



# Same Space, Twice the Room

Keeping a traditional look in a kitchen remodel designed for cooking *and* entertaining

BY NICOLE STARNES TAYLOR

**W**hen I first met with Toni-Ann and Neil to discuss their kitchen remodel, I asked them how often they entertain. Their response amazed me. Even with full-time jobs, they cook for family and friends five nights a week. Consequently, Toni-Ann and Neil's design priority was simple: Create a space that facilitates and celebrates sharing a meal with guests. This remodel was an opportunity to improve their life in a rich and fundamental way, and it was done without increasing the house's footprint. While the century-old Seattle house's existing kitchen was large enough, its poor layout, bad ventilation, minimal natural light, and cramped spaces made cooking a challenge.

In addition to improving the kitchen's utility, Toni-Ann and Neil wanted a healthy, green remodel that would pay homage to their 1900 home. Reusing existing flooring, lighting, and cabinet doors met those ends and also helped reduce construction costs. The

new base cabinets use FSC-certified plywood with maple-veneer interiors and painted poplar frames. To minimize off-gassing, the plywood has no added urea formaldehyde. The new trim matches that of the rest of the house to create a seamless transition between the old and the new. Improved ventilation, daylight, and a design that welcomes family and friends into the kitchen create an inspiring space Toni-Ann and Neil enjoy sharing.

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Architect and former carpenter Nicole Starnes Taylor owns MAKE Design Studio in Seattle. "Before" photos by Nicole Dumas. All other photos by Aaron Leitz.



Before

**Space and light.** Low upper cabinets, few windows, and a peninsula that cut the room in half made the old kitchen feel small. Raising the cabinets to the ceiling, adding new windows, and eliminating the peninsula made the kitchen feel roomy and bright.

# SIMPLE CHANGES MAKE A BIG IMPACT

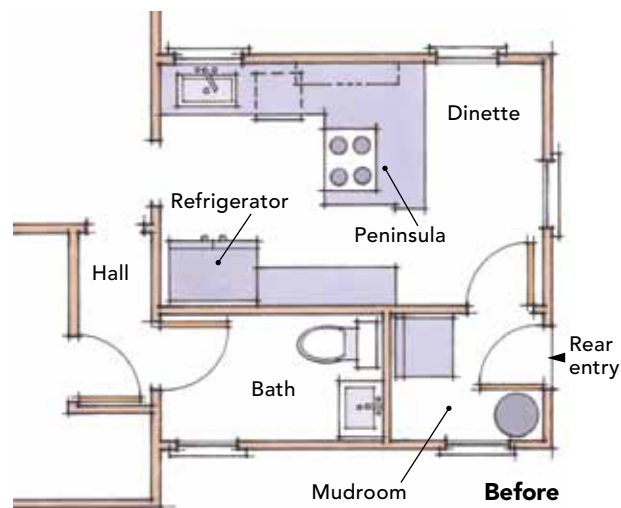


**CHALLENGES** The greatest challenge with the original kitchen was the location of the stove in a peninsula that split the kitchen into a cooking area and a dinette. There was no ventilation above the stove, and neither side of the peninsula was roomy enough to serve effectively as a kitchen or a dining space. The kitchen was dark, and the upper cabinets crowded low over the counter, making food prep almost impossible. Cabinet space was minimal. The rear entry door swung in, devouring space, and the refrigerator was placed like an afterthought in a back corner.

**SOLUTIONS** Getting rid of the peninsula and moving the range to the south wall allowed for an exhaust hood and expanded the kitchen into what had been the



dinette. Converting the mudroom entry to a pocket door made room for cabinets and a sink on the west wall, where daylight now floods the kitchen through an expansive sliding window. The window also provides a pass-through to the outside grill. Moving the bathroom door and reframing a couple of walls to recess the refrigerator into what had been an awkward hallway opened up the east end of the kitchen.





**Stolen space.** Recessing the fridge into an adjacent hall and moving the bathroom door improved circulation and opened up new space. A new peninsula made from recycled studs created a "perch space" so that guests could be with the cook without being in the way. The chalkboard is a playful element that draws family and friends to that space.

**Before**

**Contractor:** Nicole Dumas, Dumas Build  
**Completed:** 2012

