

EASY DIY ISLAND RENOVATION

# KITCHENS

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# Spotlight on Design

Discover how a California designer took one family's kitchen from dreadful to divine.



Before Mary Jo worked her magic, the kitchen was small, dark, cramped and generally inefficient for a young, busy family.

Type of home: Traditional cottage

Occupants: Active family with young children

Primary goals: Create a better flow inside kitchen and improve how it relates to the rest of the living space

Extent of redesign: Substantial remodel

**Designer:**  
Mary Jo Fiorella  
fiorelladesign.com

"My design aesthetic is really eclectic," says Mary Jo Fiorella, an interior designer from California's Bay Area. "I love so many styles that if I have my way, I will mix contemporary with mid-century on top of traditional. I feel this allows a room or a home to have more soul." Indeed, Mary Jo's unique approach to interior design guided her as she transformed an unsightly kitchen into a gorgeous, slightly whimsical, family-friendly space with style and sophistication.



Unique design elements, such as this open shelf on top of the cabinet allow for extra storage or decorative items.

A generous overhang supported by posts creates a comfortable seating area for guests outside of the kitchen's primary zones.

This warm, family-friendly kitchen is perfect for young children, but has been designed to function efficiently as they continue to grow.

"I love how cozy the home is while being open to all living spaces," Mary Jo says. "The colors and materials are warm and inviting, which is very much a reflection of the family that lives there."

Open recessed shelving allows easy access to cookbooks and recipe cards.

The large farmhouse sink resides in the island, which frees up countertop space around the kitchen's perimeter.

Glass-paneled cabinets flank the windows, further underscoring a sense of openness in the kitchen.

Dual pendant lamps hang low over the island, which offers targeted lighting for important tasks, such as preparing food, planning menus or paying bills.

The striking combination of hardwood flooring, traditional cabinetry, black granite countertops and stainless steel appliances and fixtures merges the best of conventional kitchen style with a dash of contemporary industrialism.



A recessed mosaic-tile alcove adds dimension to the sleek white subway-tile backsplash without overwhelming the design scheme.

The combination of undercabinet and recessed ceiling lighting ensures that proper illumination is available in every corner of this efficient kitchen.

Punches of canary-yellow accents look gorgeous against the black countertops and add a bit of cheer in this vibrant kitchen.



The ceiling-to-backsplash range hood adds a sense of balance and scale above the cooking range.

High ceilings and an abundance of windows allow natural light to fill the kitchen and create an open, airy space. Beautiful crown molding around the windows adds elegance and sophistication.

Because the children are still very young, Mary Jo positioned the island at counter height, rather than at bar eight.



The tray ceiling in the dining area not only helps to open up the space, but it also adds a point of separation between the dining room and the living room.

Having the dining table right next to the kitchen is helpful for most family meals," says Mary Jo. "Nowadays, families don't use a 'formal' dining room enough to warrant the extra square footage."

Mary Jo removed the wall that separated the kitchen from the dining room. "It was very cramped," she says. "Now it's more open and inviting."

See Shopping Guide, page 94.