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Kitchens: a love letter

The 6 Most Beautiful
Cookspaces in the State

**For a Chef-Baker
on Sebago Lake**

**With a View on Great
Cranberry Island**

**Bold and Blue
in Kennebunkport**

+ MORE

**A MODERN
BARN RAISING
IN FREEPORT**

**A Serene
SCANDI-STYLE
CHALET
in Cape Elizabeth**

*February
2021*

**And a Very
Decadent
Guide to
MAINE'S BEST
CHOCOLATE
SHOPS**

Kicking the Kitsch

out of the Kitchen

Six skilled specialists take the aesthetic of this dutiful space up a notch

written by Heather Chapman

photography by Michael D. Wilson

Meals gone awry. Late-night conversations around the island. Spilt milk. The kitchen has seen it all, from bearing our botched baking to heeding our domestic burdens, but only recently has it done so while exuding glamour. For a room whose purpose is strictly tactical—our place to break bread together—its stylish modernization is a testament to the keen designers, builders, and craftspeople who have made the fit and finish of this hardworking space their bread and butter. Here, we spotlight six standout kitchens and the aficionados behind them who are well-practiced in making the workhorse of the home *work* for them.

A modern shade of Benjamin Moore's Tricorn Black pops on custom Kountry Kraft cabinetry, and contrasts stark-white floor tiles.



KITCHEN COVE DESIGN STUDIO:

Traditional with a Twist



Walls, doorways, and archways were removed to create a kitchen that appears to have always existed within this Falmouth home. *right* A multifunctional sink provides space for the homeowners to wash and prepare fruits and vegetables.



MARY O. ADAMS, OWNER OF THE Portland-based specialty design firm Kitchen Cove Design Studio, relishes projects that involve problem solving. With the older dwellings typical of Maine remodels, the problems at hand are numerous, spanning from poor layouts and choppy points of entry to additional dysfunctional design. “The way kitchens work today is very different than they did even as recently as 20 years ago,” says Mary. “Our biggest challenge is how to update an older kitchen in a way that is on-trend, while also ensuring that it doesn’t feel out of place.”

When Falmouth-based clients requested a remodel, Mary assessed the situation with a healthy dose of professional tough love, removing an entire wall in the center of the home and banishing dated archways and unnecessary doorways. The expansion allowed space for a reimagining of the kitchen’s functional duties for inhabitants keen on fresh food preparation. Bright quartz countertops for the large center island, wash station, and breakfast nook reflect an abundance of natural



left A custom coat of deep taupe graces the cabinetry, fitted with brass hardware, to match the dining room. *bottom, left* Patterned tile by Stone Impressions playfully works a contemporary accent into the kitchen's traditional decor. *below* Mary raised the windows above the wash station—topped with bright quartz—to incorporate more natural light.



light pouring through newly raised windows, and an abutting glass doorway provides flow from the kitchen straight to the back deck for alfresco gatherings. Mary chose a custom coat of deep taupe for the cabinets—pairing it with brass hardware—to match existing decor in the formal dining room, which she smartly opened to the kitchen.

Although this kitchen's style leans traditional, patterned tile by Stone Impressions and oversized pendant lights draw the eye, tastefully incorporating contemporary accents for a pleasing modern twist. "You'd never know that this space was incredibly dark and small, with little to no wall space," Mary says. "Now, it really is the heart of the home."



Morning sunshine washes the kitchen in a golden-hour glow. Note the custom walnut roll-out trays under the range.

M.R. BREWER:

Built for the Chef-Baker



Benjamin Moore's Secret Path green and deep teal add playful punches to this lake house kitchen.



Barstools from Venn + Maker and lighting from Fogg Lighting—both based in Portland—add refined rustic ambience.



Tavia worked with Tia Green of Capozza Floor Covering Center to source tile for the backsplash.



top, right Quartz countertops from Surface Creations provide a stylish prep surface for the homeowner, an avid home chef and baker. *above* This kitchen was built with functionality in mind, reflected in the pop-up lift for the KitchenAid mixer.

INSIDE A NEWLY BUILT VACATION HOME ON Sebago Lake reigns a kitchen that pleasingly complements the exterior landscape, consisting of a wooded lot and lakefront views. “The owners wanted the great room and kitchen to be a timber-frame build, and they also desired the incorporation of natural elements indoors,” explains Tavia Douglass, lead designer at the Portland-based full-service custom home builder and millwork company M.R. Brewer. Exposed pine beams and walls and a commanding 10-by-3½-foot dining table milled from trees felled on the property seamlessly bring the outside in. To provide respite from all the wood, a luscious coat of Benjamin Moore’s Secret Path green was selected to grace the cabinets.

