nesting

After: The open kitchen is twice the size of the old one and features multiple work zones, light maple cabinets with roll-out drawers, a granite island and splashes of red in lighting and accessories.

Before & After

A townhome's dated cookie-cutter kitchen is transformed into a modern cook's dream.

By LYNN UNDERWOOD
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The challenge: A bland 1970s kitchen needed more counter space, storage and a dash of personality.


Walled in: Jane and Steve Kilgriff had decided to downsize and moved from their single-family home to a townhouse in Lilydale.

"It was really well built, but had the original 1970s kitchen," said Jane. "It was small, dark and ugly. And a wall blocked the view of the river valley.”

Wide open spaces: McMonigal gutted the kitchen and doubled its size by taking space from the casual eating area. She knocked down a wall to open the kitchen to the living room and dining room. "Now they can see outside from the kitchen," said McMonigal. "It feels more uplifting and they want to spend time in there."

Current, yet classic: To fulfill Jane’s request for a "sleek, uncluttered and classic look," McMonigal used natural-stained, clean-lined maple cabinets, a simple color palette and added open display shelves and a niche for a laptop.

Seeing red: Jane infused red, her favorite color, in the blown-glass pendant lights, Oriental rugs, accessories and dishes to spice up the warm brown tones. "We kept everything else muted and then the color pops more," she said.

Appliance smart: Jane opted for a double-wall oven because "when I have a big event, like a wedding brunch, I really need two ovens," she said. The cooktop is in the center island, making it easy to chat with guests and see the Minneapolis skyline through the living room windows.

Multi-use island: The custom granite-topped island can accommodate seating on three sides, so it's ideal as an informal eating area and a regular gathering place. To add texture, the Kilgriffs found high-back stools.

Brighter, better storage: McMonigal widened and converted a long dark hall off the foyer into a lighted pantry to hold dishes and glassware.

Can’t live without: "The kitchen cabinet roll-out drawers are very slick," said Jane. "I can get at everything."

The result: The Kilgriffs can cook and entertain in a kitchen that's colorful, open and draws in lots of natural light.

"At first I wasn’t sure I wanted it to be so open. I was worried about seeing dirty dishes. But now I love it," said Jane. "It's much more interactive - people sit and visit and come in to help out."

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To submit before and after photos of a relocalized or remodeled room for consideration, please send uncompressed jpeg images to kim.palmieri@startribune.com. Please include your name and phone number.

After: Rosemary McMonigal also converted a long hall off the foyer into a lighted pantry to store dishes and glassware.

Before: The townhome’s dated kitchen was small and cooks felt isolated from the rest of the house.