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+ Floor Plans for Family Kitchens


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The cherry finish of the kitchen's base cabinets matches the woodwork throughout the Minneapolis condo, while the walnut uppers, with their hardware-free fronts, blend into the background when the kitchen lighting is dimmed.



NEW VIEW

A condo's streamlined design and modern finishes keep the focus on the river outside.

writer NANCY CHRISTIE *photographer* SUSAN GILMORE *field editor* HEIDI PEARSON



DESIGN TIP
Slab-style
walnut cabinet
doors gain an
even more
contemporary
feel without
hardware.





OPPOSITE: Appliances are out of view of the entertaining and dining areas while still easily accessible. For example, the exhaust fan hides in the upper cabinetry, and the wall oven was installed below counter level, hidden from view by the island. The drop-in cooktop allows the granite countertop to flow smoothly without the interruption a freestanding range would create. **LEFT:** Using matching stainless-steel fronts on the adjacent pantry gives the refrigerator wall an integrated, streamlined look.



hen Peter Zenner decided to move to downtown Minneapolis, he wasn't just changing where he lived, he was changing the way he lived—leaving behind the 110-year-old Victorian duplex that had been home for 25

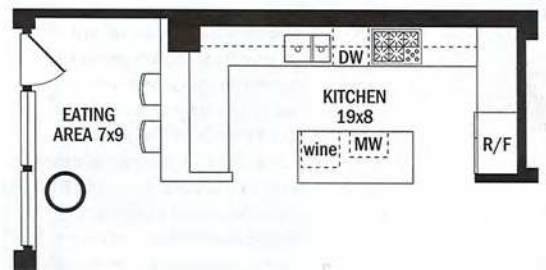
years for a Mississippi River-side condo that was so new it existed only as a blueprint at the time of purchase.

Faced with standard options, Peter turned to designer David Heide, who had handled renovations at his previous home, for assistance in choosing finishes and suggesting tweaks to the condo's floor plan. Given that the location of the plumbing, mechanicals, and structural system could not be changed, the creative challenge, Heide says, was "redefining the space and the way it worked for Peter's lifestyle."

"Sometimes larger spaces struggle for a sense of scale," Heide says. "It's fine when there's a large group, but when you are home alone, you need a sense of place within that larger context so that you feel comfortable and nurtured by that space."

To help provide that sense of place for a kitchen open to the living and dining areas, Heide looked to the ceiling. Lowering the ceiling helped visually define the space separate from the adjacent areas. The lowered portion also houses the recessed lighting that illuminates the cooking area.

Peter wanted the kitchen to be elegant yet discreet. "It was intended to sit quietly in the corner and be available and serviceable," Heide says. "The primary focus is the incredible view of the river." Heide chose dark walnut for the upper cabinets because "I wanted something that would recede into the





ABOVE: The flecks of color in the Blue Pearl granite countertop reference the dark upper cabinets, the stainless steel of the fixtures and accent pieces, and the liquid blue of the glass backsplash tiles. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The ceiling's curve draws on the shapes of the nearby Stone Arch Bridge that spans the Mississippi River.



shadows. There might be a little sparkle off the blue glass backsplash, but the room needed to be able to go dark and silent.”

There were practical concerns as well. The space had to have sufficient storage, plus room to interact with guests—something the kitchen in Peter’s old Victorian home didn’t offer. Adding a breakfast bar filled both needs, providing a place for guests to sit and visit, as well as offering more storage space. The upper cabinets, double-depth drawers at either end of the back counter wall, and a pantry and appliance garage within a wall of stainless steel more than filled the bill for storage.

The overall look ties right into the surroundings outside the condo’s ninth-floor corner location—the flowing Mississippi, the industrial buildings, and the downtown Minneapolis skyline. The blue and brown tones together with clear glass lighting fixtures reference the river and its bed, and add a natural feel to the contemporary space, while the stainless-steel elements reflect the area’s industrial heritage. This sophisticated mix of finishes and textures results in an elegantly detailed kitchen that keeps the focus on the view. **KBI** RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 132.

Takeaways

- 1** Using pullouts and deep drawers instead of standard base cabinets maximizes storage.
- 2** A splash of blue on the backsplash adds interest to the dark wall of cabinetry.
- 3** Small details, such as specialty switch and outlet covers, elevate the look of the overall design.
- 4** Altering the flat plane of the ceiling serves as a visual cue that subtly defines the space.
- 5** Stainless-steel cabinetry panels create a seamless look along the fridge wall.

THIS PHOTO: The bubble chandelier above the dining table visually defines the space without obstructing the view. The round design subtly references the Mississippi River outside.

