



above The two-tier bay windows could have been an overpowering design element, says architect Dwight McNeill, but arches on the other walls help bring down their feeling of height. With the kitchen at the front of their home, Julia and her family feel connected to their neighborhood.

"I saw these beautiful Shaker-style cherry cabinets, and I knew they'd form a great centerpiece for the room," she recalls. "There was nothing complicated about them. The design was simple, and they said 'warm' to me."

Elizabeth decided to complement the custom cabinets with a tumbled-marble backsplash, granite countertops, tile flooring, and top-of-the-line appliances. Pricy choices, perhaps, but ones made for the long haul.

"We were prepared for the project to be expensive," Elizabeth says, "but our reasoning was that I spend about 85 percent of my time in the kitchen, first of all. And second of all, we're not going anywhere. We built the kitchen to last forever."

The palette for the addition—ocher and terra-cotta—stems from the hues in the backsplash. The ocher is a deepened, more dramatic version of the gold in the marble, and the terra-cotta marries the backsplash colors with the cherry of the cabinets. The deep green of the granite on the countertops and island provides a gleaming but earthy bridge between the other two colors.

The result, Elizabeth says, is an ambience guests find as inviting and comfortable as a neighborhood coffee shop. "You're attracted to it and you just have to come in and sit down," she says.

Come in and sit down they do, whether it's children congregating after school, neighbors dropping by to discuss the day's goings-on, or family members gathering for meals. To make room for all of them, Elizabeth and Gilmer worked to keep the kitchen clutter-free, adding deep, accessible storage to such places as the island and above the cabinets.

"They needed a lot of places to put things, but we didn't want the room to be cabinet-heavy, because that would have darkened it," Gilmer explains. "We wanted to keep the feeling light and bright." She and Elizabeth encouraged that by placing soaring windows at the breakfast bay, reprising them with glass fronts on the upper cabinets, installing a pocket door to access the pantry, and keeping appliances as unobtrusive as possible.

A focus of activity is the built-in hutch, a display and storage unit flanked by a snack area and a small desk. "It's a great place for the kids to fix their lunches and for me to sort things and just generally keep up with paperwork," she says of this area of the kitchen.

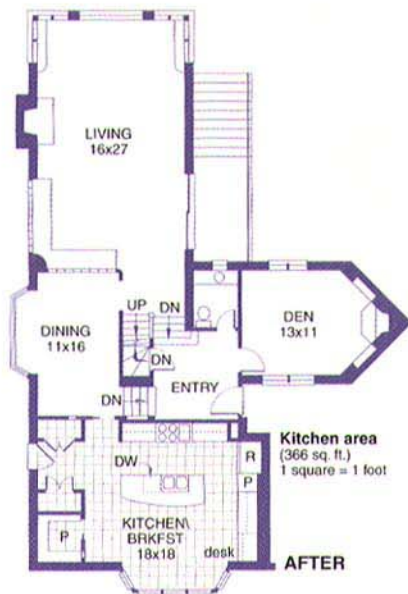
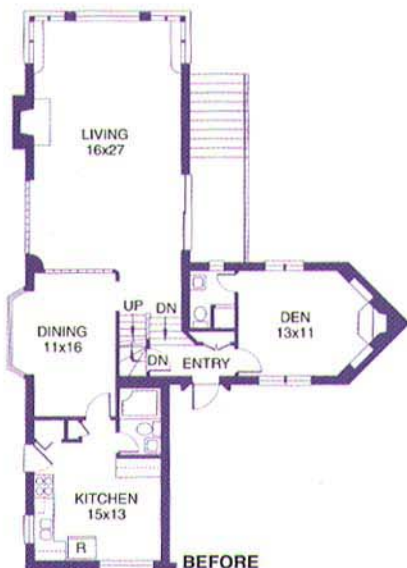
"It's also designed to look like furniture, so it doesn't have this 'look at me, I'm purely functional' appearance. It's a

the  
heart of  
a hybrid home

## Planning Points

For Elizabeth and Tom Patton, creating an attractive and comfortable kitchen in their Washington, D.C., home meant adding on and rethinking the existing exterior. With the help of architect Dwight McNeill, the Pattons made these improvements.

- Gutted the existing kitchen—formerly a garage—and knocked down two exterior walls to make way for a brick addition.
- Filled the former galley-style kitchen and additional square footage with a spacious L-shape kitchen that includes an island and breakfast area.
- Placed the new breakfast area, where the family eats most of its meals, in a sunny alcove fronted by soaring bay windows with a view of the street.
- Enlarged and repositioned the front entry, while keeping a separate entrance directly into the kitchen. New walkways and landscaping better define the entries.



