

cottage kitchens

DUTCH TREAT

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See how vision transformed this classic colonial kitchen into a stunning and functional multipurpose work area, the center of fun family activities.



[OPPOSITE] An ideal perch for a quick snack, bar seating allows Sarah to work at the stove while keeping an eye on homework and other activities. The rustic finish of the hardwood flooring was chosen to stand up to the family's three boys and two dogs.

[BELOW] The dining-room pass-through (counter-level, on the left) is typical of the home's architectural detail treasured by the Weghorsts.



When a builder and homeowners go halves on kitchen design, it's a treat all around. You could call Sarah and Scott Weghorst's gracious Toledo, Ohio, home a "classic" Dutch colonial—but it's also so much more. Built in 1916, before the Dutch colonial style was ubiquitous, the home has plenty of family space and great architectural details. "If you asked me to build this house today, I would do it exactly the same way," Sarah says. "The first time I saw it, I felt as though it had reached out and hugged me."

One of its lovable details is a cozy room off the kitchen that appears to have been added shortly after construction. "I think it might have been a servant's work room," Sarah says. "[But now] it's been a family room for some time." With two teenagers, a newborn and two dogs in the household, it was exactly what the Weghorsts needed. "We knew we would have to completely gut the space," Sarah says. "This was a big project, especially with a house this age. You just don't know what you will get into."



[TOP] Shallow floor-to-ceiling cabinets along the stove wall offer plenty of storage space for kitchen and family room items. The stove hood is hidden behind cabinetry to keep the look seamless. The arched trim above the stove mimics the look of a historic recessed stove area.

[BOTTOM] With light and air a high priority, the team decided to add a bank of windows to the sink wall.

STYLE FILE

TYPE OF HOME: 1916 Dutch colonial

BACKGROUND: This handsome home in Toledo, Ohio, had only changed hands four times in its hundred-year history and was due for a major update. For the owners, keeping the distinctive heritage of the home was uppermost in their minds.

DESIGN ELEMENTS: White cabinets and marble countertops pop against Sherwin Williams "Mindful Gray" walls. Natural "Hickory Sienna" hardwood flooring blends well with the original flooring in the rest of the home, lending soft warmth to the space.

INNOVATIVE IDEA: Since the furnace's chimney, which originally also served a solid fuel cooker, couldn't be removed, the team decided to make it a decorative accent by tying it into the marble-topped island and cladding it with stone.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Sarah and Scott were undaunted taking on this rehab, thanks to Sean Nester of Sean Patrick Builders.

"Right from the start, Sean and I had the same vision," Sarah says, and vision is what was needed. While previous facelifts had left behind four layers of flooring topped with a fifth layer of green tile, old and cold fluorescent lights, and myriad, malfunctioning kitchen impedimenta, "no major improvements had been made to the house since its original construction." Sean says.

SPLIT WORK

Working together, Sean, Scott and Sarah developed a plan for not only the look but also the feel. "We wanted the kitchen, family room and breakfast area to be open and airy," Sarah says. Bar seating at the work island and maximum cabinet space were also priorities.

But with the family room separated from the kitchen by what had been an exterior wall with an unmovable chimney stack, that was easier said than done.

"We had to figure out how to work around the chimney. It services the heating system and was originally wrapped in plaster with a stove attached," Sean says. "We decided to utilize this hindrance and turn it into a feature," Sean says. "We wrapped it in stone and built the cabinets and counters around it."

With the stone-clad column as an anchor, the kitchen's layout includes a French-door fridge on the narrow wall between the sink and the door to the butler's pantry. A work island is set between the sink and stove walls ending at the column. Parallel to the work island, the stove is flanked on each side by deep base and wall cabinets. Shallow floor-to-ceiling cabinets fill the remainder of the stove wall.

[ABOVE] A wall once separated the breakfast/family room from the main kitchen, which was added shortly after the home was built. Opening it up not only made the space feel airier, but also it was more functional and interactive for the family.

BUDGET TIPS: SAVE HERE

APPLIANCES: Standard Jenn-Air appliances were a tradeoff from high-end professional units. "I would do the same again," Sarah says, "They work great."

CABINETS: Sarah shopped extensively for cabinets and was getting really high quotes. Then Sean took his design to a local cabinet-maker, Joe Davis, of The Beveled Edge, who was able to custom build cabinets for nearly a third less.



[OPPOSITE] Originally on an exterior wall, the chimney stack services the home's heating system, so it needed to stay put during the remodel. Sean, Sarah and Scott decided to make this a decorative feature clad with stone.

