

# This Old House

## New Meets Old

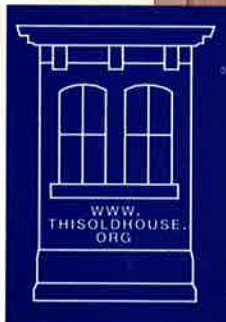
### Reinventing a Historic Home

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### Best New Tools

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# HOUSE CALLS WITH STEVE



## Steel Away

A cold, inhospitable kitchen warms up to its new owners

BY BONILES

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he 1928 Mediterranean-style white brick house with its red tile roof looks as if it would be more at home in Southern California than in the heart of suburban Minneapolis. And that was precisely the appeal it held for owners Kathy Peterson and Molly Lanpher, who also fell for such period details as marble windowsills, 2-foot-thick archways between the main rooms, and a vaulted ceiling in the living room. "It was the most solidly built house I'd ever seen," says Kathy, a substance-abuse counselor.

The kitchen, in stark contrast, featured some of the worst hallmarks of a '70s renovation. The walls and ceiling of the 10-by-20-foot space were paneled in stainless steel. The brown-stained wood cabinets, gray-laminate countertops, and dingy industrial carpeting only added to the sense of "being in a meat locker instead of a warm, inviting kitchen," recalls Kathy. *This Old House* host Steve Thomas agrees. "Stainless is one of my favorite kitchen materials, but here it was used in excess, and it served no purpose," he says. "It's easy to see why the owners wanted a homier room."

### PROBLEM

Kathy, an accomplished cook, also longed for a more efficient layout. Three doors leading into the kitchen from the dining room, the front hallway, and the garage created three traffic routes that crisscrossed and sliced through the cooking zone. Even more frustrating, a poorly positioned refrigerator blocked a good part of the storage cabinetry in a peninsula that separated the work triangle from the eating area. And there wasn't much counter or



ABOVE: *The old kitchen felt like an austere "laboratory."* TOP: *The owners wanted their remodeled room to reflect a cheery charm and incorporate a more efficient floor plan.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHAD HOLDER

STEVE THOMAS PHOTO: PASCAL BLANCON  
STYLIST: JANNIA NOEL

# HOUSE CALLS WITH STEVE

storage space next to the stove, either.

Because the owners enjoy entertaining in the kitchen, the two wanted to replace the dim dining nook on the other side of the peninsula with a cozy, convivial eating area where they could gather casually with friends. "I didn't want to be separated from guests while cooking," adds Kathy.

## SOLUTION

The challenge of reorganizing the layout and giving it an aesthetic style that would blend with the rest of the house was turned over to architect David Heide in collaboration with Bayard Engelhardt, AIA, who decided to start from scratch. In addition to gutting the space, the design team tacked on 18 square feet to the room by annexing a hard-to-access storage closet, and gained more precious wall space by removing a 3-foot-wide radiator in the old dining nook.

Attacking the traffic problem, the architects swapped the placement of the cooking and eating zones, connecting the work area along three walls that are free of doorways. The newly reconfigured work area is out of the direct thoroughfare between the garage and hallway. It also boasts 22 running feet of granite-topped lower cabinetry that links all the appliances: A built-in refrigerator stands where the former storage closet was, the sink and dishwasher are on the opposite wall, and the four-burner pro-style range with custom-designed hood nestles conveniently between them.

The peninsula was removed, and in its stead Heide and Engelhardt designed a 3-by-5-foot island located in the center of the workspace. Custom-milled of birch, painted creamy white, and topped with gold-toned granite like the rest of the cabinetry, it conceals a new radiator. The granite top cantilevers over one end so two barstools can be pulled up underneath. "Visitors can cozy up to the island and from there help with the prep, but the placement of

the counter lets the cook protect her workspace," says Steve.

To answer the owners' desire for a more enticing eat-in area, the architects designed a 5-by-6-foot alcove between the back door and the adjacent dining room, filling it with an L-shape banquette in painted birch and a matching table with a stained maple top. A new built-in buffet and china cupboard, directly across from the banquette, handily serves both dining areas. To maximize entertaining space, a small broom closet was removed to make way for a beverage bar in a corner adjacent to the cupboard.

