



“The strong contrast of materials adds a graphic-like element to the overall design.”

— REGINA KURTZ

Above: Architect Lloyd Russell and designer Ame Parsley gave their clients a simple, easy-to-manage kitchen with warm colors and interesting contrasts.

Right: Moving appliances to the back wall freed up counter space.

U-TURN

WINNER: LLOYD RUSSELL/AME PARSLEY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN MANN

ALTHOUGH A GOOD CHUNK OF Michael and Lauren Buscemi's Mission Hills house was being remodeled, they had no intention of redoing the kitchen.

“Then Lauren became pregnant with our second child, and I knew we would never get to the kitchen if we didn't do it then,” Michael says. “So it ended up being done at the end of a remodel of our house, which meant we had to work with the existing footprint.”

A list of problems appeared on designer Ame Parsley's make-over agenda: The kitchen's rustic style clashed with the home's conversion to a more modern look. A large wall with a small, cutout window closed the kitchen off from the living room.

Appliance locations created poor flow. And a center island cramped movement.

“We took everything down to the studs, and a lot of people said we should put an island back in,” says Michael, the family's cook. “But I don't really like islands. I wanted to have a big, open center area.”

Instead of an island, a generous U-shaped countertop was installed along the walls. Adjacent to the living room, where the offending wall used to be, the countertop provides seating for four.

“The biggest change was moving the refrigerator and oven to the back wall and freeing up the counter space,” Michael says. “Now we have a nice wall and a

continuous counter that's really usable. We use that bar area for preparing food, homework, coffee, meals and playing games.”

Previously, cabinetry took up the back wall. Now there are upper cabinets above the stovetop and a pantry next to the appliances.

“We did mostly drawers for storage,” Ame says. “We put storage in all of the corners, and there is a lazy Susan in the corner facing the living room. Michael and Lauren were convinced they wanted wood cabinets in a natural style, so I was trying to match the cabinets in the color scheme to complement the wood window frames and flooring. But we didn't want too much wood, so we broke it up with black laminate. We ran the wood grain for the cypress horizontally and ran the subtle grooves of the black laminate vertically.”

A generous helping of glass wall tile infuses this modern kitchen with elegance. Ame used darker grout lines that match the cabinetry and highlight the tile's distinctive shape. The tile's *White Silk* color injects even more contrast to this clean-lined cook's space where contrast caught the eye of the judges.

“The interaction of wood and black create a very graphic look with clean, white, thin, easy-to-maintain quartz countertops,” Anita Lewis says.

“A very well-done, minimal kitchen,” Dianne Harsch adds. “Each element is striking and cohesive. The use of black adds drama, and the texture of the wood makes it comfortable and warm.” ♦