[LEFT] Wall and base cabinets topped with Quartzite countertops flank the Jenn-Air stove. Carrara marble tile was chosen for the backsplash. Sean designed the cover for the vented fume-hood from Best to mimic architectural features found throughout the house.

PLAYING WITH LIGHT AND COLOR

With light and air the priorities, the team treated the sink wall to a bank of new windows. Windows were also added in the breakfast area. To extend the open feeling, Sean designed coffered ceilings for the working end of the kitchen. These lend an elegant and authentic feeling to what had once been an unadorned work zone and reflect the home's original style.

With the hard design work sorted out, Scott, Sarah and Sean were able to play with color. "We wanted the kitchen to be clean, fresh and timeless," Sean says, "so we decided to stick with neutrals. Whites, warm grays and classic wood finishes were used." The palette harmonizes with the stone, which was also added to the fireplace surround.

A TREAT FOR WORK AND PLAY

"I love the functionality of the space; you can easily entertain, watch TV, hang by the fire, cook, eat and enjoy family all in one space," Sean says.

The Weghorsts love their new kitchen too. The rooms are the center of fun family activities, making kitchen work time a true treat. 

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KITCHENS IN THE NEW STONE AGE

Homeowners have never had more options for using functional and decorative stone in their kitchens. While polished granite is the most frequently used stone for countertops, there are other options. There are also stone materials suitable for backsplashes and decorative accents. Here's a rundown of the pros and cons of many of the most widely available materials.

COUNTERTOPS / FLOORS

POLISHED GRANITE SLAB OR TILES—Slabs of polished granite for countertops typically cost about \$60–\$100 per square foot, while tiles are usually less than half of that. Installation varies depending on geographic location. Tiles can be used on countertops or for flooring and are a feasible DIY project, but they are harder to maintain on countertops. Granite has been extremely popular for years thanks to its durability, ease of maintenance and wide range of colors. However, it has been losing popularity lately, and its shiny appearance tends to dominate the room.

POLISHED MARBLE SLAB OR TILES—Costs and uses for marble are similar to granite. It has always been a top choice with pastry chefs because of its ability to absorb heat. It remains cold, which is beneficial for tricky confectionary work. While white marble, veined with gray, is most common, it's also available in a range of soft brown, tan and pinkish colors. Marble is much easier to mar than granite. The surface is easily etched by food acids, and since it is softer, it's more easily stained, chipped and nicked. It is gaining popularity, though, because of its softer appearance, which blends especially well with older homes.

HONED GRANITE AND MARBLE—Costs are similar to polished marble, but honed stones have a more muted appearance. Honed marble is a bit less likely to show etching and staining. Honed granite may be a good option if you want the durability of granite without the glitz.

QUARTZITE—Costs are similar to granite. Quartzite is an igneous rock, like granite, but less abundantly available. Quartzite has properties, and often an appearance, similar to marble. It is a little less easily marred, but needs to be sealed a couple of times a year for best long-term performance.

SOAPSTONE SLAB AND TILES—Usually somewhat more expensive than granite or marble, soapstone slabs run about \$70–\$100 per square foot, while tiles are \$15–\$20. Soapstone has been a top choice for science labs for centuries, thanks to its durability and heat-resistant properties. Scratches can be minimized by regular polishing with mineral oil, which also darkens the surface. Soapstone is the softest and easiest stone to work with, making it a good choice if you are planning a DIY project. It is available in shades of gray, from nearly white to almost black.

TRAVERTINE SLAB AND TILE—Similar in cost and properties to marble, travertine has a softer, more rustic appearance. It has been used primarily as a building material since Roman times, but is gaining popularity as a countertop material. It comes in a wide range of creamy, tan and rust colors. While it is durable in terms of heat, chip and nick resistance, it is highly reactive to acids, so it's easier to etch or stain. Also, since it is more porous than granite or marble, it must be sealed regularly for safety.

WALL TILES / BACKSPLASHES

Wall tiles for backsplashes and decorative accents are available in all of the materials listed above. These are thinner than floor tiles, so they are less expensive. Size and layout options are virtually infinite. Tiles are much more DIY-friendly than working with slabs of stone.

STONE PANELS / VENEER

STONE VENEER—Slices of real stone come in "full" and "thin" versions suitable for covering masonry foundations, fireplaces, chimneys etc. But it is not an easy DIY project. Also costs vary widely.

STONE PANELS—Panels made of thin slices of real stone, or in some cases "faux" stone, are made from synthetic materials. These panels are suitable for covering masonry foundations, fireplaces, chimneys etc. DIY projects are feasible. Costs vary widely.