

# Modern made Comfortable



**Success on all levels.** This contemporary kitchen benefits from a basic layout with wisely organized work zones and simple, refined materials presented in a clean composition.

# A new Vermont kitchen anchors an open plan

BY ERNIE RUSKEY



This house sits on a bluff with awe-inspiring views of Lake Champlain. My firm's goal was to create a modern home with Craftsman elements woven into the design of its exterior and interior. We wanted the home to have the comforts of traditional design but with the simplified and bright spaces associated with modern architecture. The Craftsman influence can be seen on the exterior in the hip roofs, exposed timbers, and stonework. On the interior, the Craftsman influences are more modern: the use of materials in their natural state and the arrangement of them to create linear, understated spaces. This approach is clear in the kitchen.

The homeowners wanted a compact kitchen that would accommodate their passion for cooking, allow them to be part of the activity of the house, and provide them with access to the outdoor views that make the site so special to them.

## A place for gathering

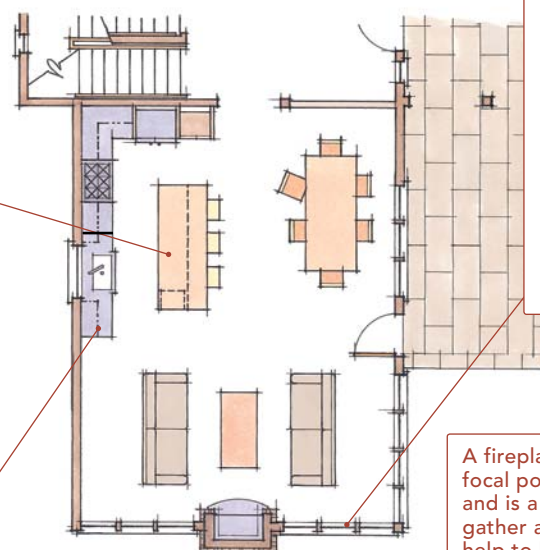
We designed the kitchen to be a workspace, which requires smooth circulation between the major zones: from areas for storage and prep, to spaces for cooking and cleaning up. Prep areas are organized as a tight triangle in the corner of the kitchen, while the cleanup zone is closer to the living room. This arrangement keeps the homeowners from being in each other's way when working together. Similarly, the large maple-topped island is an intimate interaction point that doesn't encroach on the work areas. The island's overhang, which is supported by graceful metal brackets, and the stools set before it provide opportunities for casual dining and hanging out. The placement of the island in relation to the rest of the great room enables the homeowners to chat with family members and

## CARVING OUT A KITCHEN

Defining spaces in a great room sometimes can be a challenge. Here are a few key strategies that were employed to make the kitchen and the surrounding spaces work together.

The furniturelike kitchen island, with its metal pedestal feet, defines the working portion of the kitchen and helps to distinguish the kitchen as its own space.

Tucking the kitchen into a corner along the north and west walls provides space for the upper cabinets without compromising the view to the south.



Large windows wrap the south wall, introducing light and lake views to the entire living space. This not only broadens the impact of the site, but it makes the spaces in this portion of the house feel bigger.

A fireplace serves as the focal point of the living area and is a natural place to gather around. Such details help to bring order and logic to an open-plan layout.





**Shared space.** The great room is composed of the living room, the dining room, and the kitchen, each of which blends into the others. A maple-topped island with a generous overhang defines the kitchen and provides a place for casual dining and entertaining.

## DETAILS

**Sink** Franke Farm House, [franke.com](http://franke.com)

**Faucet** Moen Level Series, [moen.com](http://moen.com)

**Tile** Island Tile Breeze, [islandtile.com](http://islandtile.com)

**Countertop** Honed Absolute black granite, [barretile.com](http://barretile.com)

**Cabinets** DA Day Woodworks, Stowe, Vt.

**Cabinet paint** Benjamin Moore Wedgwood Gray HC-146, [benjaminmoore.com](http://benjaminmoore.com)

**Pendant lights** West Elm Globe Pendant, [westelm.com](http://westelm.com)

**Hardware** Alno Contemporary, [alnoinc.com](http://alnoinc.com)

**Appliances** Jenn-Air Pro-Style, [jennair.com](http://jennair.com)

**Location** Burlington, Vt.

**Architect** Ernie Ruskey, Tektonika Studio Architects, [tektonikavt.com](http://tektonikavt.com)

**Builder** Peregrine Builders, [peregrinedesignbuild.com](http://peregrinedesignbuild.com)

guests no matter whether they choose to gather at the island, in the dining room, or in the living room.

### Subtle but substantial storage

The homeowners requested generous amounts of appropriately located storage. We set the refrigerator next to a large built-in double-door pantry in close proximity to the island, the kitchen's main prep surface. Open upper cabinets provide easy access to the dinnerware and to other kitchenware. These unpainted maple cabinets impart a refined yet casual feel to the kitchen. The island base, a combination of drawers, cabinets, and shelving for cookbooks, handles the bulk of the kitchen's day-to-day storage demands. The soffits hold items that get only occasional or seasonal use.

### Timeless design

The native-maple hardwood floors are durable, and they provide a visual link between all of the great-room spaces. The consistent floor plane throughout this area also helps to make the room feel larger than it is. The same is true of the wall of windows that frames the views and casts the interior in daylight.

The color palette is a reflection of Vermont and of the home's immediate landscape. The cabinetry, trim, and tile backsplash fall into a soft blue-gray color scheme, analogous to the sky and to the lake in the distance. □

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**A palette appropriate to house and site.** Light blue-gray cabinets complement the deep-blue glass tile backsplash, while black-granite countertops create contrast and durable worksurfaces. Stainless-steel appliances complete the kitchen's color scheme, which was driven by the colors of the view outside.