

EASY BEFORE & AFTERS • ONE BATHROOM, TWO WAYS

# Home

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FIND YOUR LOOK:

## 5 AMAZING KITCHENS

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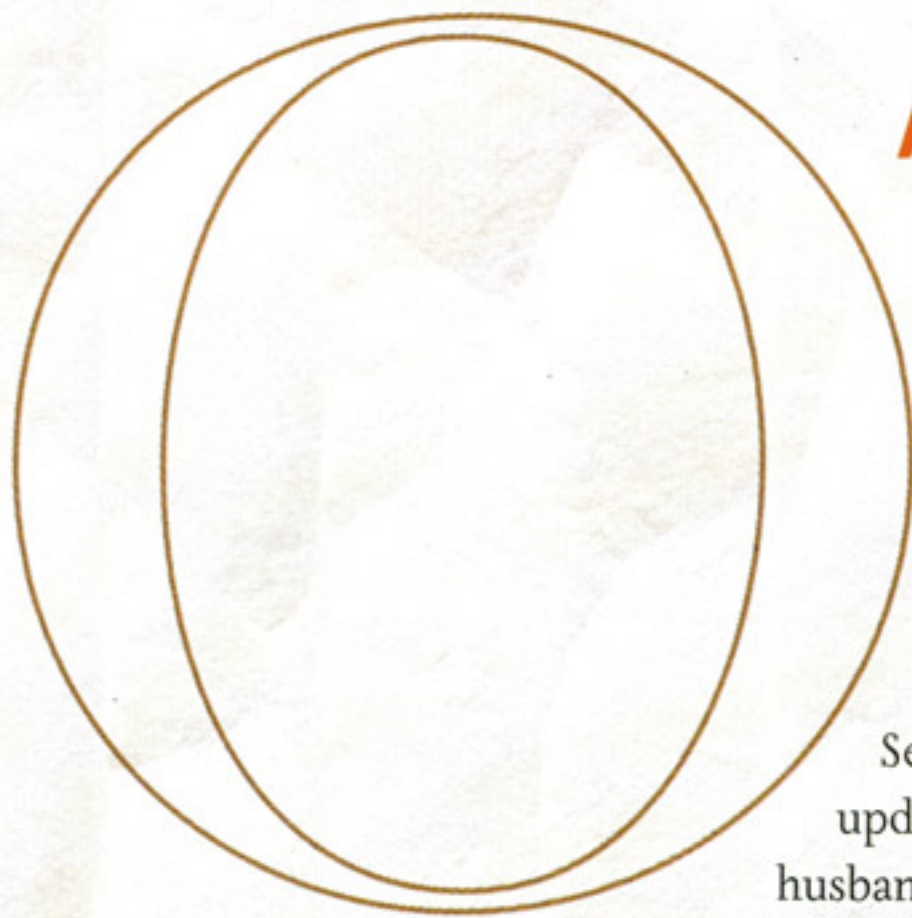
The focal point of this kitchen is its fireplace, topped by a pizza oven, inhabiting a limestone-faced column. Patterned poplar cabinet doors, raised ceiling strips, and quartersawn oak flooring—the last two in random widths—provide the room with three different textures.





# surface charms

## ARTFUL DETAILING WORKS WONDERS IN THIS WELL-THOUGHT-OUT KITCHEN MAKEOVER



**OUR HOUSE**, A 7,000-square-foot 1932 English country-style, was beautifully made. Not ornate," says Seattleite Bonnie Robbins. In updating its kitchen, she and her husband, Dick, wanted to retain its elegant simplicity. So they brought in

local architect Nils Finne to help modernize the space while preserving its character. Previous owners had remodeled the room (designed for a family with servants) in the '50s—a renovation that had a certain retro cool, Finne says, but a choppy and dysfunctional layout.

The Robbinses wanted a contemporary, open plan with a seating area, a breakfast table, and a desk, so Finne removed the wall between the kitchen and the pantry, bumping out another, at the home's rear, by 5 feet.

