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# Classic Simplicity

Major structural changes and intentional design choices to maximize storage space in this Bethesda, Maryland, kitchen renovation create a cozy, classic space perfect for hosting.

BY LAURA SHIMKO  
REMODELER: STEPHEN GORDON  
PHOTOGRAPHER: STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

**|ABOVE| RESTRUCTURE & REDESIGN.** Removing a load-bearing wall is a major structural change, and Stephen's team had to compensate by installing this large beam and columns. "The designer and architect worked on structure first, then came up with ideas to make the columns not stand out but be seamless," he says. To accommodate this change, they ended up making a larger island. "We made the island bigger to hide some of that mass," he says.

*Making your dream kitchen a reality* can be a daunting task, especially if your current kitchen needs a major overhaul to accomplish your goals. For Stephen Gordon, President of Insite Builders and Remodeling, turning clients' wishes into reality is a passion. Incorporating the classic design style of the rest of the house, Stephen took a galley-style kitchen and opened it up to be the perfect space for entertaining. "The clients wanted to have the great room concept," he says. Built in the 1970s, the original kitchen was traditional, segmented off from the dining room, family room and foyer. "The client wanted to be able to enjoy her family in the kitchen while she was cooking," he says.

The solution was to remove the load-bearing wall separating the kitchen space from the living room, as well





as replace an old walk-in pantry with an open bar area. “That made space for entertaining and cooking, and she can see a third of the house from her kitchen,” he says. Removing the load-bearing wall presented a challenge architecturally, so Stephen’s team got to work to install a beam above the island. “We wanted to keep the view between the two rooms, so we wanted the beam to be sleek and sound,” he says.

Other thoughtful design choices in this space highlight the unique needs of the client. “We put cabinets everywhere so she could have everything she needed for entertaining,” Stephen says. The removal of the walk-in pantry similarly allowed for more space, as well as a bar area to serve drinks. **CB**

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 128.

**[TOP LEFT] ONE LOVE.** Incorporating multiple textures and colors in a space adds depth and charm. The red oak floors are original to the home and extend into the living room as well as the foyer, connecting the spaces visually. The wood texture brings warmth and a contrast to the predominantly white palette. The subway-tile backsplash is a classic accent, echoing the overall classic style of the home. “It makes it all look one,” Stephen says.

**[TOP RIGHT] EASY ENTERTAINING.** Having a place to store beverages that is easy to access for entertaining was a must for the homeowners. Stephen’s team decided to convert the original walk-in pantry into a little bar area. “It is also 3 to 3½ feet in, so she can be cooking, and someone else could be making drinks, but they won’t run into each other.”

**[RIGHT] STORAGE, PREP & SERVING.** “We completely reconfigured the appliances, as this used to be a galley-style kitchen, and converted the pantry into pull-out drawers,” he says. Ensuring there was plenty of walk space throughout the kitchen was another primary concern. “Between the refrigerator and island, we left ample space for the door to be open and someone to walk by,” he says.

*Tips*

- “Pick appliances that you’re going to use, not just the trendy ones,” he says. “They will take up valuable real estate in your kitchen.”
- When choosing cabinets, look for ways to maximize storage that also make your life easier. “Make sure that your cabinets behind the doors function the way you live,” he says. “Most cabinets are soft close and pullouts, but there are all kinds of creative ways to take care of blind corners or heavy appliances.”
- Choose a countertop to match your lifestyle. “Decide how much you want to take care of it,” he says. “Limestone or marble are more of a risk, while quartz is more bulletproof for a family.”

