

Designer/Builder: *Custom Kitchens by John Wilkins Inc., Oakland*

Designers: *Joy Wilkins, Nader Feidy, Heidi Weeda*

Staging: *Cynthia Taylor, Cynthia Taylor Interiors*



Lisa Sze

Free of Obstacles



While lovely on the outside, this older Oakland home had a dark secret: its kitchen.

“The kitchen was broken up into several small rooms, the cabinets were worn and the counters had bulky, 1970s tile countertops,” designer Joy Wilkins says. “Additionally, a peninsula cabinet divided the room from the bright bay window area, and there were two door openings from the dining room and the ceiling was lower than the dining room ceiling.”

In other words, it was a dark, confusing mishmash, and the homeowners couldn’t stand it any longer. “They love to cook and entertain large parties, and the kitchen was a hindrance in doing so,” Wilkins says.

The homeowners sought a modern style that represented their love of rich, natural materials; robust natural light; and a view of their prized garden throughout the day.

Wilkins and project manager Nader Feidy removed the pantry and laundry room walls, created a large arched opening between the kitchen and the dining room, raised the ceiling, fashioned open “cubbies” at the top of each cabinet illuminated by spot halogens for artistic displays, and increased the size of the sink window. They also added a sliding patio door to maximize the natural light and the views. Because of the new, open floor plan, the area could accommodate a spacious island with seating for three people and a window seat at the existing bay window. Rift-cut white oak cabinets

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were finished off with contemporary aluminum pulls to complement the white oak flooring.

The result is a natural, warm wooden style accented by sand-colored walls, the contemporary look of stainless steel appliances, a single stainless steel accent cabinet, a custom-made steel plate under the island’s granite to support

the large overhang without the need for any corbels or legs and Vyhara granite countertops from Fox Marble & Granite.

“We especially enjoy having created a space that is as comforting as the food we consume, as stimulating as the conversations that ensue and as functional as our busy lives require,” the homeowners say. ■