Bonnie wanted to replace the storage space lost in this maneuver; to do so, Finne lined the east wall with floor-to-ceiling cabinetry and the other sides with open shelves. The homeowner says that having more drawers in the kitchen (not in a separate area, as before), as well as a new 10-inch-wide pullout pantry near the ovens, is especially helpful: She can now

stow ingredients and utensils needed for baking in one spot. The revamped room has an island, two sinks, and two dishwashers. (The island was larger in the original plan, but after Finne made a cardboard model, the couple saw it would be too wide.)

The Robbinses, both cooking enthusiasts, installed steam and convection ovens and a warming drawer. "You can cook a whole dinner in the steam oven," says Bonnie. Because the house had two unused flues (there'd previously been an incinerator and a fan), the family also splurged on a pizza oven. Placing it above the fireplace Bonnie and Dick had envisioned, Finne located both in a three-sided column in the center of the room's rear wall. "My husband had always wanted a pizza oven—it's a novelty that really adds character," says Bonnie. "We've had some wonderful pizza-making get-togethers. Our favorite variation is Neapolitan style [thin crust]."

Having achieved the airier scheme he intended, the architect layered in texture—rather than colors—to create visual interest. (Says Finne, "Food's vibrant hues should be a kitchen's main attraction.") He began with creamy beige limestone countertops, adding poplar cabinet doors and drawers with patterned panels—for

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALEX HAYDEN WRITTEN BY NINA PATEL



which a cabinetmaker created a repeating vertical motif using a computer-programmed router. (This treatment was also applied to the south wall in the sitting area). For the fireplace, the designer and homeowners chose limestone in chiseled slabs edged with smooth trim. Exposed brick frames both ends of the glass wall, lending another textural dimension.

Finne affixed strips of wood in different widths on the ceiling, positioning them to echo the random-width oak floorboards. "It's a subtlety people might not notice," he says. Bonnie adds that the effect visually scales down the ceiling's nearly 9½-foot height, giving the room a warm, cozy feeling. The mood is enhanced by the ceiling's shallow coffers, which help hide the recessed downlights.

The interplay of textures balances the updated kitchen with the older detailing in the rest of the house. "Without making the kitchen extremely traditional, we brought back the feel of craft and the touch of the human hand," Finne says. ■



## make it textured

Architect Nils Finne used an array of surfaces to unify the redone kitchen with the craftsmanship in the rest of the house. "Walking into this updated room, you don't feel a disconnect with the home's 1930s detailing," Finne says. Here are some tips for creating this look:

**GET PROFESSIONAL HELP** Find an architect or a designer who is willing to take the time to work with you until you have the combination of looks you envisioned.

**GET IN SYNC** To see how everything goes together, bring large samples of materials to the site and view them in different lights.

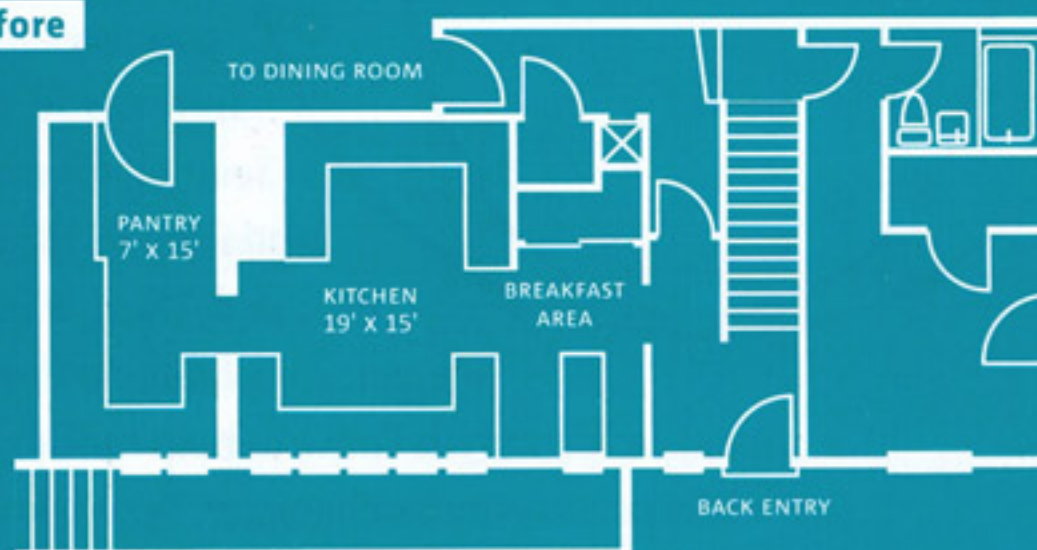
**KEEP THINGS MUTED** Finne cautions against using too many bright hues. "What works about the Robbins kitchen? There are a lot of textures but only in a subtle and limited range of neutral colors—which allows you to appreciate the interplay of surfaces."