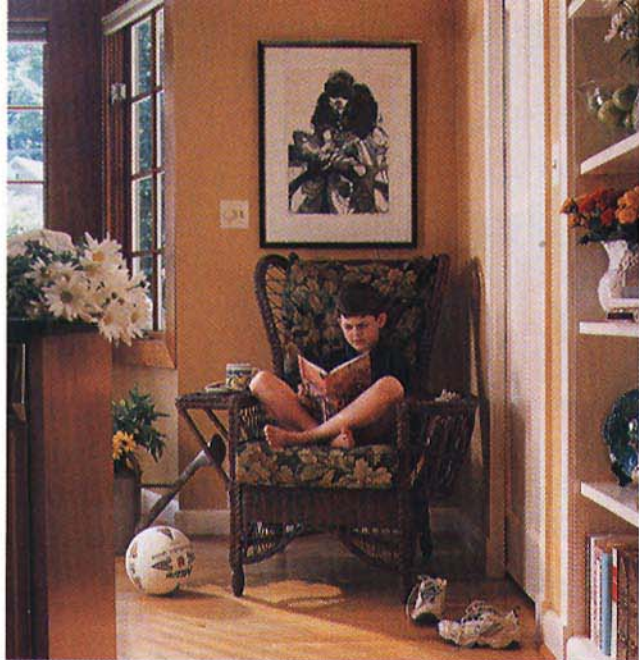
## Lessons to Learn

- **UPFRONT BEAUTY** The kitchen may be the heart of the home, but it doesn't have to be in the middle or back of the structure. A forward position energizes a kitchen.
- **POINTS OF ENTRY** If you want the kitchen to be a gathering spot, don't make it hard to find. Leave an easy route from front door to kitchen, and consider a separate side or back way into the room.
- **HOW HIGH THE ROOM?** Decide if the design payoff justifies costly high ceilings. Is upper air worth it?



right The addition continues the home's existing brickwork and Craftsman rooflines, resulting in a unified exterior. Divided-light windows and stone are also Craftsman nods.





above This niche just off the main portion of the kitchen is a favorite place for Elliot to read and his mother's favorite place to relax after preparing a family meal. Built-in shelves provide room to store and display books, collectibles, and flowers.

nice blend of really striking and really practical."

The Pattons' kitchen—striking and practical, aesthetic and accessible—inspires pride among those involved.

"They took a really unconventional-looking house and added something to it to make it more usable for them," McNeill notes, "but at the same time, they didn't want to turn the house into a showplace. So they have this practical new room that also looks just great and makes people take notice. That's a good combination."

Elizabeth agrees. "Since the addition, the house has more of a uniform style now, though it retained some of the weird little quirks that added to its charm in the first place," she says. "Now it looks more comfortable, almost like it has a certain attitude. But it's still the house we loved from the very first time we saw it." □

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the  
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## BE A REMODELING SURVIVOR

Kitchen remodeling can throw family life into chaos. Faced with weeks or months without a place to cook, many families throw in the kitchen towel and opt to dine out or even move out. The Pattons did their best to live life as usual during their eight-month renovation, hunkering down in a makeshift basement kitchen. Here are some tips for coping with a kitchen remodeling.

- **Hold a family meeting to discuss the project.** The Pattons let their two children, Elliot, age 10, and Julia, age 8, know how the family's daily routine might be disrupted. "We told the kids exactly what would be happening, how long it would take, and that there would be workers in and out," Elizabeth recalls. "We thought they'd feel more secure if there were no surprises."

- **Create a timeline.** Talk to children about the project's progress, showing or giving daily updates. Depending on the ages of the children, it might help to mark off days and weeks on some kind of fun calendar. "It's harder for the kids to grasp time, so explain it in any way that works, but make sure they know you're getting closer to the end every day," Elizabeth suggests.

- **Explore appliance alternatives.** If possible, set up an alternate kitchen in another part of the house, such as a basement, moving appliances temporarily or finding reasonable substitutes. Buy an inexpensive dorm-style refrigerator for essential perishables. Microwave ovens are portable and can cook a variety of foods. Hot plates are versatile and affordable. When the weather cooperates, your grill is another cooking option.

- **Simplify menus.** Your alternate kitchen will likely offer little or no counter space, storage, or sink access. Plan meals around dishes that involve little prep work and cleanup. Frozen and one-step convenience foods abound, but you could also eat seasonally, bringing home fresh produce from the farmer's market. Otherwise, look for foods with long shelf life, and stock up.

- **Think disposable.** If the sink and dishwasher are gone, cleaning up is a challenge. Paper or plastic plates, cups, and utensils save you from doing dishes in the bathroom sink (or tub). But don't let hygiene slip just because the kitchen has moved. Safe food handling—clean hands and utensils, proper storage temperatures, and thorough cooking—is vital no matter where you prepare meals.

- **Conquer the chaos.** Viewed as a challenge, not a crisis, a remodeling can actually strengthen the family, as everyone breaks out of the routine and pitches in to get by. "We had a lot of family time in the basement and outdoors," Elizabeth says. "We played games and talked and read and just enjoyed one another's company." The day-to-day lack of control, she says, "forced us to slow down a little and relax and take things as they came."