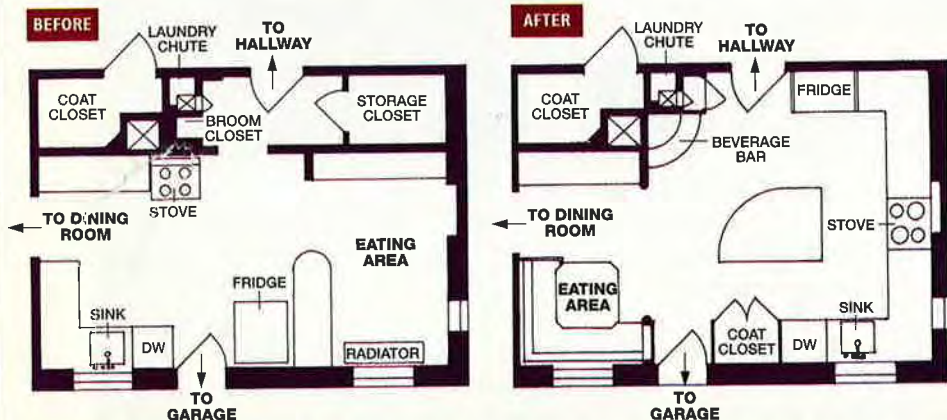
## FINISHING TOUCHES

Inspired by bungalow-style kitchens of the 1920s, the architects added stencillike cutouts in cabinet doors over the refrigerator, under the sink, and over a newly built coat closet next to the dishwasher; they also function as air-conditioning vents. The fridge and dishwasher are faced with overlay painted birch panels that match the cabinets. "The paneling visually connects the cooking and eating areas," says Engelhardt. To keep the look light and airy, pale golden subway tile runs up walls behind the sink and appliances, and the floor is composed of 3-inch-wide maple tongue-in-groove planks, protected with three coats of polyurethane.

The overall effect is "sunny and welcoming—just what we wanted," says a pleased Kathy. "Warmer, more inviting, more efficient," concurs Steve. "The old kitchen violated a cardinal remodeling rule: Never build something so idiosyncratic that it will appeal only to you. The new room blends the owners' needs and tastes with good design, which hits the mark for a successful kitchen."



The Mediterranean-style home (ABOVE) now features an L-shape banquette in the kitchen (LEFT), tucked between the back door and adjoining dining room. The fir ceiling and beams add to the nook's warmth; a schoolhouse-style pendant lamp hangs over the maple-topped table.



**BEFORE:** Interrupted by three doorways, the old kitchen suffered from a chaotic traffic flow and limited counter and storage space. **AFTER:** Maintaining the footprint, as well as the location of all doors and windows, the dining and cooking zones of the old space were switched. Removing two closets gained more workspace for the new kitchen and a beverage bar.

