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Kitchen Updates Prove White is Anything But Basic

By Kim Berndtson

NAPERVILLE, IL — What does a non-white, white kitchen look like? Designer Ann Stockard of Normandy Remodeling, in Hinsdale, IL, was faced with this challenge when a Naperville client asked her to transform the family's late 1990s white kitchen into a new, updated non-white, white kitchen that would be a showpiece for the house.

"She wanted something different, something that wasn't standard white," says Stockard.

FROM BASIC TO BEAUTIFUL

One of the main driving forces behind the remodel was the homeowner's dissatisfaction with the cabinets...builder-grade and basic white with no details or architecture. "They looked like stock cabinets," she says.

Stockard began the room's transformation with custom maple

cabinets from Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry that, although still white, feature strong architectural details and are highlighted with complementary moulding and pilasters at the refrigerator, sink and hood. Simple corbels add to the clean, custom furniture look. Bringing the cabinetry to the ceiling makes the room feel taller and allows for additional storage, as does the appliance garage.

Interior cabinet lighting shines through mullion glass doors. Antique-style glass allows her client to beautifully display dishes and colored glassware. "Each wall features cabinets with glass," she says. "It helps lighten up the space and adds character."

Another obstacle was the island, which simply didn't work for the family of three. "It wasn't functional," Stockard relates. "They

couldn't sit down, and it was an awkward, triangular shape with a prep area that was a long distance to the sink and cooktop."

Reconfigured in closer proximity to the range, sink and refrigerator, the island's new position and shape allow for optimal traffic flow around all sides. Seating for two is an added bonus.

Its dark, cherry base is topped with Costa Esmeralda granite. "The darkness of the stain adds to the space," the designer relates. "It rounds out the room. Having light lights (white cabinets), dark darks (cherry island) and mid tones (window casings and flooring) balances the space."

UPGRADED APPLIANCES

The newly shaped island gave Stockard the ability to add a custom hutch for functional storage, which fulfilled the client's desire for sufficient storage that is more decorative. Angled ends

The uniquely shaped custom hutch allows for functional, yet decorative, storage while the Sub-Zero refrigerator gets a built-in look.





Photos: Normandy Remodeling

Layers of light, including a combination of overhead, task and decorative lights, tie the space together (left). Repositioned closer to the range, sink and refrigerator, the dark cherry island also provides seating for two (above).

create emphasis through its unique shape.

Stockard moved the refrigerator from its original position near the range to its new location next to the hutch and gave the Sub-Zero appliance a built-in look. That allowed the designer additional space to include decorative storage near the new Wolf range. She also reconfigured the adjacent doorway arch to be more consistent with other arched openings in the home, while allowing the refrigerator door to fully swing open. A KitchenAid microwave with convection cooking capabilities in the island rounds out the professional-quality appliances the homeowner desired.

“One of my main goals with the new layout was to create space for the professional-quality appliances my client was looking for, and make the range more of a focal point of the room,” she says.

Creating a focal point on each wall is a signature of Stockard’s

designs, she indicates, adding that the range, the hutch and the glass cabinets to each side of the Kohler farm sink – which is accented by a Grohe fixture – accomplish that goal in this particular home.

The architectural hood draws attention to the range and further establishes its focal point status, emphasized by the symmetrical glass doors adjacent to it. An innovative tile layout with three distinctive rows frames the range and gives the kitchen layers of rhythm and texture. The first row of vertical white beadboard tile is accented by a second layer of pearlescent mosaic glass tile with hints of amber to complement the flooring, window and door casings and the lighting above the island. Pale green 2"x8" subway tile plays off the standard 3"x6" tile to finish the look.

The space is brought together with layers of light, which include recessed can lights overhead, Xenon task lighting underneath

the cabinets, decorative lighting inside the cabinets and Swarovski crystal pendants over the island.

“These pendants were carefully chosen to pick up the subtle amber hints in the mosaic glass accent tile, hardwood flooring and casing at the doors and windows,” she says. “An amber dupioni silk chandelier over the table complements the Swarovski pendants.”

Even though the kitchen is

predominately white, continuity is created through color, she notes.

“The pale greens in the backsplash tie in with the granite countertops,” she says. “The warm rich wood flooring complements the decorative light fixtures and the painted white cabinets provide contrast with the deep-stained island and furniture. Overall, there is a wide color palette of lights, mid tones and darks that create a sense of harmony.”

Project Highlights

- Designer Ann Stockard, of Normandy Remodeling, in Hinsdale, IL, was tasked with creating a non-white, white kitchen for a family in Naperville who wanted a kitchen that functions well; features sufficient, yet decorative storage and lighting; and is a show piece for their home.
- Plain & Fancy custom maple cabinets, painted white, are rich with architectural details, highlighted with complementary moulding and pilasters at the refrigerator, sink and hood. Interior cabinet lighting shines through mullion glass doors to lighten up the space and add character.
- The cherry island, stained a rich, dark color, is topped with Costa Esmeralda granite. Reconfigured and positioned closer in proximity to the range, sink and refrigerator, it allows for optimal traffic flow and easier food prep.
- The backsplash features an innovative tile layout with three distinctive rows – including vertical white beadboard, pearlescent mosaic glass and 2"x8" pale green subway tile – that gives the kitchen layers of rhythm and texture.
- Professional-quality appliances include a Sub-Zero refrigerator, a Wolf range and a KitchenAid microwave with convection cooking capabilities. A Kohler farm sink is accented with a Grohe faucet.

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