



# Same Space, New Specs

» Taking down a wall and adding color opened up a cramped kitchen and gave it a vibrant new look

BY JILL CONNORS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG SEGAL

MOST HOMEOWNERS START a renovation with plans on paper. California kitchen designer Dana Jones and her contractor-husband, Huck Jenkins, started theirs with a reciprocating saw. When the pair bought their 1950s ranch in Long Beach, they knew the kitchen would have to go. "It had no counter space, old cabinets, inefficient appliances, and an ant problem," says Dana. "We immediately tore down the wall between the kitchen and living room since we wanted an open plan."

Still, the kitchen design stayed pretty sane: no pro-grade appliances, no glitzy surfaces, no carved-wood details. "I see that stuff all the time in my business," says Dana. "My tastes are more streamlined, which suits the simplicity of the house." She chose concrete floors, engineered stone counters, and contemporary bamboo base cabinets that mix with traditional flat-panel pantry doors and V-groove wallboards for something of a modern-farmhouse look. Blocks of apple green play off other bright accent colors used throughout the house.

Huck did much of the work, from gutting the room to the studs to running the electrical to staining the floors, which helped them stay within their \$40,000 budget. Says Dana of the four-month kitchen redo, "We needed to change everything about the space functionally and aesthetically—and we did."



**BEFORE** The old kitchen was closed off save for a doorway and pass-through. **AFTER** The green pantry wall (far right) covers the spot where a back door stood. The concrete subfloor, exposed when vinyl was removed, was cleaned and colored with an acid-based stain. Toekicks were built 1 inch higher than normal to allow for future installation of wood or tile.





# TIPS FROM KITCHEN DESIGNER DANA JONES

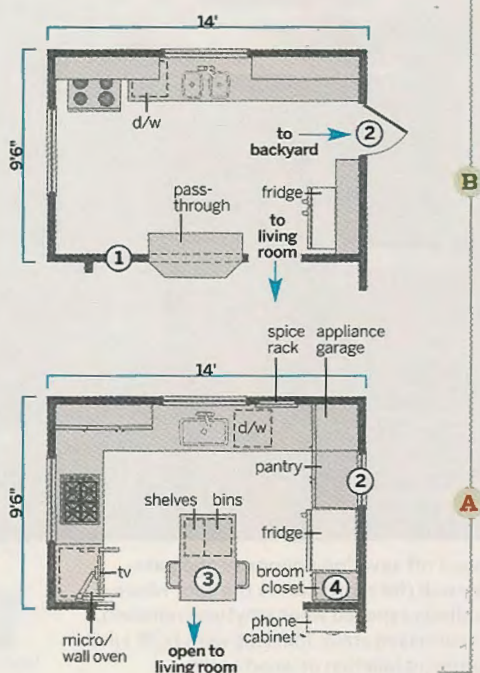
Plan now for future changes. "We know we'll be able to change the look of our kitchen quite easily just by painting the green cabinetry a different color, and leaving the neutral bamboo cabinets and countertops alone."

Choose a countertop that suits your lifestyle. "We considered marble, granite, and other natural stones, but chose an engineered stone because it has the tactile qualities of the real thing but is nonporous so it won't stain—I'm a messy cook."

Every window counts. "To get as much natural light as possible in the small space, we kept the two existing windows, added two skylights, and put a small window in the pantry wall where a door once stood."



- B** BEFORE The old 9½-by-14-foot kitchen had little counter space and a doorway interrupting the L-shaped layout.
- A** AFTER Removing the wall shared with the living room and closing up the back door made room for a handy U-shaped design with counters, cabinetry, and appliances on all three walls. An island even added seating.



## The Plan

» Open up the kitchen and maximize efficiency without expanding the room's footprint.

### What They Did

- 1 | TORE DOWN A WALL—AND MORE.** The homeowners demolished the wall dividing the kitchen from the living room to create an open-plan space without enlarging the footprint. Later, they took the rest of the room down to the studs.
- 2 | CLOSED UP A BACK DOOR FOR A U-SHAPED LAYOUT.** A door leading to the backyard was removed and all three remaining walls fitted out with cabinets and appliances. The cooktop sits under one of the two existing windows, which offers a garden view but stays shut when the burners are lit (a downdraft vents to the outdoors). Food storage is contained in floor-to-ceiling pantry cabinets that also house the fridge. A small window was installed up high where the door had been.
- 3 | ADDED A CENTER ISLAND.** The 2½-by-4½-foot island offers seating for two, plus shelves and pull-out bins on the sink side.
- 4 | MADE ROOM FOR BROOMS.** A 15-inch-wide broom closet next to the fridge hides mops and brooms from sight.





1

"The most remarkable thing about the kitchen is the color—the apple-green cabinets give the room personality and tie it to the rest of the house." —DANA JONES, DESIGNER AND HOMEOWNER



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## The Details

» A dose of color and rich, natural materials bring smart storage ideas to life.

**1 | THE CUSTOM SPICE CABINET** is designed like a bathroom medicine chest, with a chalkboard where the mirror would be.

**2 | THE FAUX APRON-FRONT SINK** was made by facing the front of a stock 30-inch single-bowl stainless-steel Blanco sink with the same Caesarstone engineered stone used for the countertop and backsplash.

**3 | THE BAMBOO TELEPHONE CABINET** around the living room corner echoes the kitchen's Plyboo base cabinets—and is a clever idea for storing hefty phone books and creating a dedicated message center. The vivid blue wall plays off the kitchen's apple-green cabinets.

**4 | SMALL-APPLIANCE STORAGE** is provided by pantry cabinets that run right down to the top of the countertop, keeping clutter to a minimum.

**5 | THE MICROWAVE AND WALL OVEN** are housed in a cabinet topped by an LCD TV. The TV is mounted on an articulating bracket for viewing from anywhere in the room.



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