

# Old space, whole new look

A smart mix of materials—and plenty of cabinets—added light and function, all within the same four walls *By AMANDA LECKY + Photographs by SUSAN GILMORE*



Ceiling-height cabinetry in the eating area adds storage and helps the two rooms feel like one.

Open shelves allow natural light to bounce off the white-tiled walls and marble counters.

Scuff-resistant stainless-steel toe-kicks add another touch of sheen.

These days most of us start a project by considering how little we can do—not how much—to transform a space. When Lyn and John Matejczyk wanted to rework their dated Minneapolis kitchen, with its red counters, blue-stained maple floor, and pickled cabinets, they dreamed about turning it into a giant mudroom and starting fresh in the nearby sunroom. Then cooler heads prevailed—local architect Todd Hansen being one of them. Together, the trio embarked on a dramatic but entirely cosmetic update of the kitchen, continuing the same finishes in the adjacent breakfast room and pantry so that the three spaces worked as one. Hansen chose materials and finishes for their light-reflecting qualities: beveled white subway tile, Carrara marble counters, cabinets painted a gray-toned white, and lots of stainless steel. The look is clean and bright, with an updated traditional feel. Proof positive of the project's success came when the owners had to move for a job change. “When we told our friends Anne and Eric Belzer the news,” says John, “Anne immediately asked, ‘Can we have the house?’” Today, the Belzers and their three kids are enjoying the fruits of their friends’ remodel. “The kitchen sold us on the house,” Anne says. “It’s the one room where all five of us want to spend time.”



**before** Last updated in the 1980s, the kitchen sported countertops the color of country ham and maple floors stained electric blue. **after** White tile and cabinets, dark-stained floors, and lots of stainless steel gave the space a new look and feel.



Oversized beveled subway tile on the walls helps unite the cooking and eating spaces.

## before + after

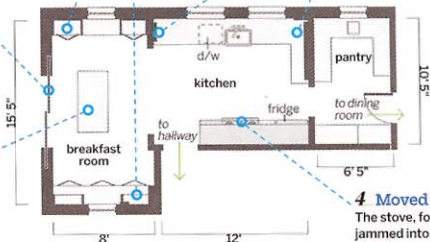
An overdue update united the kitchen, breakfast room, and pantry, adding storage, light, and prep space—without altering the footprint or moving plumbing lines.

**1 Brought in more sun.** Sliding glass doors were added where an attached greenhouse was removed.

**5 Added a counter-height table.** Equipped with bar stools, it provides space for food prep—and breakfast, too.

**2 Added storage.** To-the-ceiling cabinets, some with open cubbies, added storage and display space at both ends of the eating area.

**3 Removed upper cabinets.** To keep the kitchen light and bright, upper cabinets were replaced with open shelves.



**4 Moved the range.** The stove, formerly jammed into the corner, swapped places with the fridge and gained counter space on either side.

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