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Out of the Past

Inspired by yesterday but built for today, these three kitchens transcend time

By Fred Albert

Michael and [redacted] Minneapolis kitchen complements the historic character of their Craftsman Tudor, down to the cutouts under the sink. The faux-brick backsplash tiles are from Revival Tileworks; the chandelier is from Lightworks in Minneapolis. The built-in clock is a signature of David Heide Design Studio.



Only the most devout historian—or masochistic cook—would try to replicate a kitchen from the turn of the last century. But that doesn't mean that Arts and Crafts aesthetics have to be abandoned at the kitchen door. By pairing natural materials with period patterns and details, a homeowner can evoke the era without forsaking the comfort and convenience we've come to expect when cooking.



Susan Glenore

Above Other windows in the house inspired the patterns for the leaded glass in the kitchen, which took 18 months to remodel. "This was really a labor of love," says Michael [REDACTED], who acted as his own contractor in consultation with Next Level Renovations.

Opposite It took months to accumulate all the red birch for the project, which features slate floors and a Wolf range complete with pot filler above.

When Michael and [REDACTED] bought their 1907 Craftsman Tudor in Minneapolis three years ago, it was blessed with enough leaded glass, mahogany and quartersawn oak to make visitors sigh. But that sigh turned to a gasp as soon as guests stepped inside the kitchen: a 1990s confection with orange sponge-painted walls and milky-green floor tiles. "People would walk in and say, 'Eww, what happened here?'" recalls Michael.

The [REDACTED] love to cook and entertain, so they asked Minneapolis architectural designer David Heide to maximize the kitchen's space and modernize its appointments without betraying the home's period roots. Working within the existing footprint, Heide gutted the kitchen and raised the ceiling, gaining more than a foot of clearance. Alpine Woodworking crafted new cabinets from red birch—a warm, unpretentious wood that was popular in Midwest homes at the turn of the last century. "It's my kitchen cabinet material of choice," says Heide, who collaborated on the project with staff architectural designer Vaughn Kelly.

Once bisected by a circulation-choking peninsula, the kitchen is now blissfully unencumbered, save for a compact island illuminated by a quartet of pendant lights. A Wolf range rests beneath a hood shrouded in birch; additional ventilation and heating is concealed behind perforated wood grilles (which also hide speakers and light controls). "Everything's state of the art," says Michael, who acted as general contractor. "But it looks like it could be original to the house."

Wall ovens flank upper cabinets fitted with leaded-glass doors that mimic other windows in the home. Michael had his heart set on a brick backsplash, but Heide realized that a textured, porous finish like that could prove problematic in a kitchen, so he had ceramic tile finished in a custom matte glaze, so it resembles brick. The shape is echoed in the slate floor tiles, which were cut down to 3-by-6 inches to make the space appear bigger.

"I love slate in kitchens," Heide says. "It's economical, it comes in a lot of interesting colors, and it doesn't show dirt."

Now, when visitors stop by, they say the kitchen looks like it was there all along. That pleases Heide. "Our number-one goal was to make a kitchen that would transcend time and owners and be a permanent design solution," he says.

