

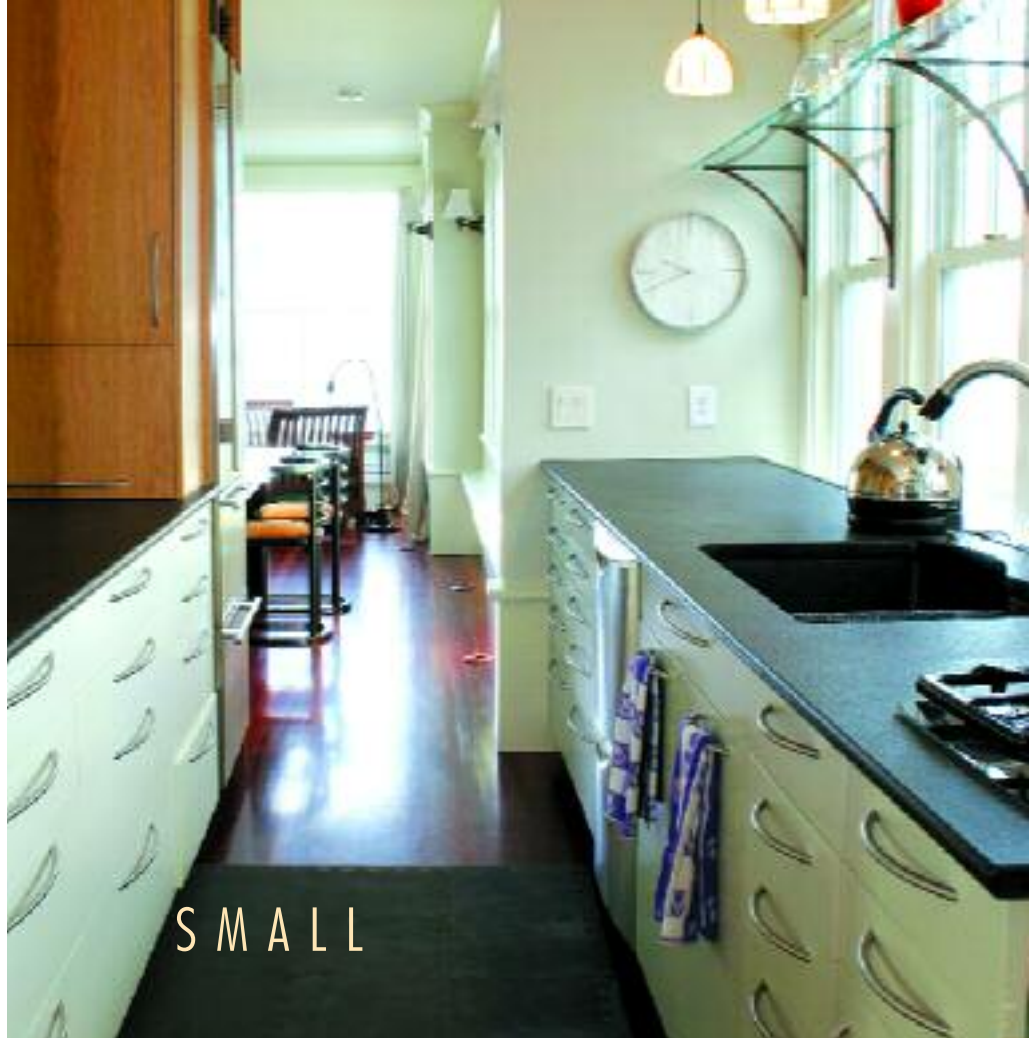
spring  
clean

# Your Kitchen

# Your Style

By Pamela Berard

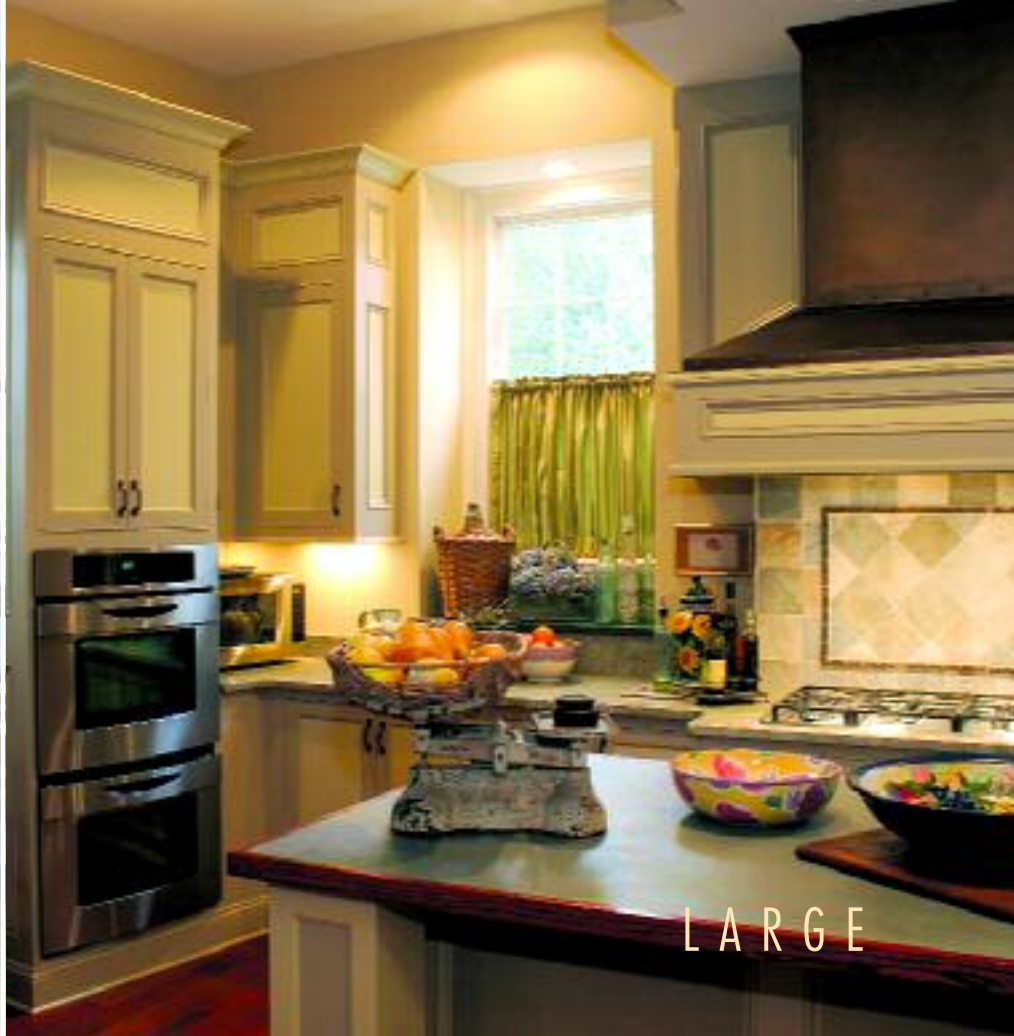
Photography by Kathryn Whitney Lucey



SMALL



TRADITIONAL



LARGE

Whether your kitchen is