**CONSIDER SCALE** Make models of the larger pieces. When the contractors made a mock-up of the ceiling, the team realized the wood strips were too thick, creating a pattern that was too strong to evoke the intimate feeling they were after.

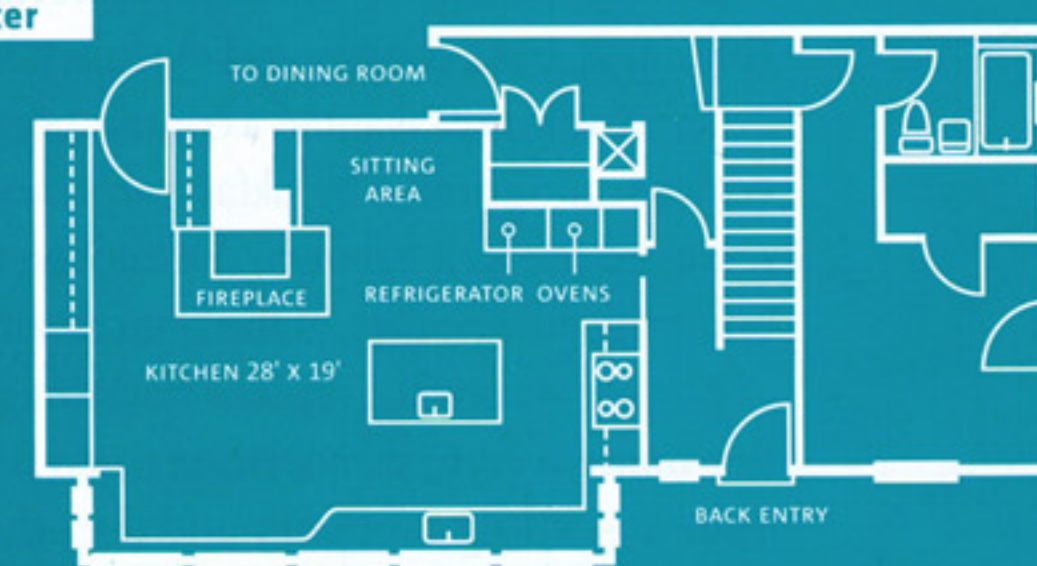
## FLOOR PLANS

To view interactive floor plans, visit [homemag.com/floorplans](http://homemag.com/floorplans).

before



after



**BEFORE** The original kitchen was divided into three distinct parts—a small dining nook, a pantry with a door to the dining room, and a kitchen lined on two sides with cabinets. **AFTER** The owners demolished the wall between the pantry and kitchen and added a 5-foot deep bump-out lined with large casement windows. The cabinets on one side of the kitchen were removed to make room for an island and open the prep zone to the breakfast area.



Its variety of textures helps make this kitchen decor work. **OPPOSITE TOP** Large windows along the rear wall let in abundant light. Open shelves, a desk, and cabinets replaced storage space lost when a pantry was removed. Architect Nils Finne designed the breakfast table and lighting. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** A 6-by-4½-foot island eases prep and cleanup.

