

Better Homes and Gardens Special Interiors

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START SMALL

You don't have to sacrifice design in a tight space. Just let your feet guide you.

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A WELL-DESIGNED KITCHEN IS KEY

to the overall feel and flow of a home (not to mention its value). So when real estate agent Thomas McCullough nabbed a 1940s charmer in a popular area of Atlanta, he already understood that the 1,600-square-foot structure would need a complete overhaul.

Firsthand insights on local building resources propelled him to bring in Ili Nilsson and Luly Melarti,

of the design-build firm TerraCotta Properties, to handle the big job of redesigning the small house. Before Thomas could move in, the team had to not only replace, repair, and renovate, but also create the flow that the home was missing. And that started with the 9×10-foot kitchen.

"When planning a kitchen, the first thing I do is imagine myself cooking in the space," Nilsson says. "From pantry, to refrigerator, to sink, to

range, I go through the motions of meal preparation. If I can envision my flow through the process easily, the homeowner will also.”

Working within the existing footprint, the design team made sure not a square inch was wasted. “The first aspect we considered was walking patterns. This helped us determine which openings could be edited or enlarged to maximize light where we needed it,” Nilsson says.

But with the space constraints, this kitchen had to be more than just a kitchen. Nilsson designed what she calls a “kitchen-breakfast-laundry-multipurpose room” to pack as much functional punch as possible. The challenge was in making it not look cluttered or disjointed, and in fitting it to the style and character of the original home.

Nilsson’s design took over the home’s poorly enclosed back porch and rebuilt it as a finished breakfast area and laundry space that leads to the backyard. The team also significantly enlarged the opening between the kitchen and the dining room, and closed the kitchen’s unnecessary access to the basement.

Clever space-savers are everywhere. There’s a pantry carved out of what was a dead wall. Cabinets extend to the tall ceiling and are 15 inches deep, versus the standard

OPPOSITE: Warm gray cabinetry, vintage-look light fixtures, and a petite furniturelike island complement the home’s historic architecture. **ABOVE RIGHT:** White subway tile is a classic choice behind the range. **RIGHT:** Custom storage nestled into every nook enhances the simple layout. **FAR RIGHT:** An undermount sink and commercial-style pullout faucet speak to the kitchen’s focus on function.



small kitchen



ABOVE: Widened openings create a flowing space from the backyard entrance through the breakfast area and into the kitchen. **RIGHT:** Full-size laundry units hide behind closed doors. **FAR RIGHT:** A pantry cabinet is tucked where there was once a window to a hall bathroom. **OPPOSITE:** Beaded-board panels hung horizontally give a fresh, unexpected look in the breakfast nook.

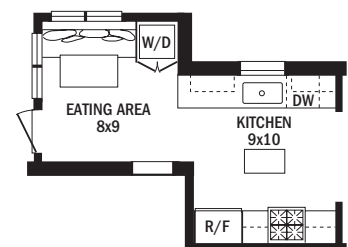


12 inches, to accommodate large plates. Nilsson also specified full-depth storage above the refrigerator and an abundance of drawers, which are more efficient than cabinets.

The new laundry/breakfast area is packed with storage and style as well. Perforated door panels are not only visually interesting, but they also ventilate the washer and dryer area while keeping the appliances out of sight. The banquette offers integrated storage for table linens.

“Bigger kitchens are not always more effective,” Nilsson says. “Sometimes smaller kitchens actually yield the best flow.” **KBI**

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SMALL SPACES THAT LIVE LARGE

Get inspired! Let these six small kitchens show you how to maximize every inch.
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