Working alongside the homeowner, Tavia drafted three iterations of the kitchen layout before finally settling on the existing plan. The deciding factor? Resoundingly, the pantry—a coveted 4-by-8-foot walk-in space carved out behind a built-in breakfast bar. A bright-teal antique barn door on sliders, a find by the owner, marks its entry. “The pantry door

helped drive the decision for the darker-teal built-in china hutch accent piece at the end of the kitchen,” Tavia explains.

“The homeowner is an avid baker and chef, so many of the custom elements were informed by her functional needs,” Tavia says. A pop-up lift for the KitchenAid mixer and a prep sink were both built into the oversized island, and large storage drawers house numerous kitchen tools. Perhaps the most custom portion of the kitchen huddles under the range top: four exposed walnut roll-out trays, designed based on inspiration photos provided by the owner. “This was a rather unorthodox request, but the owner told us that while cooking, she likes to be able to grab pots and pans quickly and easily,” Tavia says. With M.R. Brewer’s reputation for quality hinging on custom Maine-made cabinetry, this element proved an enjoyable design and install. The result? “A kitchen that accommodates guests and really works for the client. Now, all of her cooking and baking accessories have an accessible home of their own,” Tavia says.

CROWN POINT CABINETRY:

Beating the Blues



A handsome range stands in sleek contrast to the kitchen's bold coat of Indigo Batik by Sherwin-Williams. *left* Now furnished with more flow, function, and storage, the clients can happily entertain in their Kennebunkport vacation home.



BACK WHEN SHADES OF BLUE WERE synonymous with cloudy coffee and rainy days, Lindsay Farnsworth, in-house designer at Crown Point Cabinetry in Claremont, New Hampshire, bathed the updated kitchen within a once uncoordinated Greek Revival circa 1809 in a *bold* coat of the color. Surprisingly, it was just the pick-me-up the space needed.

“We chose this rich shade of Indigo Batik by Sherwin-Williams *long* before blue was considered “in,” explains Lindsay. With the color introduction, the kitchen project quickly became her and builder John Meserve’s favorite space. “It was risky, but in part I think that’s exactly why it worked,” Lindsay says.

For homeowners who love to entertain, the color makes a statement gracing the custom-made cabinetry of their Kennebunkport vacation home. “The clients’ wish list consisted of a bar area, more storage, and certainly more function,” Lindsay adds. “Our greatest challenge was creating a kitchen that could be timeless *and* stylish while hitting upon all of their desires.”

Thanks to Lindsay, John, and designer Michael Souza, the clients’ wishes were granted. A corner bar-nook proudly houses a collection of drinkware displayed behind glass-covered



A corner bar nook was high on the homeowner's wish list and seamlessly integrates with the rest of the kitchen, fitted with custom cabinets by Crown Point Cabinetry.

bottom A space that could be at once timeless and stylish was at the forefront of Lindsay Farnsworth's design choices. *below* This 1809 Greek Revival home had a galley-style kitchen before Lindsay and builder John Meserve smartly substituted an L-shaped layout with an island.



cabinets, and a wine cooler below chills bottles for dinner parties. "That section was tricky," Lindsay says, noting how the bar built-in conceals an existing pipe that functionally had to stay put. On another wall, the team constructed a hutch for extra storage and worked diligently to get the most out of every square inch of the kitchen.

"Swapping the layout from galley style to L-shaped with an island allowed for more flow and function. A magic corner cabinet determined where we could position the range, and we optimized the refined look of the space by paneling the dishwasher and refrigerator to match the cabinets," Lindsay says.

With sleek gray and silver touches—noted in the island pendants, floor tile, appliances, and marbled countertop—the result of this highly collaborative effort yields a handsomely appointed space, fit for uplifting gatherings that banish the notion of blue being synonymous with *blah*.



One would never know that the kitchen, now the unifying room in this Scarborough remodel, was once dysfunctional.



THE GOOD HOME-

INTERIORS & DESIGN:

Farmhouse Flair



Reclaimed wood reigns in this farmhouse kitchen. Custom cabinetry and sourcing in collaboration with Tim Hill Fine Woodworking & Design.



Lisa's core team consists of Rideout & Turner, Bryant Electrical, Tim Hill Fine Woodworking & Design, and DJ Small Plumbing, Heating & Pumps.



