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Cooking up a timeless style

By Alyson Ward

When Cheryl Murphy bought her Camp Logan townhome a couple of years ago, she knew it would need some work — and redoing the kitchen was first on her list.

The two-bedroom residence near Memorial Park was built in 1983, and its kitchen and dining room — which form the second of three floors — were completely separated by a wall. The renovation started

with the removal of said wall, but that's not where it ended. With the help of Avondale Design Studio designers Ben Johnston and Kathryn Berardo, Murphy has transformed her small, unsightly kitchen into a jewel of a space for cooking and entertaining.

When she hired the Avondale team, Murphy already had a good idea of what she wanted. She'd found a kitchen photo online, a bright space with white cabinetry, stainless appliances

and a marble-topped island illuminated by a trio of pendant lights.

"I said, 'This kitchen talks to me; this is the style I like,'" says Murphy, a vice president for RBC Richardson Barr who analyzes properties for oil and gas companies. With that as a guide, the trio set out to create

Kitchen continues on L7

Designer Ben Johnston hung the Devon chandelier by Arteriors Home above the dining table. It has a "fun flea-market quality" that softens the room, he says.

HOME
DESIGN



Ben Johnston

ESCAPES

Kitchen remake creates classic, inviting space

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the kitchen of her dreams.

First, the wall had to go, which left a wooden support beam overhead between the rooms.

“Cheryl really wanted that load-bearing beam to be a focal feature in the space,” Johnston says. “She wanted it to be something that wasn’t just hidden in the ceiling; she wanted it to be exposed and almost celebrated.” So he wrapped the beam in reclaimed wood, giving it a rustic look that contrasts with the sleek painted cabinetry below.

Some of the cabinet doors cover cabinets and drawers. Others conceal the Sub-Zero refrigerator, a microwave, a pull-out baking station and a recycling center. Simple

Before and after

» See photos of this project prior to the remodel at houstonchronicle.com/camplogankitchen.

and clean white subway tiles form the backsplash.

The kitchen has two sinks and two dishwashers, each on one end of the outside wall. It was designed this way for a couple of reasons: First, Murphy likes symmetry, and the fixtures form an eye-pleasing frame for the center display cabinet, which holds a glass collection and is lit from within.

Second, it’s practical: Murphy loves to entertain, and doubling the sink and dishwasher capacity helps her with



Ben Johnston photos

The far wall of Cheryl Murphy’s new kitchen features two sinks and two dishwashers — a real bonus for party cleanup.

party cleanup. She sometimes entertains big groups, but she’s partial to dinners and Sunday brunches with a small enough group to fit around the eight-seat dining table, or to gather around the 7-by-3½-foot centerpiece island topped with a slab of black-and-white Bianco Antico granite.

The new kitchen

design actually removed two windows and made another one smaller, Johnston points out. “But I didn’t feel like there was any loss of light,” he says. Dark cabinetry and a darker floor absorbed a lot of light in the old kitchen, he said, and brighter surfaces and good artificial lighting were more than enough to compensate.



Cheryl Murphy chose white subway tiles for the backsplash, then had them arranged in a pattern for the inset above the stove. The island features Bianco Antico granite.

The space now feels airy and inviting, and it’s open to the living room a half-floor below. The home is a good example of how to update an old floor plan properly, Johnston says.

“I think a lot of people who have older homes struggle with how to best open up walls between spaces — especially between

kitchens and the rest of the house,” he says. “The tricky thing is to do it in a way that feels natural to the home, not as a very obvious renovation or addition.”

“I am in love with it,” Murphy says of her kitchen. “It’s simple yet timeless.”

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