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The Italian Job

A New Jersey kitchen with European style

By Sallie Moffat

For the owners of this Bernardsville, NJ, home, renovating their kitchen not only meant creating a functional and practical space, but also infusing it with some serious style. "They wanted an Italian kitchen," said Lorena Polon, senior designer at Snaidero USA, New York, who worked closely with the couple during the transformation. And that's exactly what they got. From the ceiling to the floor, clean lines dominate this contemporary kitchen, providing depth as well as a modern sense of sophistication.

Because the kitchen adjoins the family room—which before the remodel was separated by a half wall—one of Polon's main goals was to connect the two areas to create one cohesive space. Now measuring 900 sq. ft. (approximately 400 sq. ft. of which belongs to the kitchen), the combined room has a unified aesthetic, thanks in part to the kitchen cabinetry, which Polon also put to work in the family room to bring the formerly distinct areas together.

Visually elongating the already lengthy room, this dark cabinetry lines both sides of the kitchen and makes up the

base of the island, which, with its uninterrupted wood panels, showcases the beauty of the coffee-brown larch wood and its wire-brushed finish. "It really brings out the graining and has a beautiful texture to it," said Polon, a quality that also imbues the kitchen with a formal, furniture-like feel.

Resulting from the abundance of base cabinets, the kitchen has not one, but three expansive countertops—in addition to a very long dining table—which each play their own role in the set-up of the kitchen's work areas. "The homeowners had a direction," said Polon. "They knew how they wanted to divide the space and how they wanted to use it." Consequently, one side of the island is designated for the cooks and the other side for the clients' children and guests. There's also a section at the back of the kitchen that serves as a bar/entertainment area.

As well as a professional-style cooktop and double ovens, the cook's area is equipped with a large, single-bowl sink; a dishwasher, integrated into cabinetry with a matching door panel; a pot filler; and storage drawers with a stainless



SOURCES

Designer: Lorena Polon—Snaidero USA, New York; www.snaidero-usa.com **Interior designer:** Niv Interior Design & Decoration, Short Hills, NJ; www.nivdesign.net **Manufacturers:** Cabinetry: Snaidero; Countertops: CaesarStone; Faucets and pot filler: Dornbracht; Refrigerator, freezer and wine refrigerators: Sub-Zero; Ovens and cooktop: Wolf; Ventilation hood: Viking; Microwave drawers: Sharp; Dishwashers: Miele **Photography:** © Wing Wong\Memories TTL

channel for easy opening. In the island, additional storage drawers accommodate a built-in microwave drawer and a trash station.

Like the cook's area, the kids' zone is self-contained, so the children can find everything they need without having to enter the cooking space. On the kitchen's perimeter walls, they have their own sink, a microwave drawer, ample storage and access to the refrigerator, while integrated into the outside of the island are a second paneled dishwasher and a recycling station. "It worked out very nicely," said Polon. "Everyone has an area, but they're still part of what's going on."

Bridging both zones is the 13-ft. x 2-ft. 6-in. island, where a third sink can be used from both sides, thanks to a centered faucet installed on a swivel. The island also provides an alternative sitting area to the dining table. At the end closest to the family room, the base cabinetry has been replaced by two tapered legs so stools can be pulled up under the countertop.

Not to be forgotten, at the back of the room behind the kids' area, the bar/entertainment zone contains all of the kitchen's refrigeration. Two wine refrigerators—one for red and one for white—are flanked by separate refrigerator and freezer units that have been integrated into the cabinetry with matching door panels. This way, guests and kids alike can help themselves to drinks and snacks.

To keep the kitchen light despite the dark cabinetry, Polon chose white quartz countertops with a special edge, backsplashes made up of 3/8-in. squares of Thassos marble—"tiny chiclets that have a sparkle and shimmer to them," she said—large-format light-colored porcelain floor tiles and oversized white pendants that create a soft glow.

"It's really a kitchen that I think came together very well," said Polon. "It flows, it makes sense and it's not confusing to look at. Everything is in the proper location." Add to that modern, clean lines and European styling and you've got an Italian kitchen with sophistication to spare. ■

The kitchen contains designated areas for the cooks, the children and the guests. The area behind the island is dedicated to the cooks, but on the opposite side, the clients' kids and guests can congregate around the dining table (below), help themselves to beverages or relax in the family room (bottom) without getting in the way.