“MY INITIAL CONSULTATION WITH THE owners wasn’t actually about the kitchen,” says Lisa Hincer, principal and owner of Gorham-based The Good Home – Interiors & Design, of a Scarborough remodel. “The dining and family rooms were not functioning well, and upon a close inspection, we came to understand that the guiding piece between them was actually the kitchen.”

The busy family, occupied by the activities of three young and growing children, had yet to develop a particular design or decor style. “They told me they wanted something more *them*. Something calming and comfortable, like a rustic farmhouse,” Lisa says. With little in the way of existing features to accentuate, Lisa—in partnership with woodworker and cabinetmaker Tim Hill of Tim Hill Fine Woodworking & Design—sourced salvaged hand-hewn 1820s beams from Sabattus, securing them with locally sourced handmade joist hangers and brackets. The biggest challenge—visually incorporating the newly installed beams into the rest of the kitchen and home—was overcome through peppering reclaimed

wooden elements throughout. “The island was designed with reclaimed wooden sides, and we also fabricated a reclaimed barn door on sliders to separate the adjoining dining nook and family room,” Lisa explains. What appears to be a freestanding china hutch—also constructed with reclaimed wood—is actually a built-in and serves as both a stylish accent piece and an extra storage compartment. “This project was a puzzle,” says Lisa, referring to the lack of storage and functionality in the original kitchen. “We collaborated to find unique solutions, like the hutch.”

Beautifully updated appliances, including a 48-inch range, reflect the homeowner’s love of cooking, which they can enjoy more now, thanks to Lisa’s unique approach. “I design for the client, not for myself,” Lisa states. “In my seven years in business, all of my projects have been custom. That requires a lot of questioning and listening on my part to really understand both the client and their needs. It makes projects like this such a fulfilling, creative effort, especially seeing once-tired spaces revived and enjoyed.”



Lisa designed the island with reclaimed sides and a sophisticated working face.

left A built-in hutch stylishly provides the young family with extra storage solutions, which was high on their initial wish list. *top, right* The dining nook—separated from the kitchen by a fabricated barn door on sliders—echoes the comfortable farmhouse facade.

ARCADIA KITCHEN & BATH:

Smartly Scandi



A coat of Benjamin Moore's Pure White provides a point of contrast for the custom Kountry Kraft cabinets, courtesy of Todd Perkins. *top, right* Custom metal window shelves—for the homeowner's numerous plants—were crafted by Nate Deyesso of DSO Creative.



AT ARCADIA KITCHEN AND BATH—a family-owned, Scarborough-based design-build and cabinet showroom—teamwork, communication, and joy underscore the success realized in all projects. “Our clients tend to be our favorite part of the experience,” explains Kristen LaValle, in-house designer. Founders Mike and Kim Connell concur, adding, “When a client comes in with a clear vision, it makes the process all the more enjoyable.”

Such was the case when a design-minded European family moved into a dated Maine colonial. “The kitchen was really tired and dark,” Kristen says, reflecting on the space prior to the impressive remodel, “but the homeowners knew exactly what they wanted: sleek, modern, streamlined, Scandi.” The result of bold ideas and a successful execution is a space boasting details like specially built metal window shelves by Nate Deyesso of DSO Creative fabrication in Saco, cubby-like “landing pads” with USB ports for phone charging, and a European-style larder, complete with pull-out slatted cutting boards for bread slic-

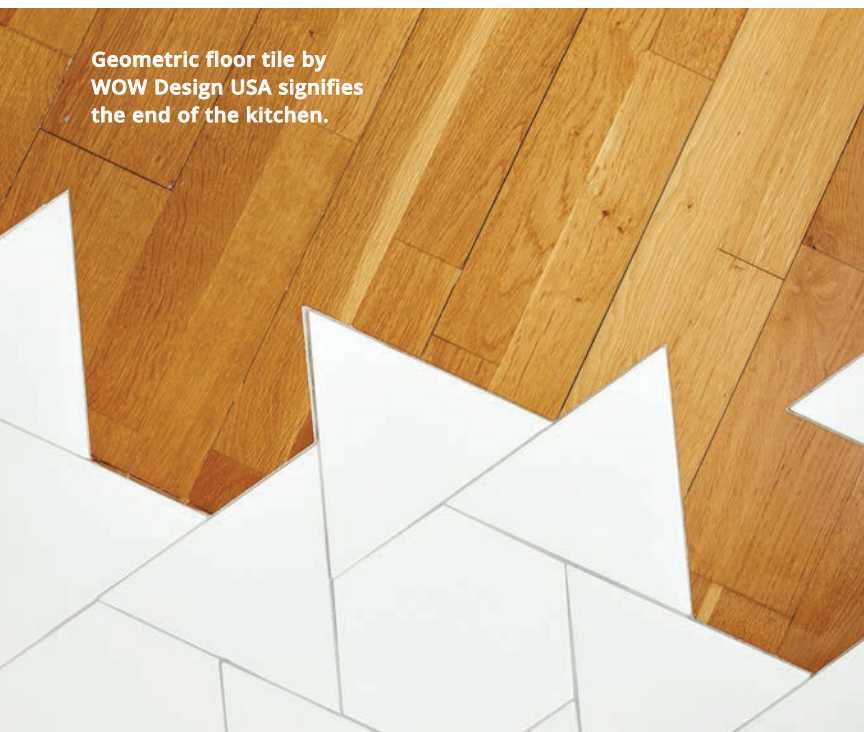
A Silestone Eternal Calcutta Gold countertop and backsplash by Granite Design suits this contemporary kitchen. Lead carpenter: Gregg Tanguay.