**SMALL** or **LARGE**,

**MODERN** or **TRADITIONAL**,

there's a way to make it work

for you. The following pages

explore four very different

kitchens in the Newport area

whose owners **MAXIMIZE**

**MODERNISM** while taking

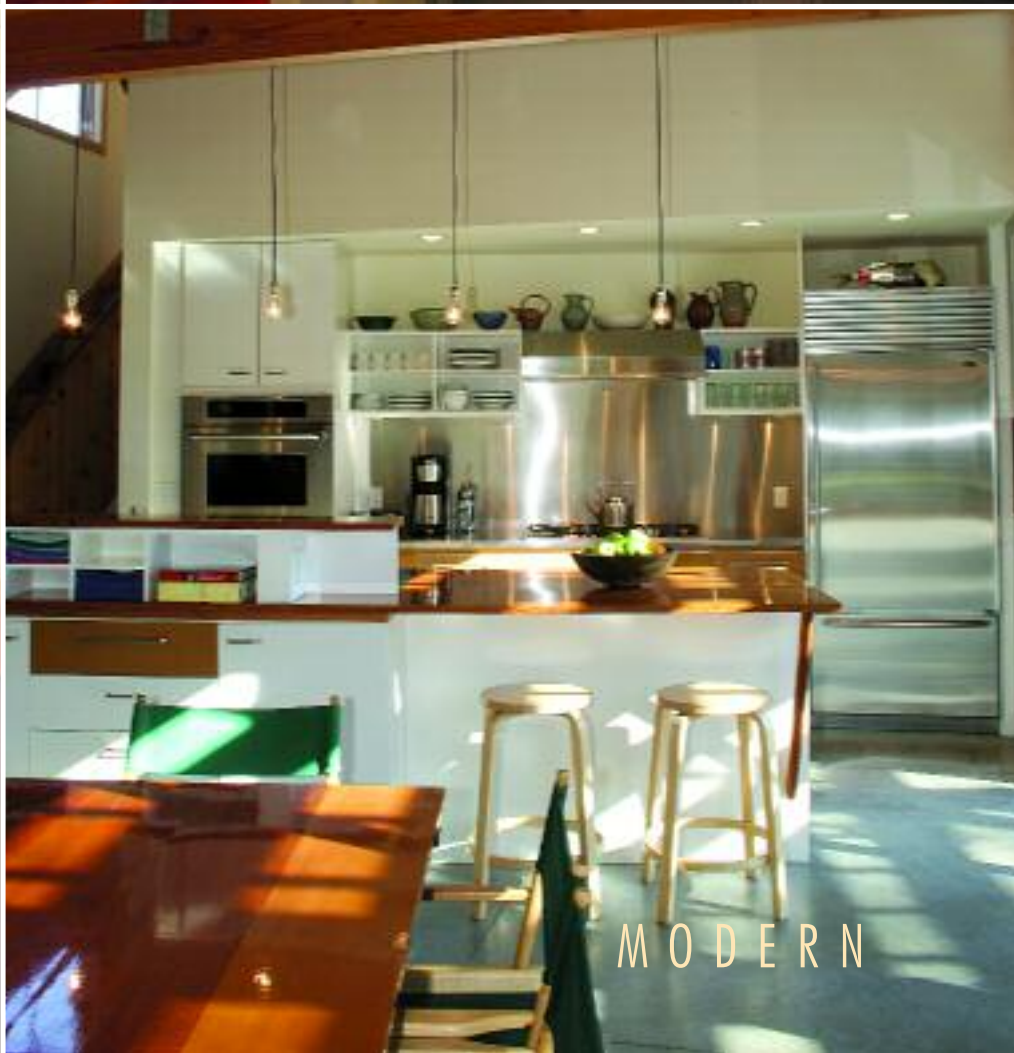
advantage of **HISTORIC CHARM**.

**WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE.** Why is it that your kitchen drawers overflow with stray soy sauce packets and dried-up pens, but you can't find a spatula when you need one?

Despite our best intentions, our kitchens become the catch-all for everything that comes into the house but doesn't quite have a home. We end up eating dinner in front of the TV because it's too much work to clean the top of the kitchen table.

Well, enough. Spring is here – what better time to organize what is undoubtedly the heart of your home? Experts say you should clean everything

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MODERN

# LARGE

INTERIOR DESIGNER and renovator Helen Harris suspects the 25-by-25-foot kitchen of her Touro Street home in Newport was once a garage. "It was all cinderblocks, with cement floors and walls and a caved-in ceiling," she says. Harris turned the cavernous space with 13-foot ceilings into a functional kitchen and great room that feels intimate, and she used all local artisans and workers to do it. Though the room is big enough to house two sofas, a desk, TV, wet bar and fireplace, it feels intimate, comfortable and warm. "People come in and say they could live in here," she says.



## NEW USE FOR OLD SPACES

Harris turned an old utility closet into a pantry to make good use of the closet's deeper shelves. "There's no parking here. I didn't want to have to schlep things inside all the time," she says. Now, she can buy large containers and make fewer trips to the grocer. She also has a clever use for her appliance dock, which she was never going to use for a toaster, she says. Her compromise? It now hides a sound system.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT ADAPTING

Harris loves to host large gatherings, and she tailored the room to fit those needs. She had the cabinets built high and deep to scale them to the size of the large room and to accommodate what she owns. "I entertain a lot," says Harris. "In my entire life, I never had cabinets to keep large platters and baskets. I only actually have three drawers in this kitchen. It's much more important for me to have space for my platters and dishes." Cabinets have adjustable shelves, to make room for platters. "I have five sets of dishes and they are all in this kitchen now." Rollout shelves and slide-out features offer quick access to small appliances, plastic wrap and spices.

## KEEP THINGS TO SCALE

Large kitchens need larger accessories, like the everyday appliances Harris keeps on the countertops. "I tried to use things that were more massive so that it didn't look cutesy kitchen in here," she says. In addition to appliances, Harris keeps the large amount of counter space from looking barren by artfully topping it with ceramic bowls and jugs. They not only make the large space cozier, but also serve practical uses, like storing utensils, soap and flowers. Since Harris loves to cook, her large island is filled with cookbooks. The shelves are deep so she can hide seasonal items and larger bowls behind the cookbooks.

WHEN ARTISTS Constance Metcalf and Murray Davis downsized from a 4,000-square-foot to a 1,500-square-foot home overlooking the base of the Newport Bridge, they had to take a key step to good organization. “I thought of the volume and size of what I own and actually use, and what I wanted to store,” Metcalf says. Though purging is a good tactic any day of the week, going overboard is not necessary. Instead of throwing items away, Metcalf put seldom-used items in the basement or the garage.



