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BHG SPECIALS





TUDOR, TAKE TWO

A renovation puts a light, bright spin on a classic style and also opens a kitchen and breakfast room to new possibilities

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Before a renovation begins in earnest, there's typically a get-to-know-you period when the designer quizzes the homeowners about their lifestyle. With kitchens, designer Melissa Lewis keys in on three things: How big is your family? How much do you entertain? How big is your Thanksgiving turkey?

As curious as it may sound, that last question stems from a life lesson. Shortly after she was married, Lewis bought her first Thanksgiving turkey—a 24-pounder. She managed to shove the big bird into her apartment's oven but ultimately caused a small oven fire and ruined the dinner. Ever since, she's been serious about oven size and the insight a client's holiday turkey holds.

In the case of a renovation Lewis headed up for a Chicago-area couple with three children,

A wide arched opening ensures easy flow between the renovated suburban Chicago kitchen and breakfast room. A half-wall with a countertop previously separated the two spaces. Designer Melissa Lewis had a limewash applied to lighten the fireplace stones, which had become dingy. An abundance of white finishes and sunlight streaming through windows brightens the rooms.

Cooking area Oversize corbels detail the hand-troweled plaster range hood. “We wanted to keep the traditional theme but in a light and modern way,” Lewis says. **Breakfast room** A curved and skirted freestanding banquette upholstered in outdoor fabric strikes a balance between dressy and durable. “This space is the focal point when coming into the house,” Lewis says. Leaded-glass windows and a cathedral ceiling provide architectural drama.



the five-burner La Cornue range was a solid start to optimum hosting. In fact, it was the only item she kept. “The last man standing is what started the whole design,” Lewis says, noting that the black range inspired the honed black granite and gray-veined marble used for countertops.

The goal was to turn the kitchen and breakfast room into a spot to linger while improving function and retaining the home’s Tudor style. “Most people think of a Tudor as heavy and dark,” Lewis says. “We wanted modern and bright.”

Removing a half-wall improved flow between the two spaces and helped anoint the kitchen as the heart of the home. “There’s always a lot of people around, so I thought, *If this is going to be the spot, then let’s really make it the spot that accommodates everyone.*”

A 12-foot-long island that seats five—and integrates an oven for supplemental use when the couple entertain—was born out of that. In the breakfast room, a channel-back banquette and caned chairs provide additional seating.







WE TOOK THE KITCHEN FROM A CHOPPY SPACE TO TRULY BEING THE HEART OF THE HOME.”

—designer Melissa Lewis

Arched cabinet Antiqued reeded glass masks the contents. Cremona bolts add old-style elegance as full-length hardware.

Countertops The black range inspired the island’s Negro granite and the Calacatta Corchia marble on perimeter cabinets and backsplashes, purposefully tall to show off the veining.

To enhance the Tudor character, Lewis played off the home’s existing arched doorways and rich woods. Flanking the sink, two tall cabinets feature arched doors framed in walnut and inset with reeded glass; antiquing creates a marbled effect. The rich wood also appears on an arched pantry door and cabinetry wall. White cabinets, marble perimeter countertops, and lacquered brass hardware lighten the look.

Craftsmanship was important throughout the renovation in order to respect the 18-year-old

home’s original build. “The house looks like it was built 100 years ago due to the amount of detail,” Lewis says. “It has that old-world feel.”

The function, though, is rooted in modern living, whether that’s the family grabbing breakfast at the island or hosting large gatherings. “I knew going in that they were going to use every inch of space, so I said, ‘Let’s make it the best inches we can make,’” Lewis says. “It’s a super-functional kitchen that’s also comfortable and beautiful.”

Interior design: Melissa Lewis