

Making a Galley

A new entry and a built-in breakfast nook transformed this room from a hallway to a destination

BY STEFAN HAMPDEN

The first time I met with Kimberly and Ryan Hamilton to talk about their kitchen, we sat around the dining-room table. Their affection for their home, a Craftsman-style house built in 1915, was irrepresible. They talked about the thoughtful detailing throughout the house, especially the newly restored built-in hutch in the corner of the dining room.

The only glaring weakness in the house was the kitchen. Poorly remodeled in the 1980s, it doubled as the primary route to the backyard (floor plan p. 76). With three doors into the space, the kitchen was a narrow hallway that zigzagged around the counter, past the stove, by the breakfast nook, and out the back door. The house was already built to the backyard setback line, and the bit of outdoor space on the south side was the only usable yard. So a big addition was out. We had to make every square foot of existing space count, and that meant rerouting foot traffic out of the kitchen.

I spread some tracing paper on the dining table and scribbled a few alternative plans that might rationalize the location of the doorways and the back door. The schemes all led to one conclusion: The hutch was in the wrong place. The irony was not lost on Ryan and Kimberly. Good-natured clients that they were, they had a healthy, eye-rolling laugh about it and agreed that work on the hutch wasn't quite finished.

Move a door, gain a kitchen

Flipping the kitchen doorway and the hutch (photos facing page) allowed the door to the yard to be next to the new kitchen entry, creating a compact circulation path. The space taken up by the doorways from the hall and the dining room could now be used for a pantry, a linen closet, a built-in oven, a warming drawer, and a microwave (floor plan p. 76). These changes freed up more space for countertops.

The other key to a more efficient plan was moving the breakfast nook from the back of the kitchen to a new bay window near the door. The kitchen bay mirrors another one in the dining room; I

***Long-gone galley.** As a dead end, the remodeled kitchen has become an efficiently organized U-shaped workhorse with plenty of counter space. The compact breakfast nook has storage beneath the benches and a view of the garden. Photo taken at A on floor plan.*

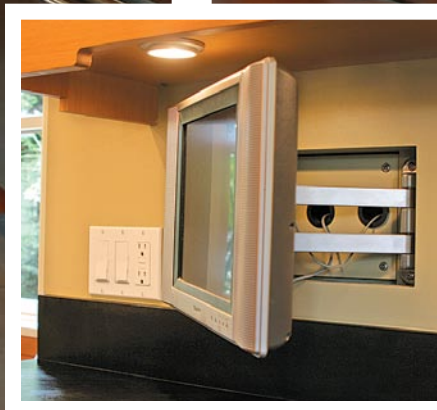


Kitchen Count



One move, several benefits.

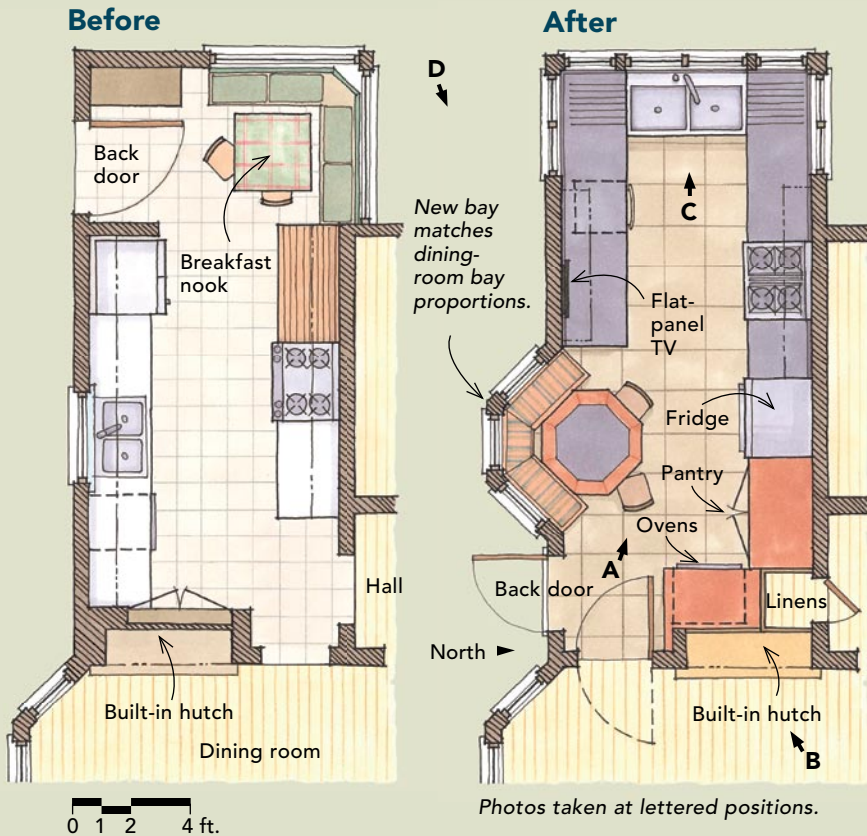
Originally, the dining room's built-in hutch was to the left of the kitchen doorway (inset photo, right). Moving the hutch gave it more prominence. Moving the doorway shortened the trip to the new back door and the yard beyond. Photos taken at B on floor plan.