The spacious, natural-palette kitchen provides a calming space for Gina Ward to cook and entertain guests.



Geometric floor tile by WOW Design USA signifies the end of the kitchen.



ing and subsequent crumb catching. “Nearly everything here was a custom project,” says Mike, noting cabinets by Kountry Kraft—finished in natural rift-cut white oak, Benjamin Moore’s Tricorn Black, and Kountry Kraft Alpine—which seamlessly meld a contemporary black-and-white palette with the warmth of natural wood accents.

Reflecting on the success of this particular kitchen, Kristen says, “I think the key is the incorporation of zones so everyone isn’t congregated around one particular space at all times,” underscoring how the larder—housing a breakfast station, wine bar, and extra storage space—keeps the countertops free and clear for cooking, a pastime enjoyed by the inhabitants of this brightly updated space.

above An oversized decorative light fixture sourced by the owner accentuates a dining area bathed in natural light.

BENCH DOGS:

Island Ingenuity

An oversized 12-by-5½-foot center island and separate wash station painted Benjamin Moore's Regent Green accentuate the view out the surrounding floor-to-ceiling windows.



Rather than appointing glass to one cabinet, Gina selected an old Western mining screen, adding character and rustic comfort.



TO SOME, THE THOUGHT OF TRANSPORTING custom-made cabinets by mailboat to remote Maine islands sounds like a logistical nightmare. But for Weber Roberts and wife Brooks Crane, proprietors of the custom cabinetry and millwork company Bench Dogs, located in Washington, adventure—and teamwork—is integral to their process.

“We couldn’t do what we do without our talented crew,” Weber says, noting how everyone uniquely touches each piece that goes out, accentuating especially his wife Brooks’s role as the “design interface” between all parties. “Our projects realize success because all of us here ask questions every step of the way and hash out unique solutions to really make something work for our clients, no matter where they’re located,” Weber explains.

And this open-concept kitchen on Great Cranberry Island—created in partnership with Massachusetts-based Hutker Architects and Gina Ward, owner of the home and founder of MinkBrook Design—is a shining example of the breadth of good teamwork. Wraparound picture

windows guide the eye out to sea from every vantage point, and large oak built-ins grace each side of the stove, a wood finish echoed throughout the rest of the home. The team employed a welcome accent coat of Benjamin Moore’s Regent Green for an oversized 12-by-5½-foot center island and separate wash station, topped with Caesarstone’s Fresh Concrete. “Gina wanted lots of character in her kitchen,” Weber says, noting her hardware selections, including an old Western mining screen on sliders in lieu of glass for one oak cabinet. “That screen posed some challenges,” Weber recalls, noting how the weight of the wood and metal necessitated newly constructed sliding mechanisms for functional ease. “It’s an example of what we love to do: analyze and understand how hardware relates to other materials,” Weber says. “Since this homeowner was so involved, knowing what she wanted aesthetically—character and rustic accents—and understood she’d be using the space to cook and entertain, her persona really shines through in the finished kitchen. We’re proud to have helped her achieve that.”

Homeowner, and founder of MinkBrook Designs, Gina Ward selected all the hardware and materials in her kitchen.



top, right A view out to sea from this Great Cranberry Island open-concept kitchen-dining room—designed by MinkBrook Designs—provides a feast for the eyes. *above* Impressively sturdy dovetail oak drawers constructed by Bench Dogs were transported to the site via an early morning mailboat.