

Irregular handmade terra-cotta tiles form a compelling backdrop in interior designer Lisa Furey's new kitchen. Lisa designed the island to resemble a piece of English country furniture. "The island is my workhorse," she says. "The large drawers hold bowls, salad spinners, serving plates, pots and pans, and baking dishes. The smaller drawers hold linens, napkins, plastic wrap, and sandwich bags."





view FINDER

A designer embraces natural materials and the outdoors to give her cozy Low Country kitchen a fresh perspective.

WRITER *Judith Turner-Yamamoto*
PHOTOS *Brie Williams*
STYLIST *Sandra L. Mohlmann*
FIELD EDITOR *Andrea Caughey*



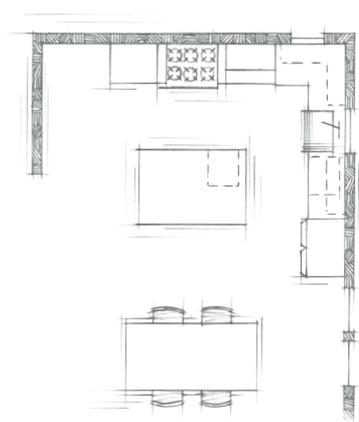
INTERIOR DESIGNER LISA FUREY'S

love affair with the South Carolina Low Country began when she and husband Jim Colton celebrated her birthday at an inn nestled in Palmetto Bluff. "This is a magical place," she says. "The streets are gaslit, and the town is cocooned by a nature preserve." The couple bought lakefront property with unobstructed views of that preserve and began building their second home in phases. A cottage came first, then a carriage house with an upstairs apartment for their two teenage daughters. The 2,000-square-foot modern farmhouse was completed in late 2017.

"With me, function comes first, before beauty," Lisa says. "We wanted a living space where we could all gather that would capitalize on the incredible views." So she and Jim decided to build an "upside down" house, in which the upper level is the main living space and, like a tree-house, is wide-open to nature.

Lisa collaborated with Court Atkins Architects on the rest of the house, but the L-shape kitchen was her exclusive purview. "With a small kitchen, there is no margin for error," she says. "We had to think about how we would use the space, what would go where, and how to pare it all down to the essentials."

the plan



Although deliberately designed without seating, the storage-packed island is the center of activity. It provides ample prep space and hidden storage for everyday cooking essentials as well as larger serving pieces. Open shelves and windows on the perimeter stand in for upper cabinetry, making the small space feel larger.



OPPOSITE TOP: A bridge-style faucet in polished nickel draws attention to one of Lisa's favorite elements—a classic apron-front sink. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Lisa fills her open shelves with "pretty, not showy, things," she says. Dishware and decorative items in the kitchen's signature tones of taupe, mushroom, and blue are grounded by white pieces and natural materials for a balanced mix. THIS PHOTO: Floating shelves flank a charming casement window. Black sconces frame the scene while adding contrast. Michelangelo marble tops the perimeter and island cabinetry.

THIS PHOTO: Shiplap detailing, wood trim, and the distinctive terra-cotta tile backsplash integrate the range hood with the room's key elements. To the right, a countertop cabinet houses small appliances and outlets.





FAR LEFT: Custom panels conceal the refrigerator, blending it seamlessly into the cabinetry. **LEFT:** “Recessed lights can make a room look cold,” Lisa says. “I chose hanging faceted-glass pendants to add texture and bring the ceiling height down.” At 8½ feet long, the custom dining table—hand-built by English Farmhouse Furniture—mirrors the island’s footprint. The tabletop is painted the same mushroom as the island. The ceramic vases were a HomeGoods find by Lisa’s husband.

A self-described neat freak, Lisa chose clean, smooth surfaces with no grooves or curlicues, put all work surfaces within easy reach, and designed plenty of out-of-sight storage. The refrigerator blends into the cabinetry; a compartment above holds trays and serving plates. A double cabinet to the right of the range houses small appliances—coffeemaker, toaster oven, microwave, and all necessary electrical outlets. Additional outlets were placed on the bottom of the floating shelves so they wouldn’t mar the tile backsplash. Hidden in the crossbeam over the island is a strip of LED lights. The choice of a casement window over the sink meant an easy-to-reach handle by the faucet.

Understated features add warmth to the open interior. Pendants over the dining table and black sconces over the sink bring the vaulted ceiling height down to human scale. Floors throughout are wide-plank oiled white oak. The knots add character, the light color doesn’t show dust, and oil can be used to fill in scratches. Lisa chose exterior decking in the same tone to further blur boundaries between inside and out. Handmade terra-cotta tiles in soft blue and mushroom echo the coastal landscape and vary in color and thickness. “Nothing lines up perfectly,” Lisa says. “Somebody made these, and you can tell up close. We wanted these quiet, thought-out details to keep all eyes where they truly belong—on the outdoors.”

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DESIGNER INSIGHTS: GETTING WHITE RIGHT

For designer Lisa Furey, enlivening a white kitchen is all in the details. She shares her strategies.

- *Play up a neutral palette.* Lisa worked with white paint in different sheens to create depth and textural interest. A mushroomy taupe in the handmade backsplash tiles inspired the color for the island cabinetry, creating a subtle color-blocking effect.
- *Add warmth with wood.* The wood drip cap under the sink and the banding on the range hood help break up the white surfaces. Oak flooring adds texture underfoot and gives the eye somewhere to rest.
- *Make storage a focal point.* Open shelving offers the opportunity to showcase collections that add color and personality. “I love seeing my grandmother’s china on display,” Lisa says. “After hiding it behind cupboard doors for too many years, I can now finally enjoy it every day.”
- *Mind the hardware.* Lisa chose hand-hammered knobs in antique pewter to add a vintage look to kitchen drawers and cupboards. Wood knobs on the island were painted to reinforce the room’s color statement. “Hinged cabinets, which provide detailing, are difficult in a moist, humid climate—the wood swells and shrinks with the humidity and gets out of square,” Lisa says. To replicate the look, Lisa used stainless faux-barrel hinges on cabinet doors inset with regular European hinges.