

THE MODERN LEAF

Opening up and tucking away

Everything in this kitchen is organized around the workhorse Macassar ebony island with wenge wood top. In addition to all of the storage space it provides, the island also hides a table on casters and bench-style seating. When pulled out, the table and benches transform the space between the kitchen and living room into a full dining area that seats up to eight. When not in use, the table can be tucked away for additional space, and also functions as a shelf under the island. This style of tucking things away when not in use is a Japanese design strategy intended to save space and maintain a clean, straight-lined look.

We allowed an extra ½ in. of length on the back side for the table to slide in and out. The apron with stretchers provides structure as well as support for the heavy top, which is protected with custom-cut glass.

MORE DETAILS

Range hood: Grothouse wenge wood

Hood insert: RangeCraft

Countertops: Honed absolute black granite

Back-painted glass: Hutchison Glass & Mirror

Light fixtures: Bruck Lighting

Out of Sight

An Asian-Craftsman kitchen and bath combine minimalist design with maximum functionality

BY AMY GARDNER AND JENNIFER GILMER

Located in Bethesda, Maryland, this whole-house remodel has ties to a renovation that occurred 10 years ago, when the house was under different ownership. That job involved creating a legitimate stair to replace an access hatch with a ladder used to reach the basement. Back then, we ended up moving the “stair” out of the kitchen and locating it elsewhere in the house, which required adding new structure from the basement up to the attic floor. We didn’t know it then, but that change in infrastructure helped set us up for this project.

This time, we added a second floor and a rear addition to the existing 35-ft. by 39-ft. one-story house. We aimed to honor the original Craftsman-style bungalow while accommodating a modern Asian aesthetic throughout. Part of the goal was to design a modestly sized, hardworking, and user-friendly kitchen. Because it was sited at the back of the house, the original kitchen didn’t work well within the new layout. The solution was to turn it into a transitional zone to connect the old and new spaces. It now serves as a single-nook pantry and is also where we put the stairs to the second floor. We customized storage solutions to maximum effect and selected materials that spoke to the dual styles. In the bathroom, we were looking for a streamlined and airy feel, which we achieved using an open-room approach. □

Amy Gardner is principal of Gardner Architects, LLC. Jennifer Gilmer recently launched Jennifer Gilmer Kitchen & Bath. Photos by Brian Pontolilo, except where noted.



CABINETS WAS KEY

Keeping it functional and sleek

Situated in the great room at the intersection of the existing house and the new addition, the open-concept kitchen is designed so one barely needs to move to reach the different elements. The work triangle is from the refrigerator on the far right, to the custom-built granite island sink, to the cooktop. There's just the right amount of counter space—no bit of surface goes unused.

Multiple strategies were used to layer in storage space. For example, the cabinet to the right of the range hood has storage on the back side of the door, making it ideal for spice bottles. There are narrow pullout base cabinets on either side of the oven with rollout shelves, and a second bifold appliance garage with a door that slides left, against the wall and out of the way. Adjustable tray dividers, shelves, and partitions were incorporated into various cabinets and drawers.

Of special note are the bifold doors of the tall Macassar ebony cabinets at the far end of the kitchen. The doors are designed to slide into built-in pockets, keeping things tidy even while in use.

For a modern look that doesn't overpower the original craftsmanship, we went with open-knot cherry cabinets, absolute black granite countertops, and celadon (a color used in Chinese ceramics) back-painted glass for the backsplash, which mirrors the same glass used behind the woodburning stove across the room.

The signature element in the kitchen is the two-part range hood (see photo pp. 70-71). A hefty plane of Macassar ebony wood sits below a vertical box with an orbital-sanded-copper patina finish—again to tie this design to the woodburning stove in the great room. Our idea was to anchor one end of the room with one kind of fire, and the opposite end with another.

SHELVING SOLUTIONS THAT MAXIMIZE STORAGE SPACE

- Install shelves on the inside of cabinet doors to accommodate small items like spice bottles.
- Utilize a shallow section of wall by fitting it with custom-built cabinetry or shelving.
- Include a cabinet filled with pullout shelves.
- Modify stock cabinets to include things like partitions or drawers within drawers.
- Equip tall cabinets with pullouts and adjustable shelves.

