

# Easy, Breezy

## COOKING

WHEN THE CURRENT OWNERS BOUGHT THIS San Francisco Bay Area home designed and built by Hawaiian architect Doug McClafin for his own family, they enjoyed its coastal elements. “Doug was influenced by East-Coast Shingle style as well as Hawaii’s outdoor living,” says designer Mary Jo Fiorella. “The home uses the outdoor spaces of the veranda and garden to expand the total living area.” While the interior flows easily inside and out, the kitchen was not quite up to par and felt too small for a family with two children. Mary Jo’s task was to keep the character of McClafin’s original design yet create a more open, airy kitchen and add a much-needed mudroom for organization and storage.

### Start with Architecture

“The space had to be accessible, durable and simple,” Mary Jo says. “We discussed flow, where the appliances should be located, which drawers and cabinets were to house which kitchen items.” The result is a clean and contemporary space that preserves the home’s architectural integrity and the client’s needs to a tee while paring down non-essential elements. “We kept the soffit with the crown molding and the original casings on the doors,” Mary Jo says. “But we used cleaner lines for the cabinetry, countertops and backsplash.” They opened the kitchen into the family room to create a large, sun-drenched space.

*Clean, contemporary lines and a blue and green color scheme help to bring the outside into this San Francisco Bay Area kitchen designed by Mary Jo Fiorella.*



To match the rest of its coastal cottage-style surroundings this kitchen gets a cool and calming makeover.

BY CATHERINE TITUS FELIX

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARY JO FIORELLA



*Mary Jo designed the banquette and table to maximize usable space in the dining area. Easy-to-clean vinyl upholstery means the banquette will always look great. Oversized Marvin windows allow light and air to flow.*

# Found SPACE

Uncover unexpected spots for storage and organization.

The Duchess of Windsor once opined that you can never be too rich or too thin. She should have added that you can never have too much space. Even in a large home, you always seem to need a bit more space for storage and display. For small-house dwellers, that need is even more urgent. Designer Mary Jo Fiorella shares her tips on where and how to carve out more space.

**CUSTOM FURNITURE:** Frequently, such a piece can create useful storage in otherwise unused spots.

**STAIRWELLS:** Niches cut into a staircase wall are great for custom cabinetry or display shelves.

**BACKSPLASH LEDGES OR MIRROR BASES:** This creates a perfect spot for keeping frequently used items handy. But keep them pretty for everyone to see.

**ARCHITECTURAL COLUMNS AND BUILT-INS:** Sometimes you can find hidden spaces next to your fireplace and built-ins by creating shelving nooks. Look at your house plans to see where spaces may have been furred out and there's nothing behind the wall.

**DIFFERENT ROOMS:** The laundry room and basement are great spill-over areas for storage. Create additional pantry storage with the installation of shallow shelves by the basement stairs or use hooks to hang bags of backstock supplies.



## Be Green Without Looking Green

"We used LED down-lighting and no-VOC paints or floor finishes," Mary Jo says. "The insulation in the ceiling is made from recycled blue jeans, and the cabinetmaker's workshop is powered by solar energy; the cabinet fronts are made partially with recycled materials. We reused furniture and fixtures where possible and donated all of the unneeded appliances, fixtures and fittings." The large Marvin windows also supply the room with natural light all day.

## Customize Your Work Zones

To maximize efficiency, Mary Jo designed the room with distinct work zones. The Caesarstone-topped island is fitted with a small sink facing the fridge. With only a few steps, food can go from fridge to sink to stove. The oven and cook-top flank the fridge, creating separate baking and cooking zones. In a break from tradition, Mary Jo located a large sink and dishwasher on the wall adjoining the dining room, near the kitchen table rather than under a window. This not only simplifies after-dinner cleanup, but it allowed Mary Jo to fit the dining area into a wall of windows. All the surfaces are easily wiped clean, and the contemporary-styled cabinets provide enough storage to keep clutter to a minimum.

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# Style File

**TYPE OF HOME:** Traditional Shingle-style

**BACKGROUND:** When a young family moved in they wanted to respect its integrity while adapting the space to their needs.

**DESIGN ELEMENTS:** Clean, contemporary lines and easy-to-maintain materials combined in an open space.

**DECORATING COLOR SCHEME:** Cool greens and blues with white and pops of sunny yellow balance the gleaming chrome-trimmed furnishings.

**INNOVATIVE IDEA:** Custom furnishings make the most out of all the existing space.





*Chrome-trimmed shelves seem to float atop the tiled backsplash. The tiles used include "Tatami" from Waterworks, with Ming Green Thassos and Lagos-Azul marble.*

**Opposite:**

*The wall between the family room and mudroom provides gallery space for the children's artwork.*

*The kids have plenty of room to stash their backpacks and school supplies in the storage unit Mary Jo designed.*

*It's easy to keep track of the family's business at the sleek and efficient kitchen desk.*

