

NH 2008
Kitchen of the Year

At just 148 square feet, this formerly dysfunctional kitchen was made stylish and liveable with a few small changes – and a small budget.

CAROL VENOLIA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MICHAEL JENSEN

SMALL & BEAUTIFUL

This kitchen proves that enlightened doesn't have to mean enlarged.

Katey Miller and Scott Goodrich put up with the troublesome kitchen in their century-old Seattle home for nearly a decade. "The sink was in one room, and the stove and fridge in another; if we were making pasta, we had to carry the pot from one room to the other," Katey says. "There was hardly any counter space, and there was maybe one electrical outlet. It was a challenging kitchen."

When they couldn't stand it any longer, Katey and Scott turned to Katey's friend Jan Kunasangeamporn, a fellow painter whose aesthetic sense Katey admired. Kunasangeamporn's firm, Batt + Lear, is dedicated to green building, so she introduced Katey and Scott to the concept. "It was an eye-opening experience," Katey says. "Now I'm convinced that it's important to use green materials. I also think they're more beautiful—especially these reclaimed woods."

The main criterion—both green and economical—was that the new kitchen stay within the narrow footprint of the original. "The space had a really nice character, and it just seemed that we could work with it and make it more delightful," Batt + Lear co-owner Jason Lear says.

Kunasangeamporn, with construction lead Kevin Svik, made a few simple moves to improve the layout dramatically. They relocated the main sink from the pantry into the main kitchen, shifted the refrigerator and range to improve workflow, and created continuous counter space by relocating the door to the adjacent mud porch. Then, she added a new glass door (locally manufactured) to bring in more sunlight. Finally, she opened up the solid wall between the pantry and dining room, installing a bar top made of reclaimed Madrona (a hardwood native to the area) where guests can sit and talk to the cook.

The designers worked hard to preserve what they could. Rather than discard the original pantry cabinets, they painted the cabinet interiors with low-VOC paint and added large sliding doors made of Madrona frames with 3form recycled-resin panels. A local blacksmith made the slider hardware. They replaced the rotting and shallow countertop with a deep butcher-block countertop made of reclaimed Madrona.

Katey and Scott love their new kitchen. "It's beautiful, it's much more functional, and we actually cook more now because we can enjoy doing it," Katey says.



The kitchen's two adjoining rooms were reconfigured to improve work flow. Original fir flooring was refinished with low-VOC paint and AFM Polyureseal.



The small pantry sink is convenient and melds well with the reclaimed Madrona countertops.



DESIGNER/BUILDER: Holly Batt and Jason Lear Batt + Lear, (206) 301-1999; www.BattAndLear.com

DESIGNER: Jan Kunasangeamporn, Batt + Lear

BUILDER: Kevin Svik, Construction Lead, Batt + Lear

THE CHALLENGE

For Kunasangeamporn and Lear, the combination of tight budget and space presented challenges. "My challenge was 'How many small changes can I do to make this work?'" Kunasangeamporn says. "The budget only allowed two big moves. One was moving the door to make more counter space, and the other was moving the sink."

THE JOY

"We think it's really beautiful," Katey says. "I love looking at this kitchen every day. It's very peaceful, and the lines are great. And having the sink in the same room as the stove is a joy!"

THE COMPROMISE

Kunasangeamporn and Lear would have loved to open up the kitchen to the adjacent, enclosed mud porch and backyard. "We imagined this really dynamic indoor/outdoor thing," Lear says, "but it would have been much more expensive."

OUR FAVORITE FEATURE

Katey, Kunasangeamporn and Lear agree: The sliding panels are the best. "When you walk into the house, you're standing in a 100-year-old living room. Then you look through what is clearly a cut-in opening, and you see this juxtaposition of a modern, resin-paneled, giant Madrona sliding door on a steel track enlivening the old pantry space."



Katey's favorite aspect—the juxtaposition of historic and modern—is expressed in sleek steel tracks and modern recycled resin panels mixed with reclaimed hardwoods.



BEFORE



THE GOOD STUFF

CABINETS: New kitchen cabinets were made with reclaimed Madrona veneer on a Forest Stewardship Council-certified plywood core, fabricated by local green cabinet company Core Casework. Lower cabinets are stainless steel shelves, built by local fabricator Metal Masters Northwest. The butcher-block countertop is made of reclaimed Madrona. Some cabinet doors have 3form recycled resin panels, and cabinet pulls are made of reclaimed Madrona scraps.

CABINET AND COUNTERTOP FINISH: Low-impact OSMO oil

HARDWARE: The spice shelf and the metal track and wheel for the sliding doors were made by Boiler Room, a local blacksmith and metal artist.

FLOOR: The original fir floor was refinished and painted with Seattle-based low-VOC Best Paints, then sealed with AFM Polyureseal.

WALL PAINT: Low-VOC Miller

TILE: Fireclay recycled ceramic tile was used as a backsplash in both the kitchen and pantry. **NH**