

BIG STYLE IN A

SMALL
SPACE

Lush color and a refreshing mix of materials turns a stuck-in-the-past kitchen into a modern-day stunner.

WRITER AND FIELD EDITOR *Shannon Quimby*
PHOTOS *Christopher Dibble*

When interior designer Donna DuFresne was asked to design a kitchen remodel of a 1903 Colonial home in Portland, Oregon, she didn't hesitate to say yes, nor did she need the address. Over the past 10 years, DuFresne and the homeowners had collaborated together on every other room in the house. Their combined love of a modern-classic style, no-holds-barred color, and use of every inch of space makes this one-of-kind family-friendly kitchen a showstopper.



Q AS THE DESIGNER, WHAT WERE YOUR PRIMARY GOALS TO MEET THE HOMEOWNERS' NEEDS?

We wanted to keep costs down, remodel within exterior walls, and improve space for designated areas: breakfast room, office, and pantry. This is an active family with two teenage sons, and they love to cook. The kitchen is a workhorse. Choosing materials that stand the test of time was a must.

Q WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR MAKING THE MOST OF A SMALL SPACE?

Incorporate unexpected storage and choose furniture that is strong but doesn't feel heavy. The walnut floating shelves over the unadorned sink window add sophistication and are home to decor accents. Centered in the kitchen is a custom-made table. It's open and airy and doesn't dominate the space.

Q WHAT WAS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE DESIGN?

Definitely the wallpaper. While searching for design inspiration, the homeowners discovered a pattern that was no longer in print. We found something better. The bold depth of the multidimensional colors of the Forest pattern by Cole & Son anchors the kitchen in an elegant, warm, and stylish beauty.

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—DONNA DUFRESNE, DESIGNER



OPPOSITE: Matte black and emerald green pair with brass for a sumptuous look. A table is a practical addition that takes up less visual space than an island.
RIGHT: The 30-inch range fits snugly at one end of the room. A niche for oils and spices highlights the modern, geometric pattern of the backsplash tile.



meet the designer

Donna DuFresne is principal of Donna DuFresne Interior Design, an award-winning design firm based in Portland, Oregon. With a design history that started over 20 years ago in Beverly Hills, DuFresne specializes in creating unique spaces that combine the past with the present. Each project, ranging from historic renovation to new construction, is approached with the intent of incorporating functionality with timeless style.





Q A BLACK-AND-GREEN COLOR SCHEME IS NOT A NORM FOR A KITCHEN. HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON THAT?

The homeowners had grown to respect the 50-year-old olive green kitchen cabinetry and it was a color choice they “couldn’t quit.” We also have a mutual respect for using black materials and furniture throughout the house. By combining the moody matte-black hexagonal floor tiles, matching appliance finishes, and linear tile backsplash, this once drab kitchen is now gorgeously dramatic.

Q YOUR AESTHETIC DESIGN STYLE IS SO UNIQUE. WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?

I like to research the styles and designs of older homes. This kitchen was choppy, crowded, and, to use the homeowner’s favorite word to describe it, “disastrous!” The added details of the beveled-mirror backsplash near the refrigerator, inset cabinetry, glass door fronts, no toe-kick, and unpolished-brass hardware nod to the era of the home. Every design detail is unique, original, and truly reflects the homeowners’ personality.



TOP: Designer Donna DuFresne painted the original plank ceiling in the breakfast room white. A midcentury pedestal table pairs with cane-back chairs and hexagonal floor tiles for a fresh take on vintage style. RIGHT: The paneled refrigerator and a tall, narrow spice cabinet flank the built-in bar. A mirrored backsplash creates the illusion of more space. OPPOSITE: Built-in cabinetry keeps clutter at bay in the adjacent home office.

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SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR REMODELING SUCCESS

Designer Donna DuFresne shares her tips for planning the perfect project.

- ***Respect the home.*** Complement and highlight an older home's architectural history.
- ***Sit in the space.*** "I've been called the kitchen whisperer by clients," says DuFresne, referring to the importance of visualizing a kitchen's new layout by learning the room.
- ***Pick materials*** that match the homeowners' lifestyle. Consider durability and upkeep.
- ***Spend money wisely.*** Stay on budget by choosing affordable materials with a high-end presence.