

Timeless Treasure

By Courtney Tompkins, Photography By Marlena Vogt

The house is a stately remnant of the 1930s.

Unfortunately the kitchen was more like a painful reminder of the early '80s.





Granite countertops and a shiny Brizo faucet glisten above the deep, sunken sink.



Top of the line Viking and GE appliances equip this kitchen for party prep or everyday.

When Ann Wilson and her husband, Ric Silvestrini, moved into the Roosevelt-area home 13 years ago, the kitchen was approximately 15 years post-remodel. The couple immediately replaced the solid black countertops. Through the years the rest of the house was updated with paint, furniture, and flooring. In March of 2006, it was time to make the big change: remodel the kitchen.

"Originally we were just going to replace the cupboards but decided to rip it all out and start again," Wilson explains. "We didn't like the stove, and the cabinets were falling apart. We wanted modern touches and wanted it to fit with the era of our house."

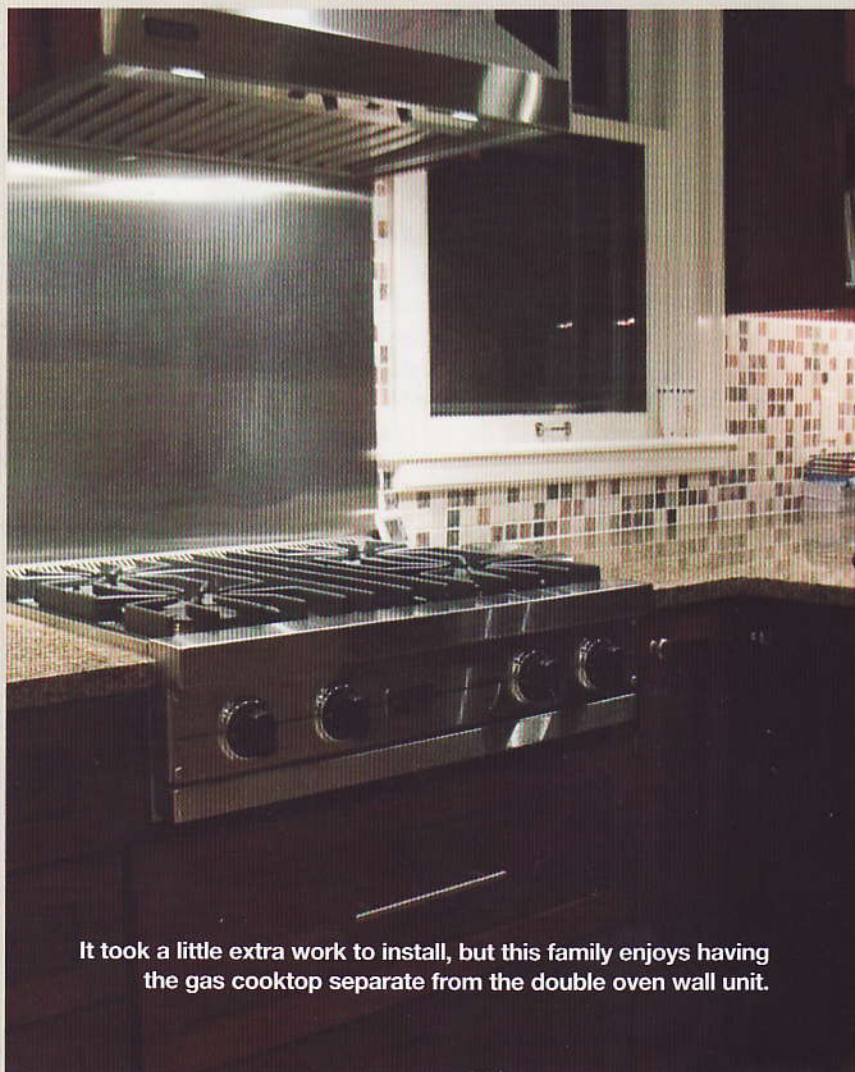
The couple also wanted plenty of work and storage space for both parties and everyday family living.

"The homeowners do a lot of entertaining and wanted a kitchen that was conducive but still functional for an eating area. It needed to be updated," explains Jeff Ellis of First Call Construction.

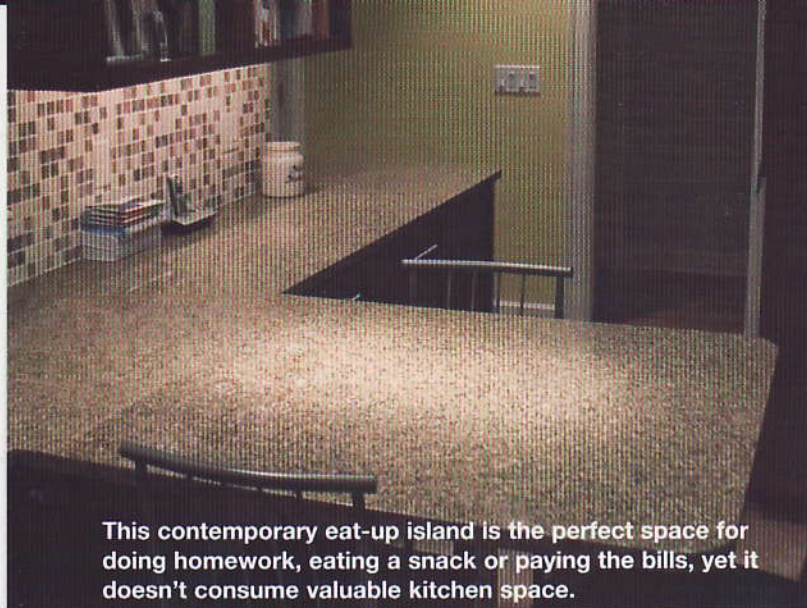
The goal of updating and improving carried an extra challenge for First Call. The couple didn't want to knock out or move any walls, move any doors or windows, or change any original woodwork. That limitation is even more meaningful given the kitchen's size — 26 feet long and only 11 feet across at the widest!