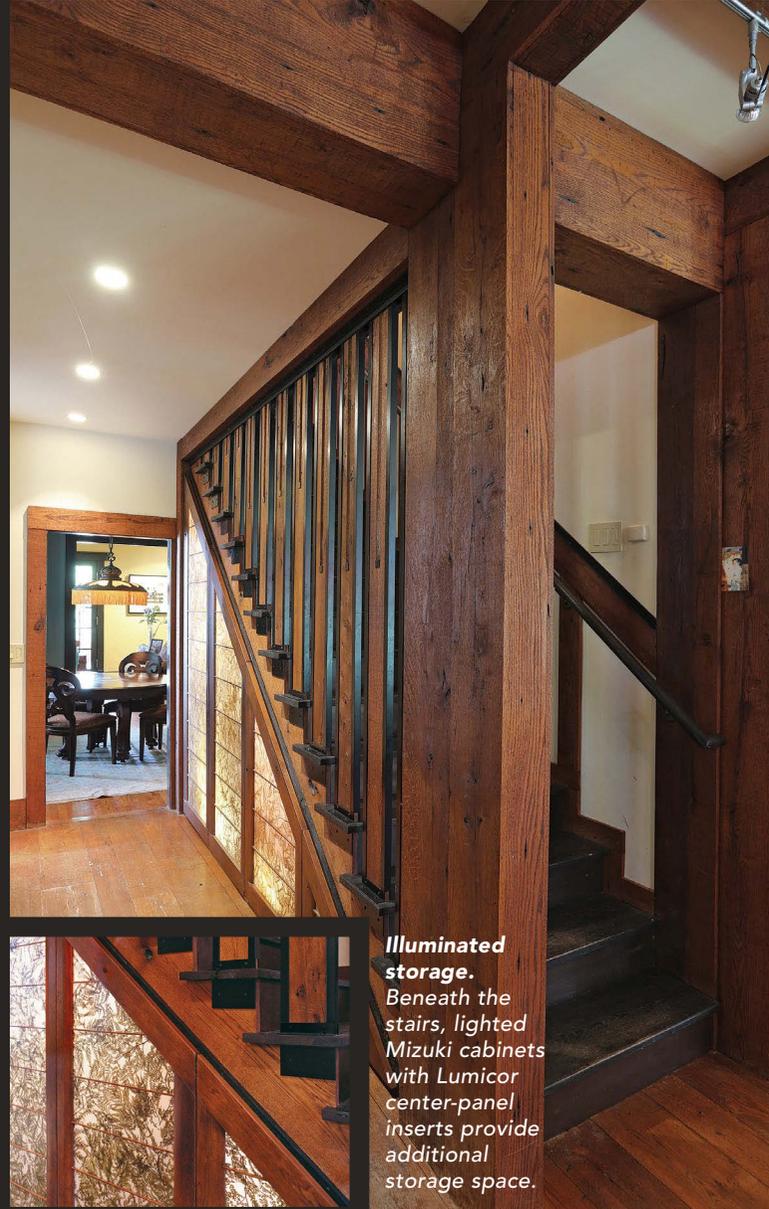


Faucet: KWC

Sink: Custom honed absolute black granite

Island top: Grothouse wenge wood

Island cabinets: Premier Custom-Built, Inc.



