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Classic Upgrade

The kitchen in a
1928 Sea Girt
cottage grows into the
twenty-first century





What to do when the kitchen is too small? Knock down the walls and start over.

That's what Carl and Marilyn Debiase did inside their 1928 cottage in Sea Girt, Monmouth County. Worth the wait and the 10-month move-out is a beautiful new kitchen that is four times its original size. The look of the new kitchen honors the style of the house, with a sun porch described as tremendous, though the high-tech amenities are totally today.

Expansion of the kitchen became part of a major renovation that included demolition, foundation work, and several additions (among them a patio and two-car garage with a shower and changing room). The remodel also netted a new bathroom, laundry room, and back porch as well as all new windows and a new front door.

Now the three-up, three-down, two-bath house is perfect for two, says Marilyn Debiase, a sort of mini-retirement home for the couple. There's enough room for their 26-year-old son when he's there and the families of their older children.

And the kitchen, which could hardly hold a table for four because of the proximity of the door to the basement, now has space for an office nook and for everyone to stand around the big central island and gab when Marilyn Debiase cooks for holiday gatherings and celebrations.

Previous pages: A wood and tin coffered ceiling soars over a roomy kitchen that unites glass-front and solid-door cabinets, blue granite countertops, Southern pine flooring, blue accents, and special touches such as whimsical counter-height stools in flexible steel and wood and a large island with wine cooler, sink, stove top, and refrigerator drawers. **Left:** Old and new combine gracefully when 1928-style cabinets and drawers and hardware, farm sink, lighting, and a ruffley window treatment cozy up to high-tech refrigerator, warming, and dishwasher drawers; a built-in microwave; and a range with a custom vent hood that echoes the exterior window treatments.





Opposite: A perforated panel crowns a large lighted china cabinet that shows off glassware in a corner near the door to the large dining room; nearby is more dishware behind glass. **Above:** Business gets done in a corner alcove with good light and shelving where the house's main staircase used to branch into the kitchen. The opening above the computer monitors allows glimpses into the living and dining rooms.

Top to Bottom Gorgeous

Besides wanting more kitchen in the kitchen, the plan was always to maintain the look and feel of the 75-plus-year-old cottage, right down to duplicating the distinctive exterior trim around the windows and the grid created by the panes of the windows. You see it in the glass-front cabinets and especially in the columns on the central island, alongside the stainless steel-fronted stove, and on the handsome, compact vent hood designed — like the rest of the kitchen — by David Magliaro of New Horizon Interiors in Farmingdale. The builder for the project was Robert L. Monetti Custom Builders in Brielle.

The vintage cottage style also lives in the clean look of the white cabinetry with hidden pin hinges and knob-and-cup hardware on doors and drawers, the exposed apron-front sink, and the delicate beadboard paneling. Blue and white cottage pottery and other accents in blue echo the exquisite blue Bahia granite countertops with a half-inch bullnose edge.

A lighted china cabinet — New Jersey seaside cottage-style, with a perforated top panel — holds glassware galore and stands near the push-through door to the large dining room and a 144-inch-long, seat-everyone table. Rich Southern pine was used for the flooring and solid cherry for the desktop (brown glaze over harvest gold) in Marilyn Debiase's office nook. Before the redo, the nook was where the main staircase of the house accessed the kitchen.

Above it all is a coffered ceiling of wood and tin, whose criss-crossing beams repeat the grid in the windowpanes and glass-front cabinets. The design elements and materials tie together for a subtle, cozy cohesiveness.

Room of the Future

Other kitchens dream of sharing the

modern luxuries in this one, even the amenities featured on the Magliaro-designed curved island alone: a four-burner stovetop, a second sink of stainless steel, a convenient wine cooler built into the end, and refrigerator drawers for produce, platters of party food, and the like.

A warming drawer near the oven and two dishwasher drawers near the apron-front sink are ready to help out any time of the day or night. The upright Sub-Zero refrigerator sports panels of the same inset cabinetry — naked refrigerators hardly ever happen any more.

The artsy counter-height chairs of flexible steel and wood that Marilyn Debiase discovered in a shop of unique designs add another modern touch; the backs are steel cut-out scenes of a sailboat and of circles — a charming element representing new in the mix of old and new.

"It's a happy place to be," she says. **DNJ**

Elizabeth Eckstein writes from her home in Austin, Texas.

SOURCES Island view: kitchen design, cabinetry, beadboard paneling, cherry desktop (right foreground), New Horizon Custom Interiors in Farmingdale; ceiling and flooring, Robert L. Monetti Custom Builders in Brielle; blue Bahia granite countertops, Ideal Fabrication in Farmingdale; hanging spot lights and pendant light, Capitol Lighting in Eatontown; wine cooler, Stohrer's in Point Pleasant; island sink, Palermo Plumbing in Toms River; door and drawer pulls, C.H. Briggs Hardware in Reading, Pennsylvania; stools, Arrivé Gallery in Long Branch; paint, Sherwin Williams Pure White. **Appliance view:** range, vent, refrigerator, refrigerator and dishwasher drawers, warming drawer, microwave, Stohrer's; Walker Zanger tile, Avalon Carpet Tile and Flooring in Point Pleasant; countertops and tile work, Ideal Fabrication; farm sink and hardware, Palermo Plumbing. **Glass-front cabinetry:** canister set, Brielle antiques shop now closed. **Desk:** paned mirror, Designs by Grace in Manasquan; Herman Miller desk chair, Design Within Reach in Princeton.

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