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DESIGN

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STEALTH

This sleek kitchen's secret weapon: Almost all its essentials are kept under the counter

Written by **JILL CONNORS**
Photography by **JOHN HORNER**

WHAT SURPRISES ARE CONCEALED BEHIND THE PROPER façades of the Boston area's charming old houses? In one home in the Chestnut Hill section of Newton, Massachusetts, it's a stunningly contemporary European kitchen. The homeowners, a professional couple with two college-age children, blended traditional and trendsetting in their 1928 Colonial Revival house. "I love the warmth of an old house and the clean lines of contemporary interiors," says one of the owners.

Seeking a more open kitchen than the original layout provided, with its separate pantries and servants' quarters, they removed two partial walls to gain a view of the backyard, allowing space for the working kitchen, a casual dining table, and a small desk area all in one. "One intention of the design was to have as little separation as possible," says the homeowner, who worked with interior designer Fran Silverman to establish palette (very subtle, very calming) and overall aesthetic (very open) before turning to Mercedes Farrando, senior project manager for Arclinea Boston, for the kitchen design.

"For me, all design starts with getting to know the people and how they live," says Farrando, who was raised in Buenos Aires and brings an Argentinian flair to her interactions with customers. "We often become close friends."

Farrando saw immediately that the homeowner's affinity for contemporary style was matched by a zeal for cooking, exemplified by the professional-style range the owner had chosen. "The range became the big statement; it defined the direction of the design," says Farrando, who placed the stainless steel appliance between two windows. She then built out from that focal point, adding sleek countertops with cabinet drawers underneath, and a center island paralleling the range wall. "I love keeping everything under



Contemporary in style and efficient in function, drawers stained a dark coffee color make the 12 by 14-foot kitchen work.

Drawers to the left of the range include storage for serving dishes. Stainless steel cabinet handles play off the material of the range.

The 48-inch-wide professional-style range was a must-have item for the homeowner, who loves to cook. Arlinea Boston's Mercedes Farrando placed it between two windows, making it a focal point.

Grouped along a recessed wall, the tall units include a narrow pullout pantry, storage cabinet, refrigerator with a pair of freezer drawers underneath, and two more refrigerator drawers under the microwave.

Bold red accents come from the knobs on the range and the stools at the island counter.

Additional tall pantry units provide storage for food.



The floor's 16-inch-square tiles form a checkerboard in café-au-lait hues.

Drawers to the right of the range support cooking functions, and are filled with pots, pans, and utensils.

The island holds a dishwasher and small-appliance storage.

The end of the island was left natural oak to transition to oak surfaces in the rest of the house.

Synthetic stone countertops in solid white maintain the neutral palette.

A round dining table occupies space opened up when partial walls from a pantry were removed.

the counter. It creates a feeling of lightness,” says Farrando, who religiously keeps exterior walls free of upper cabinets. The tall units—refrigerator and food pantry—are grouped at one end along an interior wall. “I usually put all the tall units together, concentrating them on a recessed wall,” she says.

The working area is organized by function: The range wall is devoted to cooking; the island is part prep, part cleanup, part casual dining. Food storage is handled by the rollout pantry and large fridge, augmented by freezer and refrigerator drawers. Storage throughout the kitchen is accommodated in contemporary wood undercounter cabinet drawers—Arclinea’s signature look. “Storage, storage, storage, that’s all I hear about during the planning phase,” says Farrando, laughing. “With the efficiency of these drawers, I’ll talk



PHOTOS COURTESY ARCLINEA

to the clients a year or more after the project is done, and there’s always one drawer still empty.”

For the Chestnut Hill homeowners, the kitchen exactly met their needs, allowing multiple hands to work when the college kids are home, but also providing the performance they need on a daily basis. “Cooking is my form of relaxation,” says one owner. “And this kitchen is a nice place to be at the end of the workday.” ■

EFFICIENT AND ATTRACTIVE, Arclinea’s *Mediterranea* drawers (shown here in a different finish) feature stainless steel pulls and convenient compartments.

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