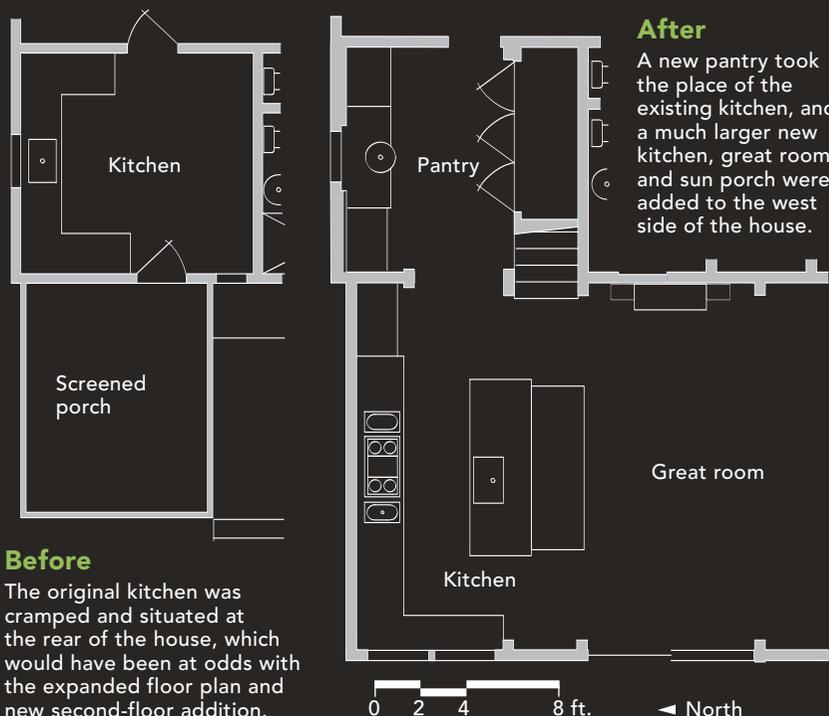
Illuminated storage. Beneath the stairs, lighted Mizuki cabinets with Lumicor center-panel inserts provide additional storage space.

PANTRY PLUS

Existing kitchen reimaged

The most important storage area is the pantry—it serves as a coffee bar by day and a cocktail bar at night—which includes a small refrigerator, dishwasher, and ice machine. Bifold doors open to reveal a copper countertop with a circular limestone sink that mimics the appearance of wood. A 24-in.-deep appliance garage houses the coffee machine, and the equally deep cabinets above have adjustable shelves. There's also a wall cabinet on the far right, a pullout cutting board, and two rollout shelves.

Heavy timber posts and beams complement black steel frames and flanges on the stair newels. Beneath, lighted Mizuki cabinets house yet more storage space. Mizuki was adapted from the Japanese word for "kitchen chests," which were historically built to fit into kitchen alcoves to address storage needs while respecting a home's architecture.

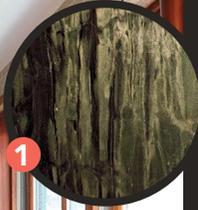


Before

The original kitchen was cramped and situated at the rear of the house, which would have been at odds with the expanded floor plan and new second-floor addition.

After

A new pantry took the place of the existing kitchen, and a much larger new kitchen, great room, and sun porch were added to the west side of the house.



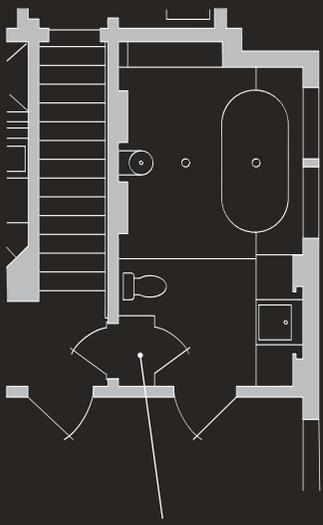
A MIX OF MATERIALS Making a masterful bath

Because the second floor was all new, we had a clean slate to work with when it came to the bath. Rather than going with a traditional layout, we designed one large room. This open approach lends the moderately sized space a feeling of breadth that wouldn't otherwise be possible. The light and airy vibe also comes from the large two-over-one double-hung Craftsman-style windows.

Given that the bath adjoins the master-bedroom dressing room, we decided to continue the reclaimed oak flooring to make the rooms feel related. But we wanted a distinct separation between wood and tile, so we stepped up the shower, which also helped to address drainage in the wet zone. Opposite, a Lacava tub and wenge wood apron are situated on the shower platform under windows that give views of trees and sky.

Various types of tile and stone bring tone and texture to the space—there's moss-green subway tile, tile made of bamboo suspended in resin, and stacked river rock. Between the two showers, honed absolute black granite frames the mirror above the shaving sink, and for special effect, we went with a green striated granite shower panel with a top live edge.

Storage in such an open space was something of a challenge. We incorporated a tall, custom-built linen closet that anchors the east end of the space, and painted it white so it wouldn't dominate the room. We actually penetrated the wall with the cabinet and glued a full-length mirror to the back of it, which is used out in the hallway. That enabled us to capture 4½ in. that would have otherwise been occupied by wall, which also resulted in a deeper cabinet.



A custom linen cabinet was built into the wall to minimize its footprint.



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