





MaKING a LIVING SPaCE

A KITCHEN SATISFIES
THE NEEDS OF
BOTH A FAMILY AND
A PRO COOK



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STYLED BY INGRID LEES

A trio of wood species
graces this kitchen:
A veneer of quarter-
sawn maple enrobes
the cabinets' main
surfaces. Toekicks
and posts are black
walnut, and the
island's legs are
cherry. The subtle
differences in color
and grain fend off
tonal chaos.

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DESIGN DETAILS

Debra Singer makes her living cooking for others, so when she and her husband, builder Robert Singer, decided to redesign the kitchen in their decade-old center-hall colonial, they made sure that it catered perfectly to their personal and professional lives.

The Peapack, New Jersey-based couple created a contemporary space where they can not only serve meals to their three sons—13-year-old twins Ryan and Elliot and 12-year-old Jonah—and host parties for their family and friends, but where Debra can prepare delicacies on a large scale for her catering clients. “We entertain a lot,” says Debra. “We have everything from casual gumbo get-togethers to elegant cocktail affairs. I recently had a party for 150 people.”

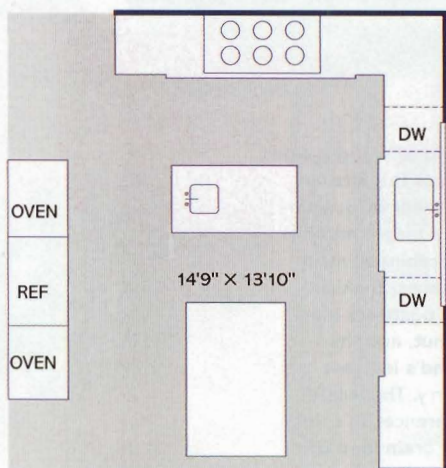
Although the space is large (it measures 412 square feet), kitchen and bath designer Ian Cairl, owner of Pluckemin, New Jersey-based Platinum Designs, says it was a challenge to come up with an attractive layout that would



A PALETTE WITH POLISH Pairing a deep blue granite counter with honey-toned wood cabinets gives the kitchen a strong yet muted contrast, avoiding the stark extremes of a black-and-white color scheme.




TOUCH DOWN! A stainless steel pullout is a heat-proof landing spot for piping hot dishes. Located on an island, its no-nonsense handle can be quickly and easily grabbed by an oven-mitted hand.



LEFT: Two islands in the kitchen render the room more flexible in terms of usage. Orienting the long side of the work island to the cooktop makes it more serviceable to the chef; exposing the short end of the other island to the adjoining room eases passage between the spaces.



Of the room's dual islands, the one closer to the cooktop is set up as a prep area with knife storage, a chopping-block top and a veggie sink. The other island is scaled and finished as a dining spot.

A professional kitchen featuring a large window with three pendant lights. The window looks out onto a lush green landscape. Below the window is a large, deep stainless steel sink with a high-arched, flexible faucet. To the left of the sink, a bowl of green salad and a plate of tomatoes sit on the countertop. To the right, a built-in oven is visible, and a drawer-style dishwasher is partially open, showing a basket of vegetables. The cabinetry is made of light-colored wood, and the backsplash is composed of small, square tiles in various shades of brown and black.

Befitting a kitchen
for a professional
caterer, the
extra-deep sink
is equipped
with a powerful
rinsing faucet. A
pair of drawer-
style dishwashers
is a clean-up
convenience,
handling loads
large and small.



While the functions of this wall may run hot and cold, its appearance is an even-tempered composition of cabinets and integrated appliances.

accommodate a family eat-in component plus the cooktop, two sinks, two wall ovens, refrigerator, three freezer drawers, two dishwashers and the storage space that Debra needed for her business. "It is a long and lean space," he says. "I approached it from an artistic standpoint by making furniturelike cabinetry that almost looks like sculpture."

The pantry was moved to the hallway, and in addition to cooking, eating and food-prep zones, there is a dessert/butler area that comes in handy for staging large events. Two islands, which can be connected by a floating retractable stainless steel panel, were added. "I put my stand mixers on the panel," says Debra, adding that the islands double as tables. "And the surface is practical because it wipes up easily."

Monopoint halogen fixtures on the Venetian plaster ceiling allow the illumination to shift. "This way, the food can be highlighted," says designer Theresa Scelfo, whose eponymous company is based in Morristown, New Jersey. "They make the room look sexy."

Debra favors fresh fare and chose eco-friendly features that meshed with the family's healthy lifestyle. The maple cabinets, for example, are made of reconstituted veneers, the stone floor is travertine, the backsplash is glass that resembles bamboo and the countertops are Volga blue granite. "I wanted natural and organic materials," she says.

When the weather is good and the party is big, the work space expands: There is a second kitchen, which includes a pizza oven, in the backyard. Robert loves to act as the prep chef, and the kids, too, are right at home in the kitchen. "I love living in my kitchen," Debra says. "The room has breathed new life into the house." ♦