Ellis says, "The biggest challenge was the room's sheer size and having to squeeze a lot into a limited space. Also a challenge was the age of the house and using new materials on an old house while dealing with original construction and plumbing."

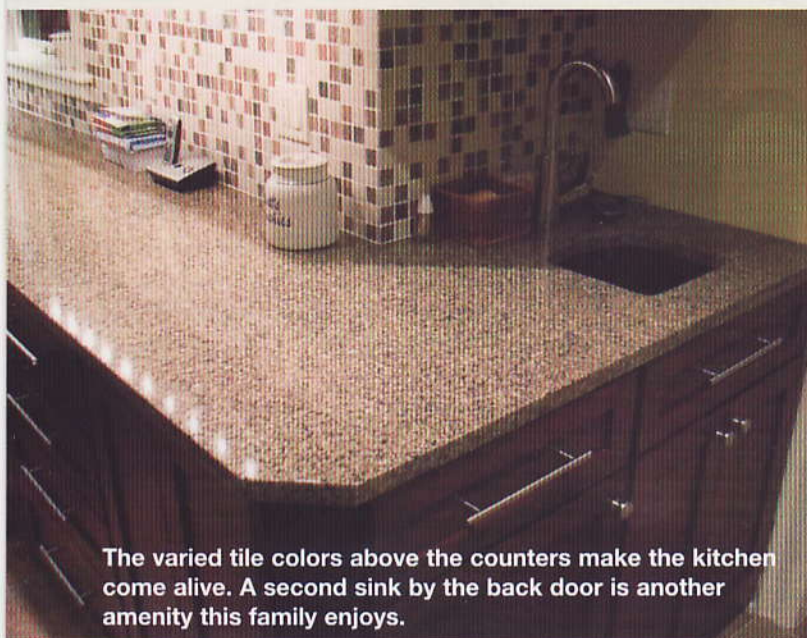
The wood trim throughout the kitchen was carefully removed during the gutting process, then painted and put back. "It was a painstaking process, but it was very important to us to keep the original woodwork, imperfections and all," Wilson explains.



It took a little extra work to install, but this family enjoys having the gas cooktop separate from the double oven wall unit.



This contemporary eat-up island is the perfect space for doing homework, eating a snack or paying the bills, yet it doesn't consume valuable kitchen space.



The varied tile colors above the counters make the kitchen come alive. A second sink by the back door is another amenity this family enjoys.



The microwave nook and TV space near the fridge provide more counter space for this narrow kitchen.

Another issue unique to this kitchen was hidden under the old tile. Instead of the typical wood floor construction, it was a concrete floor with steel beams underneath. That made getting the old tile up harder and limited the new options. The couple opted for gorgeous porcelain tile in the kitchen and hardwood floors in the dining room.

Colors, materials, appliances, and amenities were handpicked by Wilson and Silvestrini. The three-month construction phase actually followed four months in the decision and design phase. Wilson says the original inspiration was a magazine photo. Then she did her research to select the granite counters, cherry cabinets, lighting, steel hardware, and tile floor. She says, "Before, we had white tile and I had to mop two times a day to keep it clean!"

The couple went high end on appliances because they like to cook and entertain. So they chose a GE Profile stainless-steel fridge and the Viking double oven and gas cooktop.

Ellis says, "Wall-unit ovens are becoming popular. Anytime you have a wall oven you have to have a separate cooktop. They had a huge industrial oven before that was just massive, and they wanted to go back with the industrial feel."

Near the new stovetop, the couple's Brizo faucet sits in a deep black sink. "I didn't want the water spots of a stainless-steel sink, and

I wanted a deep sink. Before, we couldn't get our pots and pans in there," Wilson says.

Some amenities, like the undercabinet lighting, are state-of-the-art modern, and some features were just updated. "The microwave nook was already there. We were going to take it out but realized how much space it saved," Wilson says. "The TV over the fridge was there. We watch a lot of TV, but I don't like stuff on the counters."

Overall, the kitchen has a classic yet contemporary look. Ellis says, "It's a very welcoming yet formal kitchen and it's very, very functional. The dark cherry cabinets and granite counters are very classic. There's a touch of contemporary with the eat-up island. It doesn't have an actual sit-down table area, which is very contemporary, but I think of it as a formal kitchen."

Ellis and First Call got the job because Wilson and Silvestrini felt like the company had a good grasp on remodeling older homes. They earned rave reviews from the job because of attention to detail and on-site supervision.

Wilson says, "Kevin Johnson [site manager] would call with questions all the time. He never made a move without asking. With an older home, you don't always know what is going to pop up or be discovered, and we were glad he kept us involved. He's really picky, too. The stainless steel for behind the stove came in with a tiny scratch that we didn't even see, and he sent it back."

Even if the job foreman is terrific, Wilson advises other homeowners to be very involved with their projects. "I micromanaged the whole thing down to the half inches!"

Now, with the half-inch decisions and construction behind them, the family will enjoy the timeless beauty of this kitchen for many years to come. **WH**