### MODERN THINKING

Metcalf’s kitchen has some “why not?” surprises. Who says drinking glasses and bowls need to be in cabinets near the sink, where you always have to reach behind things? Metcalf keeps coffee cups and glasses in a pullout drawer. Serving bowls are also stacked in drawers for easier access. Metcalf took pottery and ceramics that had been “hiding” in her old house and organized them together behind a glass cabinet. The effect is a work of art, an eclectic collection of sea-colored pieces from glass blowers, antique shops, the Salvation Army, or the couple’s travels. “For me, it’s kind of like a photo album,” she says.

### MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

If you typically find that you work or pay bills at your kitchen counter — don’t fight it. “I always end up making sort of an office in the kitchen, whether it’s technically there or not,” Metcalf says. So she created a desk area in the space. Metcalf keeps bar items together in an easy-to-reach space to the right of the island. Open the cabinet to find glasses and mixers on the lower level for easy self-service by guests, while fine china is stored above, because you’ll reach for that less often.

### SIMPLY SMART

Small kitchens have no spare room, so you need to have a place for everything. “I realized that my whole aesthetic was . . . the beauty of simplicity,” says Metcalf. “The elegant line can be better than a lot of froufrou.” Like most small kitchens, Metcalf’s space is free of knick-knacks and clutter. The strong elements of the room — red oak Pommele cabinets, Jatoba Brazilian cherry heated floors, sleek appliances and absolute black granite countertops — add to the sophisticated air of modernity, while maintaining their classic charm. Metcalf’s countertops are mostly bare, save for a simple dish of lemons and limes. Small appliances and utensils are hidden in cabinets under pantry items. Utility items (like tape or scissors) are sorted in categories by drawer, rather than clumped together.



# TRADITIONAL

ONE MIGHT THINK the Nicholas White House in Newport an unusual fit for its owner, Matt Tscheulin. At 6-foot-1, his head brushes about an inch-and-a-half from the ceiling. The history and charm of the structure are perfectly suited for Tscheulin, however, a fine furniture and cabinetry maker. The circa-1775 Tilden Avenue home in Newport was once a trading post. "Nicholas White sold provisions to the British. He was loyal to the British, which didn't work out too well for him in the end," jokes Tscheulin. When he bought the home six years ago, it had been a rental property in bad shape, so he turned a former bathroom with a Jacuzzi into a cozy kitchen.

## PERIOD PIECE

Tscheulin takes care to keep the décor in an appropriate style for the home. He did not face any historical restrictions when renovating, but nevertheless, he kept his work true to the traditional time period. "I did everything the way it would have been done," he says. "I like the Colonial look." Tscheulin tried to use period materials and antique lumber in the house whenever possible. In the kitchen area, a wood stove is surrounded by exposed beam and brick. The sage, Pecky Cypress cabinets and select white ash wood countertops are functional yet traditional. He also bought modern, everyday items that have a nostalgic feel, including measuring cups and pans in bright copper to complement the copper sink, with oil-rubbed bronze fixtures. By hanging cups and pans on the walls and beams, he gets the items out of the way but readily available for use, and they add visual appeal.



## CLEVER STORAGE

Tscheulin keeps the room classic, while adding decorative touches. He displays some cabinet items through glass or open shelving for visual interest and added storage in cubby holes, like a spice rack cabinet built into a wall cavity. A small cabinet rests below it, neatly tucked near the stove. Since traditional kitchens are small with little cabinet space, Tscheulin says, "You try to create storage wherever you can."

## TRADITIONAL DECOR

The kitchen is simply decorated, free of modern appliances or items that might seem out of place with the historic charm of the room. Tscheulin thought of the items he owned and needed when organizing and constructing the room. For example, he measured his coffee pot and found a space that would fit it just right. "The kitchen doesn't have the most bells and whistles," Tscheulin says. "It works for me." Tscheulin built a maple wood island that features iron brackets from a local artisan. It fits perfectly with the style of the home, and serves as major storage space. "The kitchen centers around the island," he says. "I have all my cooking utensils in there."

ARCHITECT JIM ESTES does not consider his seven-year-old kitchen modern, but from the look of the sleek, glass and stainless steel space in Jamestown, it is anything but traditional. The land once housed a greenhouse, with the remnants of the structure aging in the backyard, so Estes carried that charm inside with a full wall of glass doors facing south to welcome the sun. "It's a wide open space and we wanted to keep it that way," he says. "Everyone hangs out in here no matter what the style, and we serve our guests with the same simple set of plates and glasses that we use every day."

