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FAMILY IN TAMPA, FLA., WANTED their kitchen to play more of a role in their large home. The dysfunctional space featured limited work areas and not enough room to host family gatherings, both of which were at the top of their wish list for improvements.

A general contractor in their area provided some quick drawings from a local cabinet shop, but the clients knew they needed someone with much more design experience. After seeing Jarrett Design's Facebook page, the homeowners made their choice – although the firm is located several states away in Emmaus, Pa.

Designer Jesse Jarrett was able to provide them with a quick design and a quote, and already they saw how much more functional the space could be. What began with only the kitchen ended up encompassing a great room and five bathrooms – a project that took a little more than six months to complete.

CREATING A LIMITLESS, TIMELESS KITCHEN

“The previous kitchen was U-shaped, with cramped work areas and less-than-ideal seating around a small, multi-level island,” said Jarrett. “The clients wished for more functionality for both cooks and guests.”

The design team was able to meet these requests by removing the wall between the kitchen and the dining room. This opened up the space to larger walkways, a large island with workstations on each side and long runs of cabinets on both walls.

The clients also wanted to improve the storage and hide smaller appliances when not in use. Deeper custom cabinets and drawers feature internal accessories like tray dividers and double trash receptacles, and an appliance garage helps keep those items out of sight when entertaining.

After looking at five different flooring options, they chose a darker stain, which Jarrett says drove the rest of the kitchen's color palette.

“The perimeter cabinets are a light gray to keep the space feeling bright and provide contrast to the floor,” he added. “The island is a charcoal stain on cherry to feel like a piece of furniture planted in the center of the room. Dark hardware and lighting finishes provide contrast against the light cabinetry and blend well with the wood tones.”

GOING THE



DISTANCE

A designer provides every project request despite being miles away from his clients
By Chelsie Butler

The clients chose a warm shade of gray for the custom kitchen cabinets and loved the look of a two-tone island. Quartzite provided the need for a natural countertop material, and the handmade backsplash that goes all the way to the ceiling on both walls complements the cabinet color.

The designer and his clients chose dark hardware to give the neutral-colored kitchen a level of rawness, as well as brushed-nickel fixtures for their timeless look.



A NOD TO AGING IN PLACE AND SUSTAINABILITY

According to the designer, many of his firm's clients are renovating their forever homes and want to be as comfortable as possible as they age. Jill Jarrett, the owner of Jarrett Design, is CAPS certified and has compiled a list of aging-in-place items from which homeowners can select. In this project, they included rollout shelves and drawers to avoid too much bending over; hardwood flooring, which is a safer option over slippery and hard tile; and undercabinet illumination, ample recessed fixtures and natural light to help with aging eyesight.

"To minimize walking distance, the sink, range and refrigerator are all close to one another, and plenty of countertop space was included so all prepping can be done in a single space," said Jarrett.

As a former electrical engineer, the designer is always interested in using sustainable elements like solar panels and LED lighting. He explained that his goal is to reduce his projects' carbon footprints, and as part of that, he specifies high-end products that will last a lifetime and won't have to go to a landfill in 10 years.

"In this project, we used cabinets that comply with TSCA Title VI/CARB formaldehyde emission standards, along with appliances that have the highest energy- and water-performance ratings," said Jarrett. "The timeless design and long-lasting products mean this kitchen will last decades."

ABOVE "Taking down the wall between the kitchen and the dining room allowed us to open up the space, making way for a massive island with workstations on either side—one for the chefs and one for the guests," said the designer.

"New engineered wood flooring replaced tile to reduce damage to knees over time," said Jarrett, who also incorporated 42-in. walkways for wheelchair accessibility. "Since the husband enjoys grilling outside, we installed a second sink on the opposite side of the main work area for his prepping needs without conflicting with the main chef's work space."

OVERCOMING A CHALLENGE BODES WELL FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Because this home is located in another state, the design team had to work hard to communicate effectively with the clients. Little did everyone know that the upcoming pandemic would deem this type of interaction the new normal.

"We had to find a way to design and construct their kitchen without their physical presence," said Jarrett, who explained that Facetime calls while at their home and custom sample boards were key to overcoming this challenge. "This is an extremely important lesson to learn right now given the current circumstances of the world—we may need to work remotely more often."

The design firm used the time it was shut down to ensure the appropriate internal systems were in place, including legal documentation that protects its intellectual property with drawings being shared virtually. Jarrett also admitted that having to schedule less in-person meetings speeds up

the whole process. Without as many clients visiting his showroom at least for the time-being, he invested in more samples to send out.

“Prior, we did not have duplicate samples, so we were forced to limit how long a client could take them out of our studio, if at all,” explained the designer. “The large collection allows us to ship directly without worrying about getting the samples back right away.”

UPDATING A UNIQUE – BUT UNUSED – SPACE

The clients wanted to transform what used to be a 1,500-sq.-ft. indoor pool into an area for entertainment, including a bar and a kitchenette. The large concrete slab made it challenging to run electrical and plumbing to the space.

“Given the difficulty of moving these items around after they had already been roughed in, furniture and cabinetry needed to be thoughtfully placed without any error,” said Jarrett. “This took a good deal of coordinating from design firm to contracting firm.”

A few examples of this coordination included strategically covering up power outlets and building scaffolding to mount the chandeliers from the tall ceilings. According to the designer, the contractor needed the exact locations of the dining and coffee tables to build the scaffolding to just the right height – since the ceiling slopes dramatically from one end of the room to the other.

Another challenge was mixing multiple finishes in such a large, open space with different functions. The flooring came first, which is a large-scale porcelain slate tile with minimal grout. This choice was the impetus for the other finishes in the kitchenette, which include a dark charcoal stain on



ABOVE A reclaimed chestnut bar is the show stopper in the great room's kitchenette, which also features black hardware for a moody theme.

cherry cabinets and black soapstone countertops – a material the designer says is popular in his area because of the number of farmhouses.

“When dealing with an overwhelming amount of square footage in a single room, it's always a good idea to start with flooring,” said the designer. “We knew it would be best to select a subtle yet natural-looking material that would go well with the stone fireplace and wood ceiling, as well as the furnishings.”

SOURCES

DESIGNER & PHOTOGRAPHER: Jesse Jarrett, Jarrett Design LLC

KITCHEN

BACKSPLASH: Sonoma Tilemakers; **CABINET HARDWARE:** Ashley Norton; **CABINETS:** Medallion; **COUNTER STOOLS:** RH Remy; **COUNTERTOPS:** Taj Mahal; **DISHWASHER:** Cove; **FAUCETS:** Grohe; **FLOORING:** Johnson Hardwood; **HOOD & RANGE:** Wolf; **MICROWAVE:** Hubbardton Forge; **PENDANT:** Breville; **REFRIGERATION:** Sub-Zero; **SINKS:** Mirabelle

GREAT ROOM BAR

BAR STOOLS: Domaci Nisky; **CABINET HARDWARE:** Ashley Norton; **CABINETS:** Medallion; **COFFEE MAKER:** Breville; **COUNTERTOPS:** Bucks County Soapstone & Nest by Jarrett Design; **FLOORING:** Epoca; **REFRIGERATOR:** GE Profile

