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Projects: Kitchen

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A combination of high-gloss white and rustic, rift-cut, white oak cabinetry helps combine the style of the New England colonial-style home with the contemporary vibe the clients wanted.



February 12, 2018

Every family has different needs and ways of interacting and cooking together. One household in a New England traditional, colonial-style home wanted more storage, an open and bright space and room to seat eight people – and that was just the beginning. Designer Jaye Gordon of Watertown, Mass.-based Interiology Design Co., who partnered with designer Mark Haddad on the project, worked with these clients to fulfill each request they had for their kitchen.

Pairing Modern with Traditional

Before the renovation, the 1980s-dated kitchen was dark, lacked storage and had a disproportionately small island that seated only two people. Although the actual square footage was generous, its minimal natural light and older materials made it feel small.

“Our clients were seeking a contemporary, clutter-free, open space with large windows overlooking their beautiful backyard,” said Gordon.

The design team faced the challenge of marrying the new modern kitchen their clients wanted with the home’s traditional exterior. Gordon’s solution was to bring in a rustic wood element to balance the style differences. The natural rift-cut white oak wall cabinetry she chose for the upper cabinets juxtaposes high-sheen, contemporary, white base cabinets.

“We also refinished the existing wood floors to allow the space to flow into the rest of the home,” she added, explaining that the floors are a lighter shade that complements the wood cabinetry.

Using Chief Architect software, the team laid out the white base cabinets along an L-shape on one side of the room, which is also lined with windows. These are larger casement windows than the originals, and some upper cabinetry was removed to provide for an additional set of windows. A bigger sliding door was also installed leading out to the back deck.

The Right Storage

Since the clients have two young children, they wanted easy access to snacks, cereals, cups and dishes. They also needed a double oven and microwave, as well as a place to accommodate a 50-lb bag of rice they use and like to keep on hand.

“Since the large windows use valuable wall cabinet space, maximizing storage for plates, dishes, bowls and crystal was another challenge,” said the designer.

To make up for the lack of upper cabinetry, the team built several kinds of interior storage in the base cabinets, including a custom peg system for easily organizing items. A custom shelf large enough for the bag of rice was also integrated into the pantry. The children’s items, along with a microwave drawer, are stored within their reach in the new island.

Seating for a Crowd

“The family wanted the island to have seating for four and plenty of work space for prepping and serving, yet they wanted to make sure the kitchen felt open and airy,” said Gordon.

The homeowners also use the kitchen as their main dining space, so they requested room for a table that could seat eight. Providing all this seating was a challenge to the design team, and they also needed to keep the walkways spacious and maintain easy access to the back door.

First, they tackled the island and expanded it from a compact 48-in. length to a more comfortable 84 inches with wraparound seating for four. If they had then brought in a table for eight and centered it in the remaining space, the kitchen would have felt restricted and tight. Instead, they installed a “floating” banquette bench right up against the back wall of the kitchen and paired it with the large table for eight. This long bench keeps the space airy because of its lack of a base, but it also ensures the table is enough out of the way for easy flow through the kitchen.

Blending In

To go along with the contemporary design, the homeowners also wanted their appliances and the hardware to blend with the rest of the kitchen. For the white base cabinets, narrow hardware was positioned vertically on both drawers and doors to create a sleek look. The white oak cabinets use Kajum handles, which are carved into the doors to provide a clean architectural detail without visible hardware.

For the appliances, the team hid the dishwasher behind a cabinet door front, and the microwave drawer in the island is across from the refrigerator, which is out of view from the nearby dining space. They left the stainless steel refrigerator and the wall oven in full view to break up the cabinetry and add texture.

“We were fortunate to order the wall ovens just as Miele released the white glass,” said Gordon. “The tone is a perfect contrast to the rift-cut, white oak wall cabinets and a beautiful complement to the high-sheen base cabinetry.”

The induction cooktop and the hood above it – a sculptural piece chosen for its minimalism – complete the modern aesthetic.

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Source List

Designers: Jaye Gordon and Mark Haddad, Interiology Design Co.

Photographer: Jared Kuzia Photography

Cabinetry: Pennville Custom Cabinetry

Cooktop: Miele

Countertops: Caesarstone Organic White

Dishwasher: Miele

Faucet: Grohe

Island Lighting: Holtkoetter

Microwave Drawer: Sharp

Oven: Miele

Paint: Benjamin Moore

Range Hood: Zephyr Horizon

Refrigerator: Sub-Zero

Sink: Franke Oceania

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