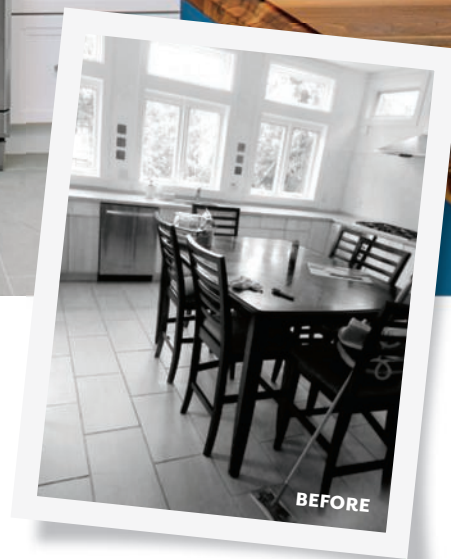




Covering the metal vent hood to match the cabinetry allows it to blend in rather than jump out.

Coming Clean

An avid entertainer turns a dated Washington, D.C., kitchen into a happy place fit for hosting friends (including the four-legged kind)



NADIA NEJAIME, A REAL ESTATE AGENT in Washington, D.C., sees kitchens all the time. So when she decided to update the one in her 1914 Foursquare Colonial, she knew exactly how to relay her wishes to her interior designer, Christopher Patrick. “You can always tell a seventies or eighties kitchen,” says Nejaime, whose kitchen was last renovated in 2000. “What I craved was something classic—nothing super trendy that would go out of style in 10 years. And I wanted white. If you can see the dirt, you know it’s time to clean it!” It was also important to pump up the functionality. Nejaime hosts parties at least once a month—“from small gatherings to big bashes,” she says—and her previous kitchen couldn’t keep up with the demand. It had a large footprint but no island, plus inexpensive materials that led to broken cabinetry and cracked tiles. She needed a place for guests to mingle and a bar to keep drinks flowing. “This was the home’s 100-year-old birthday gift,” says Nejaime. Here, we see how rethinking everything—including the kitchen sink—keeps the central space functional and soiree-ready.

PROBLEM #1: Short on prep and party space

SOLUTION: A new island serves as a buffet when entertaining. The bold color of the base cabinets (Blue Lagoon; *omegacabinetry.com*) and warm walnut top make it the focal point of the room. Nejaime says, “I didn’t want the walnut polished because I like the natural look. Every few weeks it’s aerobic exercise to wax it, and I’m constantly policing for coasters!”

STYLING: CHARLOTTE SAFARI



PROBLEM #2: Didn't flow with the rest of the home

SOLUTION: "Nejaime wanted the kitchen to feel inspired by the history of the house," says Patrick. Handmade glazed subway tile, marble countertops, and more traditional cabinet doors—Shaker style with bead detailing—all feel classic. "We installed window moldings to match the trim in the rest of the house, and that really harkens back to the style," says the homeowner. Even the hardware has a vintage feel: The flair on the edges is inspired by 1920s materials. Hiding the fridge, dishwasher, and vent hood behind cabinetry gives the kitchen a seamless look and disguises modern amenities.

PROBLEM #3: Poor lighting

SOLUTION: Pretty shaded lamps (Bryant Sconces; *circa lighting.com*) by the sink offer much-needed task lighting



and can be dimmed for mood as well. "We also hid LED lighting underneath the floating shelves," Nejaime says. "These lights are great by themselves when I want something softer for entertaining." The two pendant lights (not pictured, Cosette Lantern; *curreycodealers.com*) above the island were a harder sell. "I thought pendants

would be overwhelming and block the windows," she explains. "I also thought that combining gold with chrome fixtures and a stainless steel stove would look weird. But now I see that mixing metals adds a layer of warmth."

PROBLEM #4: Too much countertop clutter

SOLUTION: Located to the

FAR LEFT: A clever redesign of the stairs during the reno created a few extra feet to squeeze in a self-serve bar. **LEFT:** A double sink previously made it tough to clean large pans, but this new roomy single-bowl design flaunts an architectural faucet. "She needed something intense—a wimpy faucet wouldn't have looked right," says Patrick.

right of the fridge (not pictured), an appliance garage with a lift-up door "allows more space to store the random ugly nonsense: dog food, mail, and all of the other unsightly stuff you don't want any guests to see," says Patrick. He also installed an outlet inside the garage, which means Nejaime no longer has to drag the toaster or coffeemaker down the counter to find a plug.

PROBLEM #5: Limited storage

SOLUTION: Patrick redesigned the pantry, eliminating the walk-in portion to allow for deeper shelves and removing the dropped ceiling to bring storage space all the way up to the top. The open shelving, both flanking the stove and situated in the bar area, keeps everyday dishes within reach and the kitchen airy. 🐾

Designed for Dogs

PROBLEM #6: Gunther hogged all the floorspace and kept getting in the way of the cook.

SOLUTION: Carving out a nook in the island for the pup keeps him close to the action but not underfoot. Gunther's spot is much more than just a cabinet with a cushion though. "The door features open latticework for airflow, and it faces the windows to give him lots of light," explains Patrick. With no more need for a kennel, which used to sit to the right of the stairs, there's now enough room in that space for a bar.

