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Classic Revival

WHEN THE DESIGNER DESIGNS FOR HERSELF,
THE RESULT IS A KITCHEN FULL OF PERSONAL TOUCHES

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RIGHT: Pam Polvere's collection of cow creamers earns pride of place in her kitchen. The first one was acquired in Italy on her honeymoon, and she's been on the hunt for more ever since.







Sometimes a remodeling project isn't just about replacing outdated cabinets and rejuvenating old-fashioned floor plans; it can reflect an evolution in personal philosophy as well. When designer Pam Polvere, a Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD), recently remodeled her own kitchen, she was able to incorporate some fresh thinking about building and living green while redoing the room to suit her current needs.

It began with the tear-out. Polvere had remodeled the kitchen 18 years ago, when she and her husband first bought the circa-1930 four-square home in Oak Park, Illinois, and over time she had meticulously maintained the space. "I was troubled about sending a per-

fectly good kitchen to the landfill," she says. So in perhaps the ultimate recycling effort, Polvere auctioned off the birch cabinets and black appliances on eBay. Her contractor dismantled the room, and the winning bidders trucked it all off in a trailer.

The floor plan of the 11'6"×10' kitchen remained largely unchanged, although the designer coaxed more storage and performance out of the space through a savvy selection of features.

She refined the appliance selection to better respond to the way she works in the room. By pairing a 24-inch column refrigerator with a couple of under-counter freezer drawers, Polvere enjoys the same cubic capacity



ABOVE, OPPOSITE: In the dining room, adjacent to the kitchen, the cabinet color scheme is reversed, setting the space visually apart.

ABOVE CENTER: A buffet area and microwave is flanked by the column refrigerator and freezer drawers and a matching cabinet.

ABOVE RIGHT: Behind the range, a stainless steel panel protects the wall from heat while food is cooking.



ABOVE: The existing floor plan remained largely intact, but streamlined appliances replaced bulky units, freeing up storage space. The room flows through the dining area, past an existing powder room and into a mudroom.



ABOVE LEFT: For consistency, a carpenter duplicated molding used elsewhere in the house for the new dining area's baseboard.

ABOVE CENTER: Cutlery is kept organized with built-in drawer inserts.

ABOVE RIGHT: In newer refrigerators like Polvere's, energy-efficient LED lights are replacing outdated incandescent bulbs.

of her old 36-inch combination refrigerator/freezer, while achieving a more balanced cabinet composition.

In the original kitchen, separating the cooktop and oven had eased circulation and gave the cook maximum flexibility. In the revamped design, an all-in-one range is supplemented by a built-in microwave that's also a convection oven. This arrangement still keeps traffic flowing freely and broadens the cooking options.

Another eco-issue was addressed at the sink. "We're big bottled-water drinkers," admits Polvere, adding that she was concerned about the number of plastic bottles the family went through. Installing a three-handled faucet (generically called a tri-flow model), where filtered water streams from the single spigot but runs through a dedicated line, lets the family fill up reusable containers with purified water. She changes the charcoal filter once a year.

Polvere replaced the fluorescent under-cabinet task lights with LED models. "The old fixtures used to hum and generate heat," she notes. "Not only are the LED lights cool-burning, but they will last for years, so they're environmentally friendly."

The surface treatments also mirror Polvere's aesthetic and environmental outlook.

"As soon as I saw these tiles [for the backsplash], I knew I'd use them; they were actually the first element of the remodeling. So in a way, I designed this kitchen backward," says Polvere. She didn't want to mar the backsplash

by punching electrical outlets into it. Her solution—among her favorite features in the kitchen—was to attach angled power strips to the walls, where they are concealed by the overhang of the cabinets. This ensures there's a more than adequate number of spots to plug in small appliances throughout the space.

With regard to the floor, the designer had a choice to make: refinish the worn-out maple planks, or replace them. She opted for the latter route, selecting porcelain tiles that convincingly replicate the look of wood but last longer and are easier to clean.

Now the kitchen reflects Polvere's years of experience designing rooms for others, packed into a space she can finally call her own. ■

design elements

Cabinetry: Plato Woodwork/Ridgewood door style/Diamond White and Fog with a white glaze finish/Merit hardware; Countertops: Calacatta Gold Select marble and stainless steel; Flooring: Abisko Ebano/4"X18" porcelain tile; Backsplash tile: Walker Zanger/Jackie O mosaic marble tile; Range, hood, microwave, refrigerator column: Thermador; Freezer drawers: Sub-Zero; Dishwasher: Bosch; Sink, faucet, soap dispenser: Franke; Under-cabinet lighting and angled power strips: Task; Hanging light fixture: Stonegate Designs/White Linen; Wall color: Farrow & Ball/Skylight; Clock: Chiasso.



The circular motif established by the backsplash is continued in the casual dining room with the round table, clock and light fixture.