## RECYCLED STEEL

With a whole wall of doors and windows, overhead cabinet space is limited, so Estes built a food pantry on the north side of the kitchen only a few steps from the steel countertops. Plates are easily accessible in open cubbies above the range like a short order kitchen, because cabinets close off space, Estes says. Even glasses, cookbooks, spices and a Cuisinart blender are stored on shelves behind glass and steel cabinets that were salvaged from a bankrupt steel company. The stainless steel was a no brainer for Estes, as it is "bullet-proof, timeless and never goes out of style." Estes can place hot pans and dishes on it and it never stains. "I like materials that age well but don't rot," he says. "We tried to do contemporary architecture, but at the same time, think of products that after 20 years have a richness and patina to them."



## CONCRETE PLANS

With no basement and a high water table, Estes figured he needed a slab of concrete somewhere, so radiant concrete flooring is underfoot throughout the first floor, creating an air of indestructibility. To mix it up a bit, a blue stone path leads from the entry on the north side of the house, through the dining room and out to the patio facing the old greenhouse, which creates a unified modern look through the long and narrow home. Even the overhead light fixtures are modernized. Halogen light bulbs that had been in place since Estes built the home blew out last year, so he installed temporary stainless fixtures for \$1.29 apiece, and they hang from the high ceiling on simple black wires. "This is not a high end kitchen, but we love it," he admits. "It's the heart of our house."

## BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

"It's a little bit of cats and dogs as far as the cabinets go," he says. "We thought it would be neat to show the natural fiberboard. It's just a form of decoration, and we played with the material." With limited storage, steel appliances are kept close at hand — the microwave is under the counter near the sink and the coffee making station is in the corner next to the range. Individual cubby holes in the counter even create space for organizing mail, napkins and books, and water pitchers are a decorative touch on a shelf above the short order kitchen.



# Your Kitchen, Your Style

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out, see what you have and only keep what you truly need. If you haven't used it in the past year – give it to someone who will.

Put that stepstool away. If you use something regularly, keep it within easy reach. Those cabinets high above the refrigerator should be used only for things you'll grab sparingly, like seasonal items.

## LIKE A PUZZLE

"It's a phenomena – people gather in the kitchen," explains Jerry Lawler of Humphrey's Building Supply in Tiverton. "There's kind of an informality and welcome and warmth to invite someone in for a cup of coffee."

Kitchen staples have long included a refrigerator, oven and dishwasher, but kitchens have evolved to include elements such as coffee brewing centers or wine coolers. There are more elements to fit into the space, Lawler says. He tries to tailor kitchens to the use of the homeowner and their day-to-day activities. "I think kitchen design has evolved to representing the personality of the people in the home," he says.

With more than 20 years of experience helping people make their kitchens work, Lawler offers some simple tips: Spice racks should be near where you cook for easy access; use wooden tray dividers in cutlery drawers; bookcase-depth cabinetry makes sense, so you don't have to reach behind items to find something; stash hand towels near the sink to eliminate walking across the kitchen with dripping hands.

Think outside the box to create storage space. "You can take a narrow hallway and turn it into a much grander space for storage capacity," he says. If you have a cellar entryway in your kitchen, he suggests incorporating shelving in the stairway to create storage. "In design, it helps to clear out the kitchen and figure out what you have and what you really need."



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—Jerry Lawler





### IN THE ZONE

Julie Bisbano of Portsmouth, who owns Decorganized, suggests creating “zones,” or designated areas, in your kitchen for activities like baking, microwaving or coffee brewing. “If you’re going to be baking, have a spot where the counter is clear where you can put your cutting board and mixing bowls underneath and, on top, your flour, sugar and extracts,” she explains.

A garden zone might include pots, vases and scissors. If kids gravitate to the kitchen, designate a craft section with a small table or a cupboard for crayons and paper. You might buy two sets of inexpensive items (mixing bowls, cutting boards) to put in different places. Be careful about overbuying, Bisbano warns, even if things are on sale.

“Unless you have a huge family, you really don’t need any more than two casserole dishes, eight cups, five or six dishtowels, 12 glasses,” she says. “I can’t think of a time when I have ever used more than 12 or 15 wine or martini glasses, not even at a party.”

Choose items with multiple functions. CorningWare bowls with handles could be used for baking, soup, cereal, freezer and microwave, she says. Use graduated or stair shelving in cupboards to prevent losing things behind other items.

Bisbano keeps her appliances off countertops to avoid clutter. “But other people like to see everything, so they know what they have,” she says. If you keep appliances on the counter, Bisbano suggests buying them in one color to create an uninterrupted line for the eye.

Most importantly, because you eat in your kitchen, keep everything clean, and ultimately, organize according to your comfort level. 🍳