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fresh START

With elegant details and a refined palette, a traditional kitchen is the star of an Alabama home's reinvention.



A window above the sink, opposite, offers views of surrounding pastures and woods. The range's ceramic tile backsplash features a decorative inset of smaller, gray-veined tile—both are glazed and set in a herringbone pattern to break up the room's straight lines. "The tiles have a really cool texture to them that gives the backsplash a natural look," kitchen designer Jay Young says.

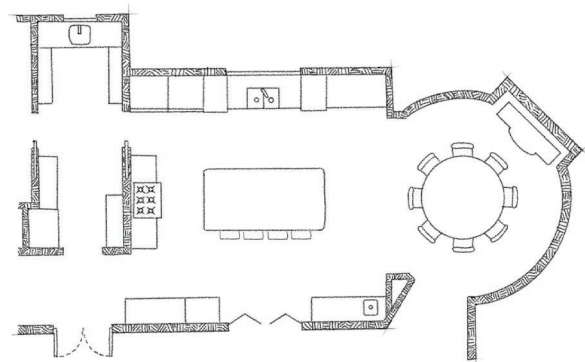
**SOMETIMES A RENOVATION
REQUIRES CAREFUL
CONSIDERATION OF WHAT TO
KEEP.**

Other times, as Mistie and Chip Burkes found while upgrading their Alabama home, it's OK to completely begin anew. "There wasn't anything we wanted to keep, to be honest," Mistie says with a laugh.

Ellis Architects spearheaded a whole-house revamp, and Toulmin Kitchen and Bath worked in harmony with the firm and the homeowners to make a dream kitchen that complemented the surrounding redesign. To start, the team selected white walls and quartzite counters to reflect the room's generous natural light, creating the Burkes' desired open and airy feel. Maple cabinets finished in a light gray ever-so-gently balance the palette and prevent the neutral space from appearing sterile.

The colorway extends to the ceiling beams but with a darker tone for extra dimension. The exposed gray-brown beams are chamfered to add angularity and highlight the lofty ceilings. "We wanted to keep the whole space in the same vein," kitchen designer Jay Young says. A custom metal range hood introduces warmth through its brass strapping.

Panel-clad appliances are in keeping with the buttoned-up look. "I have to tell people where things are because you can't tell which is which," Mistie says. The hidden refrigerator and freezer, bookending the sink wall, are embellished with fanciful moldings. The curved-X motif appears throughout the kitchen. "Little details like that make the space," Young says. This something-special philosophy inspired the team to select



the plan

In a layout where square footage is not an issue, the design team fashioned areas to prep or clean up (a butler's pantry behind the range wall), dine away from the cooking zone (a curvy dining niche), and fit extra amenities (like a beverage station opposite the sink wall)—preventing the space from feeling cavernous.



Arches, appearing on panels and in cabinetry niches, soften the kitchen's straight lines. The designers selected grays to calm the bright space, painting the island base a slightly darker shade than surrounding cabinetry.



LEFT: An undercounter fridge and icemaker hide behind maple panels in the kitchen bar, blending in with the cabinets. Open wine storage and leaded-glass cabinets balance the flat wood fronts with more airy components. OPPOSITE: The butler's pantry is home to bonus appliances, such as an extra refrigerator, and additional counter space and cabinetry, including drawers that provide extra strength for storing heavy pots. The pantry opens to a laundry room, creating an ideal layout for everyday chores.

an island that feels more like furniture than regular cabinetry, thanks to its hand-carved legs and feet.

Beyond a subdued palette, Mistie's other must-haves prioritized practicality—she needs ample space to cook for their three boys or guests and a way to easily keep it all clean. A vast butler's pantry certainly helps with the latter, allowing prep and dish-scrubbing to happen behind closed doors. Vintage French doors, to be exact. “We love them, the imperfections, the handles, everything,” Mistie says of the antique pieces, which juxtapose the otherwise contemporary fixtures.

The best feature, however, is a tiny TV within the wet bar's cabinetry, just above the microwave oven. Mistie and Chip enjoy the small but mighty amenity as they're helping the kids start or end their days. In those family moments, it's obvious: The new kitchen is the heart of their new(ish) home.

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DESIGNER INSIGHTS: PRACTICAL MAGIC

A kitchen that is as hardworking as it is beautiful? Sign us up. Designer Jay Young follows these rules to achieve the duality.

- **Give appliances pretty packaging.** Even the most stunning stainless steel can be a visual distraction in a sea of cabinetry. To keep must-have appliances in the cooking zone, consider making them panel-ready for a seamless look.

- **Let statement surfaces shine.** To keep the island clutter-free, the apron-front sink was placed on the perimeter under the window. A more dramatic—and more polished— island results, as an uninterrupted quartzite slab takes center stage.

- **Keep messes behind closed doors.** A scullery or butler's pantry can house extra appliances and plenty of storage to get prep work done behind the scenes and away from guests.

