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New York City

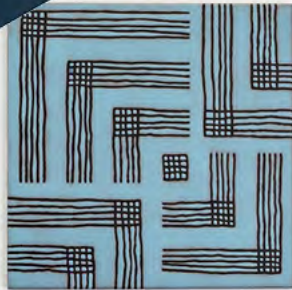
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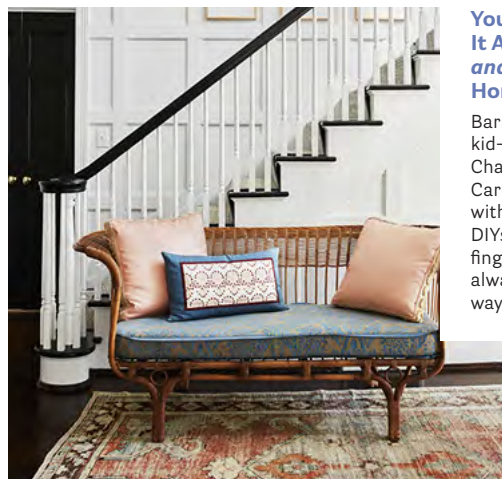
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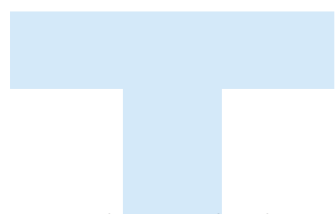
Photographer
Ngoc Minh Ngo
Interior Designer
Barrie Benson
Producer
Frances Bailey

On the cover: Chandelier, West Elm. Wallpaper, Ferns by Meg Braff Designs. Table, MasterCraft base pedestal with custom white oak top by Restoration Fabrication. Chairs, CH24 Wishbone from Design Within Reach. Vinyl on cushions, Kravet. Striped art, Donald Judd.

The True History of a Dark Kitchen

Steve Pallrand of Home Front Build brought one space into the present by celebrating its past.

By Kaitlin Menza



There used to be a time when the kitchen was something you wanted to hide. “The kitchen was meant to be only a utility space where you worked,” says Home Front Build founder and designer Steve Pallrand, referring to the early 20th century, when the Mission Revival style was popular in California homes. **“The idea that it would be a place you wanted to hang out in just didn’t exist back then.”** Homes were divided into spaces that were “public” (living and dining rooms) and “private” (kitchen and laundry), he explains. So when he embarked on renovating this Los Angeles home from the same time period, his mission was clear: Unite the two. Pallrand opened it all up—the dark kitchen, its neighboring laundry room, and the hidden hallway—to create one warm, happy centerpiece of the home’s main floor.

The kitchen’s dark history lives on in other ways: The original Douglas-fir floors showed several years of use. Notoriously soft, the wood stains and dings like no other, so there were plenty of marks from things like “leaks in 1940, or someone dropping a pot on it in 1960,” says Pallrand. **“It had a lot of damage, aka ‘character.’”** But the homeowners loved it so much that Pallrand simply refinished the floors, then used scraps of reclaimed Douglas



When reconstructing the walls, Pallrand built in recurring arches to unite the various spaces.

Bold blue tiles bridge the transition from warm, darker lower cabinets to bright upper ones.

Reclaimed-Douglas-fir panel fronts hide a roll-out pantry and other storage.

PHOTOGRAPHER LISAROMERIN. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES

Kitchen of the Month

White upper cabinets and shelves that blend into the coved ceiling help make a room feel much larger than it is.

"The adjustable low stool keeps the space more open visually—and practically," says Pallrand.

Wall paint, reclaimed-wood countertop and cabinets, drawer pulls, and refinished floors are custom by Home Front Build. Cobalt blue tiles by KJ Patterson. Perimeter countertops, Black Moon soapstone by Stoneville USA. Faucet (right), Traditional PLP pull-down faucet by Waterstone. Apron sink, Franke Farm House. Island faucet, Hampton Prep by Waterstone. Barstools, homeowners' own.

Kitchen of the Month

The homeowners have Moroccan-style lighting in their bedroom and suggested the same for the kitchen. "A spectacular light fixture is certainly what you want here," notes Pallrand of this one from Badia Design.

"A turret is a wonderful feature of the Mission Revival style," Pallrand says.



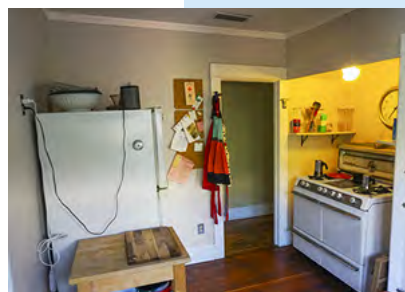
A prep sink allows whoever's cooking to face their guests. "It's another way to make the kitchen social again," Pallrand says.

A new island is now the gathering point of the home. "It's where you check your e-mails, or hang out with friends and family, drinking wine," Pallrand says.

fir to construct cabinets and the island countertop. "When you're looking at a piece of unstained oak, it looks generic; there's no differentiation in the surface," he says. "But when you look at this wood, you'll see tiny nail holes and nicks. Those imperfections tell a story."

Pallrand added encaustic tile (see page 22) to transition from the warm wood to the bright-white ceiling and turret, which he built to showcase the family's vision of a striking light fixture. The faucets are unlacquered brass. "Those will patina and get more of an oil-rubbed, irregular finish, so it'll be a very nice, rich look," he says, ensuring that the story of this kitchen is just beginning.

Before



These traditional pulls are typical of Craftsman houses in L.A., says Pallrand, making them right for this house's original era.

Kitchen of the Month



Tile Style

Blue encaustic tile catches the eye while also adding dimension. "It has a subtle play of light because there's a bit of textural relief to it," Pallrand says. Here are some other fun picks.

1. Ginko in Midnight and Sky, \$8 per tile. granadatile.com.

2. Shadow in navy by Annie Selke, price upon request. tileshop.com.

3. Pivot in Warm Motif, \$30 per tile. fireclaytile.com.

4. Awash Voyage Blue from the Jeffrey Bears Immersion collection, \$35 per sq. ft. akdo.com.

5. Bronte Ventosa Dunant in blue, gray and white, \$8 per sq. ft. tilebar.com.

6. Esker from the Kelly Wearstler Maven collection, from \$88 per sq. ft. annsacks.com.

7. Dual-Glaze Right Triangles, price upon request. heathceramics.com.

