Mountains. And from the kitchen's work areas, a cook easily can watch children playing outside or guests arriving in the driveway.

**Built-in balcony.** The idea that the kitchen should be connected to the rest of the house inspired a second-story overlook and a sitting area on top of the built-in refrigerator cabinet. Photo taken at A on floor plan.

With walls that face south, east, and west, there isn't a minute on a sunny day when the kitchen isn't full of natural light. Including a large walk-in pantry adjacent to the kitchen allowed us to trade upper wall-cabinet space for more windows. A vaulted ceiling provided opportunities to capture sunlight with a bank of windows on the south-facing wall and eyebrow dormers on the east- and west-facing walls.

Without strategically located artificial-light sources, however, vaulted ceilings can turn into dark voids at night. We employed a combination of fixtures to make evening light in the kitchen both warm and functional. Task sconces, undercabinet lighting, and a pendant fixture above the island light the work areas. A chandelier over the dining table and upward-facing sconces illuminate the rest of the room.

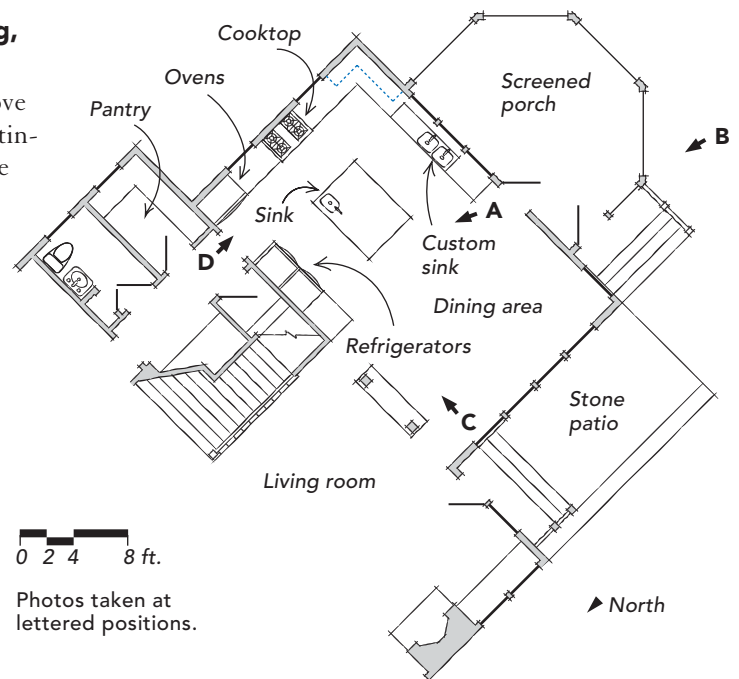
### Add a vaulted ceiling, and stir in the stair

The vaulted ceiling above the kitchen both distinguishes the room from the rest of the house and integrates it with



## IT'S A WING THING

Dedicating an entire wing of the house to the kitchen is an effective way to get plenty of room, lots of natural light, and a direct connection to outdoor living space. Thanks to ample pantry storage, this kitchen has windows where wall cabinets normally would be. There are backyard views on all three sides, and a large screened porch is just a step away. The vaulted interior gets additional light from eyebrow dormers on both sides of the roof. Photo taken at B on floor plan.



# Kitchen

At the hub of a busy house, a sunlit kitchen with great views and clever work areas brings family and friends together

“The vaulted ceiling both distinguishes the kitchen from the rest of the house and integrates it with neighboring spaces.”



neighboring spaces. Because of its height, the ceiling created an opportunity to connect the kitchen to the second floor.

At the stair landing, an arched opening forms a balcony that overlooks the kitchen. A built-in bench atop the refrigerator cabinet makes a great upholstered porch from which to view the action. By the way, using cabinets that are deep enough for the bench also allowed us to use standard-depth refrigerators instead of their more expensive (and shallower) cabinet-depth counterparts. The balcony takes advantage of views through the high kitchen windows and gives the kids a place to spy on what's being made for dinner.

