



SAVING THE BEST

A refreshed galley kitchen with some annexed space completes a home rehab

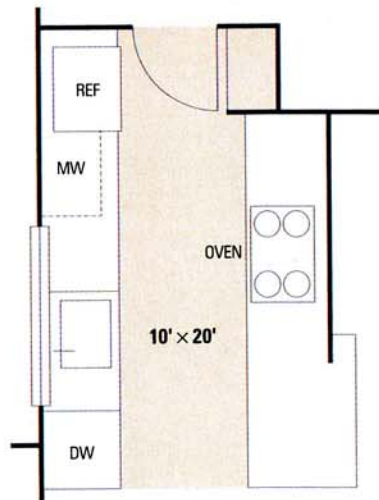
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Framed in the same maple used to craft the custom cabinets, a chest-high partition faced with ceramic tile separates the cooking zone from the adjacent family room. A long counter, inset with a cooktop, creates a surface for snacks and breakfasts as well as meal preparation.



ABOVE: One end of the cooking counter is used as a breakfast bar, supported by a Fu-Tung Cheng–designed steel leg.

RIGHT: The floor plan shows a kitchen that has absorbed part of a garage corner. The space is sandwiched between the family room and the outdoor courtyard that leads to the front door.



Seeking to have an attractive new face put on the homely galley kitchen of their Sunnyvale, California, home, Paul Parker and Art Espinoza enlisted designer Fu-Tung Cheng, of Cheng Design in Berkeley. Paul and Art bought the one-story, four-bedroom house because they appreciated its openness and spare Modernist design (the work of local architects Jones & Emmons back in 1960). The two men began putting their

stamp on the place not long after moving in, but left the kitchen for last. “The appliances had been replaced at one point, but the plywood cabinets were original—and in poor repair,” Paul says. “Countertops were a worn plastic laminate and the flooring was vinyl.” Paul and Art wanted a quality upgrade; they also wanted more space for storage.

“We had a very tight budget,” says Cheng. “So if something still worked, in terms of the

design, it stayed. We didn’t want to disturb the architecture because it has a pedigree.”

The new kitchen measures only 10x20 feet, but it has 20 percent more storage space than its predecessor, providing more bang for the buck. Because the layout is basically the same, the fact that the room had even been remodeled might elude casual observers. “We notched out a corner of the garage, about 30 inches deep,” says Cheng. “That freed us from

having too many wall cabinets.” It also meant he could place the refrigerator in a more favorable location near the new door to the garage, completing a more efficient work triangle.

“Everything else is pretty much where it had been before,” says Cheng, underscoring the thriftiness of the floor plan. “The cooktop and oven are no more than a foot from where the old stove had been; the sink is just about where it always was, but the counters are longer

A stainless steel refrigerator is built into the window wall, where a slatelike counter extends down to the floor, partly framing the dishwasher. The house’s original hanging globe lights unite the new kitchen to the entryway, with its slate floor. Flooring in the kitchen is bamboo.



Store-bought translucent glass set into aluminum frames add a crisp look to the bank of cabinets that hold essentials at one end of the kitchen.



Maple cabinets under the cooktop have minimal stainless steel pulls. The drawers hold silverware, napkins and place mats. Tall, narrow cabinets flanking the built-in oven are pull-out pantry units. The remaining cabinet hides roll-out shelves that hold cookware.

Different materials act as a **map to the functions** of this kitchen.



because we had grabbed that extra bit of real estate from the garage.”

The tatty plywood cabinets became new maple custom cabinets, including a trio of tall cabinets custom-fit into a niche just inside the kitchen door. Inexpensive translucent-glass doors purchased from a big box store mute cabinet contents without creating a blank wall facing the kitchen. The counter that surrounds the farm-style stainless steel sink is crafted of a man-made stone that resembles slate; the one surrounding the cooktop and extending outward is a more glamorous surface. “It’s a type of concrete material that’s mixed and poured in my own shop,” says Cheng. “It’s 2½ inches thick and has a lovely translucence.”

A skilled contractor would be a key member of the team and Cheng recommended that the couple talk to Scot Nicholls, of Nicholls Construction in San Jose. “Scot was great. His craftsmanship more than did justice to Fu-Tung’s design,” says Paul.

All the work took just under five months. When it was done, Paul and Art had a more stylish, more functional kitchen from a high-end designer—without busting their budget. ♦

ABOVE: A stainless steel apron, with the designer’s characteristic fossil implant, extends down from the cooktop to the top of the oven.

ABOVE RIGHT: A steel rod supports the stainless steel shelf the microwave rests on. The rod connects to a wall cabinet whose door wraps around the corner.



design points



FOSSIL IMPLANT Part of a nautilus (left) is embedded in the concrete apron below the cooktop. “It’s an actual fossil,” says Cheng. “We treat it as a signature design symbol and put at least one in each of our projects.”



CORNER DOOR The kitchen’s only wall cabinet (above) has an L-shaped door. Cheng calls this a key design element: “You can see that little negative pull and the way it turns the corner.”

SURFACE MARRIAGE The slatelike surface of the sink counter flows seamlessly into the one-piece stainless steel basin set into it (left). A tiny notched-out area separates the sink from the apron that drops down from it.

TILED PARTITION The 48-inch-high wall (opposite) that shields the family room from the cooking end of one kitchen counter is faced with celadon-colored subway tile that extends onto the adjacent wall, creating a two-sided backsplash.



A free-form slate element is embedded in one corner of the breakfast end of the cooking counter, which is made of a Cheng-formulated concrete product.