Flat screen goes right, then left. Mounted on a pivoting arm that folds into a wall recess, the TV can be adjusted for viewing from the breakfast booth or the sink workstation.

MORE COUNTERTOPS, LESS TRAFFIC

Two doorways on one side and one on the other turned the original galley kitchen into a hallway. The location of the breakfast nook also contributed to the awkward layout. Relocating the hutch and moving the doorways took traffic pressure off the kitchen. The new bay window became an ideal berth for the breakfast nook, opening the rest of the kitchen to contiguous countertop workspaces, anchored by the fridge, the pantry, and the ovens in one neat cluster. Photo right taken at C on floor plan.



A new back door between bays. The breakfast-nook bay takes its shape and detailing from the bay in the dining room to its right. The new door is between them, sheltered by an extension of the existing shed roof. Photos taken at D on floor plan.

integrated the bays by extending the existing roof over the new one and over the entry in between (photo left). These circulation changes turned the west side of the kitchen into a dead end, allowing me to join the opposing counters into a U-shaped workspace.

Maximum efficiency in a tight space

With only a 4-ft.-wide aisle between the kitchen counters, we decided that a big double-bowl sink would be the best use of the short side of the U-shaped counter. I couldn't find an off-the-shelf sink that exactly fit Ryan and Kimberly's needs, so I collaborated with Craig Jeppesen at Metal Masters Northwest (www.metalmastersnw.com) to design a sink that would take full advantage of the available space. Given the size of the bowls, we used 16-ga. stainless steel and a ¼-in. fillet radius for the corners.

The sink is overlapped on both sides by Fireslate-2 countertops (www.fireslate.com). Sloped grooves milled into the counters act as drainboards, directing drips back into the sink. Freshly installed and sealed with tung oil, the counters looked great at first.

Drawings: Martha Garstang Hill. "Before" photos: Stefan Hampden.

A custom sink and a garden view crown this kitchen



Wrapped in windows, the end of the U-shaped kitchen basks in sunshine. Counters with integral drainboards flank the sink. Below, pullout bins by Häfele make the most of base-cabinet space.



But the finish turned blotchy in just a few months. The manufacturer recommends reapplications of tung oil every four to six months to maintain the counters. If you want Fireslate-2 countertops and you want a uniform luster, be aware that it is a high-maintenance material.

The inside-corner cabinets on both sides of the sink are fitted with ingenious pivoting storage shelves. Made by Häfele (Magic Corner 1, www.hafele.com), these gracefully sliding, contortionistic wire cages do an excellent job of making accessible the impossible-to-reach corners of base cabinets.

I took advantage of another space-saving device on the wall by the breakfast nook. A flat-panel TV mounted on a pivoting arm swings out so that it can be viewed from the nook or from the sink counter. The folding arm tucks into a recess in the wall (model 75/100 CL, www.omnimount.com).

Benches border a stable table

Although the old breakfast nook was inefficiently planned, it was well used, and a replacement was

high on the list of desires. Built-in benches with slide-in seating require less space than chairs, but they also require plenty of leg clearance so that diners can get in and out of them comfortably. The benches trace the octagonal footprint of the bay window, which strongly influenced our choice of a pedestal table with a very sturdy post.

Supporting the octagonal table is a steel column with steel crossbars concealed inside a shell of vertical-grain Douglas fir that matches the rest of the cabinetry. The steel post is bolted to a concrete footing in the crawlspace and is further supported by the floor framing. We're pretty sure it's not going anywhere. □

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