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Marin Home

FROM TOURS AND MAKEOVERS TO DECORATIVE DETAILS AND REALTOR INSIGHTS

With elimination of an intrusive structural wall, the kitchen now rolls seamlessly into the living room.



RENOVATION

ISLAND LIFE

The crown jewel of this remodel is a 10-person kitchen gathering place that guests love. »

BY DAWN MARGOLIS DENBERG • PHOTOS BY LIZ DALY



FIVE YEARS AGO, the Forrest family – Todd, Jackie and their two children – moved from San Francisco to Mill Valley. Their new home’s bedrooms and baths were reasonably well updated. The kitchen, living room and decks, on the other hand, needed a little TLC. “I’m guessing these parts of the house were last renovated in the late ’80s or early ’90s,” Jackie says.

Rather than jump right into any remodeling or major structural change, the couple agreed to first see how they used the space. Over time, they decided a straight-up kitchen remodel wasn’t going to cut it. “We discussed our needs with an architect and then realized that if we were going to go through with a remodel, it probably made sense to also expand the home’s footprint,” Jackie adds.

Their plan called for 660 more square feet of living space. For the main floor, that meant adding an office/TV room for the kids, adjacent to a new open-concept kitchen. They also

added a walk-in pantry, as well as a laundry room that doubles as the home’s mudroom. “We were then able to turn the old laundry room into a separate office for Todd,” Jackie says. Downstairs, the Forrests expanded a small rec room into a larger hangout space for their children and added a wine cellar. The master bedroom also got a minor facelift.

The heart of the home, and the crown jewel of the remodel, was the new kitchen. “I love to cook. It’s how I relax,” Todd says. With an eight-burner Viking stove, two dishwashers, two sinks and an expansive island for food prep, they could easily feed a football team. And while the footprint of the kitchen didn’t change significantly, knocking out a structural wall separating it from the living room dramatically changed the feel of the house. “One of the reasons we bought the place was for the views,” Todd says. “And now we can enjoy it from the living room as well as the kitchen.”

For help with finishes and soft goods, the couple turned to San Anselmo–based interior

designer Ann Lowengart. They weren’t exactly sure what they wanted, but they trusted her instincts. So when Lowengart suggested they splurge on a few statement pieces, including handblown glass pendant lights by John Pomp over the kitchen island, they gave her the thumbs-up. Ditto for the Christopher Boots interlocking brass ring light fixture in the living room and the Urban Electric one in the family room. “We definitely splurged on the lighting,” Jackie notes. And while many of the soft goods were custom made, they managed to integrate a few retail pieces, including the RH Modern sofa in the family room.

One aspect of the design that defies convention: “We don’t have a formal dining room, or even a dining room table,” Jackie says. The Forrests like to entertain but prefer the informality of gathering large groups around the kitchen island. So an extra-long one that seats up to 10 people was essential to the design. “The first time we had company over, I was certain we made the right decision,” Todd says. **M**



THE DETAILS

WHERE THEY LIVE The Country Club neighborhood in Mill Valley

WHAT THEY OWN A four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath contemporary

CONTRACTOR Shay Lyons, Cairn Construction, San Francisco

ARCHITECT Steve Geiszler, Geiszler Architects, San Francisco

INTERIOR DESIGNER Ann Lowengart, Lowengart Interiors, San Anselmo

FAVORITE DETAIL “The light fixtures,” says Jackie. “All of them. I’m obsessed.”



Opposite: A chef's kitchen with all the bells and whistles. This page, clockwise from top: Bifold doors improve the home's indoor/outdoor flow; custom furnishings fit flawlessly into the new space; a Christopher Boots light fixture; the master bedroom; Jackie and Todd Forrest.

