

Trend Lines/Case Study

Intelligent Design

Multiple strokes of genius maximize space, storage, and style.



Once closed off from the rest of the house, the kitchen of this long and narrow home is now an open and efficient work space. A glass breakfast bar (below left) contrasts with the soapstone counter. Stainless steel chutes (below right) tucked into the window seat wall direct recyclables to outdoor bins.

This petite workhorse of a kitchen was transformed from a dim, drab, cramped cube into a bright, contemporary, and roomy space that pulls its weight in style. But it doesn't simply work hard; it also works smart. Designer and renovator Paul Denys packed it with clever details that maximize storage space without compromising the newly open layout.

Removing the wall dividing the kitchen and dining room connected the cook with family and guests, but it also





Toekick drawers, a corner cabinet pullout, and a convertible work/storage center based on a Hoosier cabinet (below) are the kinds of clever details that keep the kitchen organized and provide ample storage.



eliminated much of the upper cabinet storage. With less than 180 square feet to work with, Denys needed to regain functional



space. To store goods of different sizes (cans, boxes, utensils), he incorporated drawers with different interior depths. A

blind corner cabinet in the peninsula organizes pots and pans, and toekick drawers along the base of each run of cabinetry take the place of a pantry. “You only have so much space to put things into, but what really helped a lot was putting those drawers in the kick space,” Denys says.

The corner between the kitchen and entry hall is home to an ingenious Hoosier-style built-in. Denys latched onto the concept of this early-20th-century work center and modernized its overall look, but retained the essential functionality that once made Hoosiers indispensable. In addition to drawers and open shelves, the built-in houses an appliance garage with a pull-out platform for easy access. An extendable stainless steel work surface provides a spot to prepare baked goods, pay the bills, and stage buffet dinners. And its location near the front door makes it a convenient place to park groceries before putting them away.

Smart storage and organization don’t stop there, though. A window seat conceals file drawers and also incorporates a heating vent and toekick outlet for the home’s central vacuum. Stainless steel recycling chutes through the window seat wall let the owners deposit materials in bins outside and make separating recyclables a cinch. Just outside the kitchen, a floor-to-ceiling cherry cabinet serves as an entry hall closet.

To give the clients a sightline to the front door, Denys placed square stainless steel portholes on each side of the kitchen window. They liked the portholes so much that Denys suggested using three to break up the dining room wall and to bring in more light. “As clouds go over, they lighten and dim, so you get a sense of what’s going on outside as well,” Denys says.

Smart, creative features are what make this small kitchen work—and look—like one of twice its size. Every scrap of usable space is geared to meeting the needs of the clients, and it does its job with inherent ease, intelligence, and flair. —Stephani L. Miller

Designer/Renovator: Denys Designs Builds, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Project size: 330 square feet; Construction cost: Withheld; Photographer: Gordon King Photography.