### Thoughtful workstations

In a two-cook kitchen, you need twice the amount of workspace. Here, we were designing a kitchen for a cook and a baker. To allow them to work comfortably in the kitchen without rubbing elbows, we created two separate work areas, one for cooking meals and one for baking. We traded the standard work triangle of sink, refrigerator, and stove for more specific workstations.

Standing on legs, a large cherry island looks more like a piece of furniture than a kitchen counter. But the island and each workstation are located purposefully to work with adjacent cabinetry and appliances. This way, the ingredients and utensils used at each station are always close at hand.

The baking station is on the island across from the refrigerators. Beneath the granite top, flour and sugar bins and a mixer are on a sliding shelf, along with a broad, shallow

**A kitchen that raises eyebrows.** When you walk into the kitchen, it is clear you have entered a special place. The vaulted ceilings and eyebrow windows garnish the room with sunlight and character. Photo taken at C on floor plan.



## A custom-made sink keeps the peace

The Kiernans wanted two people to be able to work at the sink at the same time without getting in each other's way, so we specified a double sink for their kitchen. They wanted the area to be easy to clean up, so we thought it should have an integral drain board. But when they requested that the divider be low and wide enough to support a large cooking pot below the faucet, we realized they were asking too much. The sink would have to be custom-made.

It turns out that having the sink fabricated by a ductwork contractor was quick and comparable in price to mass-produced stainless-steel sinks. The stainless-steel double sink is 6 ft. by 2 ft. with a large drain board and a wide, sunken divider. The sink cost \$1,000—a \$700 savings compared to the granite, labor, and smaller-stock sink that would have been used in its place. The custom sink is an attractive element in the kitchen, and so far, no after-dinner food fights have been reported.

drawer for utensils. Measuring cups and mixing bowls are on open shelves for easy access.

The meal-prep area is on the side of the island that's across from the cooktop. Pots and pans are stored beneath the cooktop on open shelves. The adjacent drawers contain only the implements used there. When a pancake is ready to be flipped, the Kiernans won't

scrape their knuckles on the cheese grater while reaching for a spatula.

Between the baking station and meal-prep area, a sink is easily accessible for both the cook and the baker. Everything for serving food is within a step of the dishwasher and is close to the dining area. The microwave is built in to the island, where a third person can

use it without being in the cook's way. The side of the island that is nearest the dining table forms a counter where guests can relax and mingle. □

Architects Judy and Stephen Selin ([www.selinandselin.com](http://www.selinandselin.com)) practice in Shelburne, Vt. Photos by Charles Miller.



## Sources

### APPLIANCES, FIXTURES, AND CABINETS

#### Cabinets

Turkey Mountain Woodcrafters  
802-759-2550  
931 Mountain Road Extension  
Addison, VT 05491

#### Dishwasher

KitchenAid  
800-422-1230  
[www.kitchenaid.com](http://www.kitchenaid.com)

#### Faucet

Kohler  
800-456-4537  
[www.kohler.com](http://www.kohler.com)

#### Lights

Conant Custom Brass  
800-832-4482  
[www.conantcustombrass.com](http://www.conantcustombrass.com)

#### Refrigerator

Amana  
800-843-0304  
[www.amana.com](http://www.amana.com)

#### Sink

Chuck's Heating and  
Air Conditioning  
800-655-1489  
[www.chucksheating.com](http://www.chucksheating.com)

#### Stove, oven, and hood

Dynamic Cooking Systems  
800-433-8466  
[www.dcsappliances.com](http://www.dcsappliances.com)

**Everything in its place.** The working theme in this kitchen is that everything the cooks need is right where they need it. Open shelves provide easy access to the pots, pans, and groceries used on the cooktop. Cooking utensils are in nearby drawers. Photo taken at D on floor plan.