

Transforming a Galley Kitchen

By Annette DePaepe

Although a galley kitchen can be a workable layout, this one was long, dark, and confined by narrow entries at each end. The hallway effect was aggravated by the dark cabinets, dark vinyl floor, and a coppertone wall oven. There were several existing windows along the sink wall, but the natural light and view were blocked by the deep roof overhangs outside. The plan was to gut the entire

space and install new cabinets, appliances, and surfaces. About the only thing worth saving was the interior brick wall that backed the fireplace in the adjacent living room.

This was the customers' second home, which they used every weekend as a country retreat. In the not-too-distant future, they hoped to retire to the home permanently. It was important to them

that the new kitchen serve not only their current weekend needs, but future needs as well.

Of particular importance to them was the cooking center, since they entertained frequently and their specialty was French cuisine, which requires standing at the cooktop for long stretches while sauces simmer. Along with this, more storage and counter space was requested. It was also important that the space and the entries to it be enlarged to better accommodate their casual style of entertaining.

Opening Up the Space

The key to opening up the space visually was removing 5 feet of the brick wall that stood between the kitchen and the living/dining room, and replacing this section of wall with a peninsula. We also added to the sense of spaciousness by replacing the existing row of high windows with a 6-foot-wide garden-style window that extended down to the 6-inch-high shelf at the back of the countertop. Two large skylights were installed to bring in natural light from all angles.

Next, the function of the kitchen was addressed. The eating nook was sacrificed to enlarge the adjacent master bathroom, but the new, smaller kitchen actually seemed larger and more open due to the L-shaped layout with the peninsula. The result was a triangle pathway formed between the three main work centers: the sink, range, and refrigerator. The most frequently used center, the sink, was placed at the center of the triangle to further maximize function.

The new shape allowed us to increase both base and wall cabinet storage, as well as provide additional countertop area. Extra storage was obtained by using 15-inch-deep wall cabinets, including those over the peninsula. The double

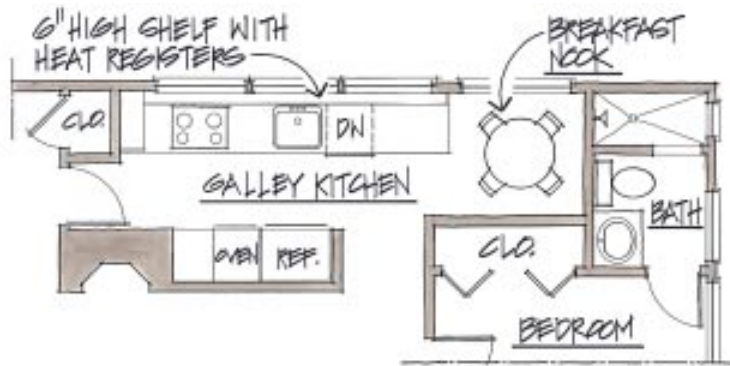


The original long, narrow galley kitchen (above) was poorly lit and confining. The remodeled space (right), though smaller, felt larger and more open due to better lighting, light colors, and a new L-shaped layout.

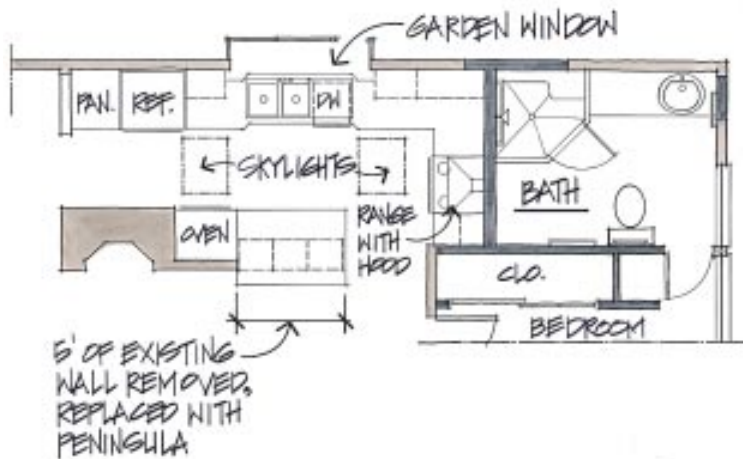


Galley to L-Shape

Before



After



A clever reworking of this tight space turned a dark kitchen hallway into a comfortable space for cooking and entertaining. The key was removing a section of wall to transform the galley layout to an L that turns around the new peninsula.

A natural maple peninsula cabinet with a see-through wall cabinet replaced the section of wall removed. This created additional work and storage space while preserving the open feeling of the new layout.



access wall cabinets over the peninsula have glass on both sides to maintain the visual openness between the kitchen and the adjacent living/dining area.

The refrigerator and a tall pantry cabinet were located at the end of the long wall of the L so that the only area of the room to remain relatively closed in was used as storage rather than as a work area.

Cabinet Choices

We used full-overlay, flat cabinet doors, giving a clean, uncluttered look that would be easy to maintain and would not collect dust when the kitchen was not in use. White plastic laminate was selected for all kitchen cabinets (except for the island) for easy maintenance, and to brighten the space. White will reflect the most light and keep the room looking bright, even on a cloudy day. We chose a light maple finish for the peninsula cabinets to create a sense of warmth and to make the transition into the living/dining area.

To tie the two finishes together visually, we installed a maple floor and used maple moldings throughout the kitchen. This type of contrast at the counter edge and between perpendicular surfaces such as the floor and base cabinets will help older users with failing eyesight work more safely in the kitchen. A single row of decorative ceramic tiles at the base of the backsplash defines the back of the countertop and keeps the white-on-white area from looking too clinical.

The Cooking Center

Because the most important area to the owners was the cooking center, we wanted to make it special. We positioned it at the center of the new wall, making it the focal point of the space, and visible from the adjacent living/dining area. Instead of wall cabinets to the left of the range, we opted to hang a pot rack on the wall, leaving space below for a favorite shelf the homeowners had purchased in Europe. This meant that their favorite pots and utensils would be at their fingertips. Other frequently used items were also kept visible and within easy reach by

the glass-fronted cabinet to the right of the range and open shelves in the left-hand corner.

The cooking center was visually highlighted by creating a column of stainless steel that spanned from the floor to the ceiling. Beginning with a stainless-steel professional range, then a 30-inch-wide steel sheet at the backsplash, it ends with a triangular hood with exposed ducting that extends all the way up to the vaulted ceiling.

Installing a large stainless steel sink with a drainboard visually ties the sink to the cooking center, and adds some consistency to the overall design of the kitchen. We also made the sink center special by recessing the sink base and dishwasher 3 inches from adjacent

cabinets. This is set off by a 45-degree angle at the front counter edges, which is repeated at the 6-inch ledge that runs behind the sink and along the length of the wall. This ledge extends into the garden window and functions as the window sill. The cabinet offset at the sink helps make the space look less like a hallway, and also makes the window operation easier for the homeowners.

Accessories

In addition, we added a number of storage and accessory features that maximize the function of the kitchen. These include:

- Sixteen roll-out shelves in pantry and base cabinets

- Slide-out tabletop between the refrigerator and the sink
- Wastebasket and towel bar under the sink
- Tilt-out drawer front with stainless-steel sponge tray under the sink
- Silverware drawer at the right of the dishwasher.
- Pull-out recycling basket in peninsula base cabinet
- All glass doors or open wall cabinets
- Three hanging glass racks in peninsula wall cabinets
- Two warming lights in the hood above tilt-down wire racks



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