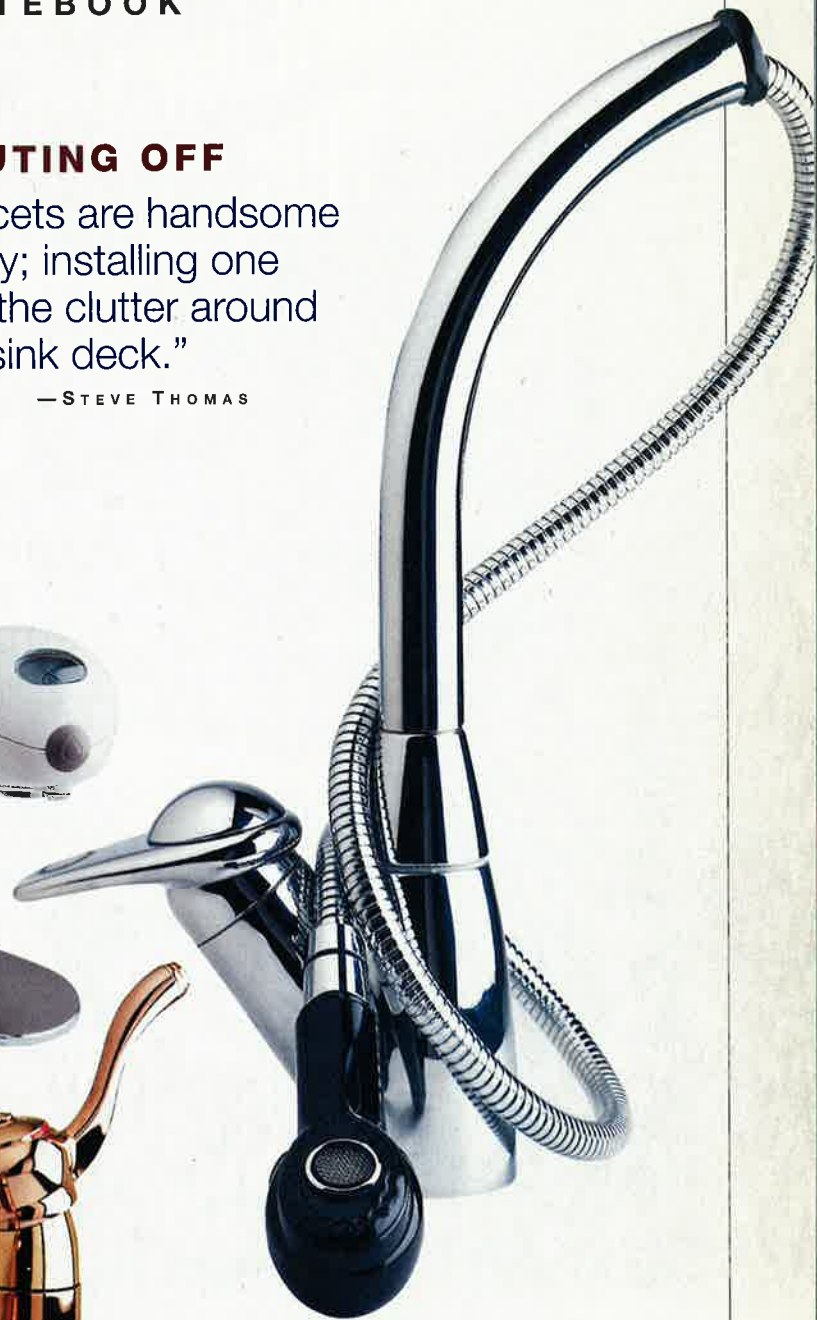
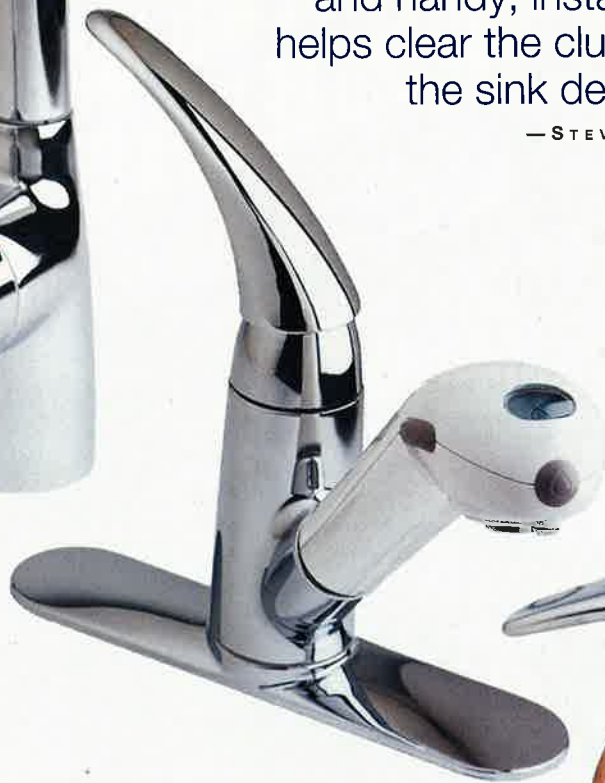
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## IDEAS NOTEBOOK

### SPOUTING OFF

"Pull-out faucets are handsome and handy; installing one helps clear the clutter around the sink deck."

— STEVE THOMAS



The loop-handle Price Pfister 533-series faucet in the Peterson/Lanpher kitchen was chosen for its handsome looks and practicality. The spare profile of the single-hole-mounted spigot suits that of the one-basin sink. And with a totally clear deck plate, there's much less to clean.

TOP LEFT: Grohe's Ladylux Café offers pull-out convenience in a graceful spout with an 8½-inch reach and a 360-degree swivel for tackling hefty pots. TOP CENTER: Moen's PureTouch Professional faucet features a built-in water filter. TOP RIGHT: Standing 16 inches off the sink deck, Kohler's ProAvatar, with high arch and black spray head, works with both one- and three-hole mounting. BOTTOM: Moen's neatly compact, copper-finish Colonnade unit has a matching soap/lotion dispenser.