



Mix and match

An all-new kitchen (with the same old cabinets)

Usually, when tackling a kitchen renovation, homeowners and contractors assume that the first step is to gut the old kitchen. But not always. Last year, Todd Buck and his team at Weston Construction completed a kitchen redo that left nearly all the existing cabinetry in place—and yet completely updated the space.

The house, built in 2005 in a then-new Albe-marle development, is traditional in its detailing and owned by a local interior designer who had been heavily involved in choosing all its original finishes. Yet she wasn't satisfied with the kitchen. Budget constraints had dictated ho-hum laminate countertops, and the layout on one side seemed choppy. A pantry on the corner was a closed-off space with standard wire shelves—functional but uninspired.



Buck and his team, working closely with the client, devised a plan that ups the kitchen's elegance factor by a mile. And it wasn't even necessary to change out the original cherry cabinetry—though some of it did get replaced with open white shelving, all the better to display ceramics, rustic cutting boards and other beautiful objects. "The idea was (to stay within the budget) we'd mix and match," said Buck.

The laminates gave way to black soapstone, offset by grey-white marble backsplashes and a white granite countertop on the center island. The desktop now extends around the corner and becomes a shallow countertop inside the pantry—which lost its door and gained custom shelving built by Bill Marks of Marks Construction. Potatoes nestle in their own basket and the spice rack is custom-sized.

Over the stovetop, a new white vent hood is clean and bright, yet rather monumental, and echoes the fireplace on the opposite end of the great room. A farmhouse sink completes the look.

The project also included a total redo of the laundry room, which Buck calls his favorite part of the job. "It's like a ship," he said—many functional parts cleverly squeezed into a small space. A utility sink, stacked washer and dryer, fold-down drying rack, and a surprising amount of shelving all find their places here.

Buck said his team accomplished the renovation with very few specs and an ever-evolving plan as his client homed in on the look she wanted. "That's not something I do very frequently," he said, "but I knew there was enough of a vision that we could figure it out."—Erika Howsare



Open shelving above the desk area displays the homeowner's collection of vintage wares.

PHOTOS: ANDREA HUBBELL