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Night and day

Swapping around a family room and kitchen gave this house a larger, light-filled kitchen that has become the social hub of the home

Priorities shift as a family grows and needs change. An interior layout that suits when the children are young might not be the perfect solution when they are older.

For the owners of this house, interior designer Allison Baskes and her husband Daniel, a growing family forced a rethink about the best position for the kitchen. After consultation with architect Peter Nicholas of Nicholas Design Collaborative, the original architect of the house, it was decided to swap the family room and kitchen around.

"The existing kitchen was much smaller and

quite dark," says Allison Baskes. "Everyone likes to cook in this family, and we love to entertain. And of course everyone gravitates toward the kitchen when you are preparing meals, so we wanted a larger, lighter space."

The Baskes had a clear vision of what they would like, and the starting point for the design was the Calacatta Gold marble.

"I love the texture, depth and lightness of this marble," says Allison Baskes. "I also wanted dark cabinets and a semi-industrial look, so choosing this marble was a way to ensure the light and dark colors could play off each other."

Facing page: Calacatta marble is the hero of this new kitchen. It is used in long tiles on the backsplash and in slab form on the island. The marble is contrasted by dark-stained walnut cabinetry and shelving. Black steel-framed glass sliding doors add a layering element to the shelving. The island is also layered, with an overlapping oiled wood tabletop.

Above: Other dark accents include the waxed raw steel custom hood, and charcoal-gray light pendant.

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Nicholas says a contemporary look was a given – the kitchen needed to fit with the modern feel of the rest of the interior. Plenty of storage was another prerequisite.

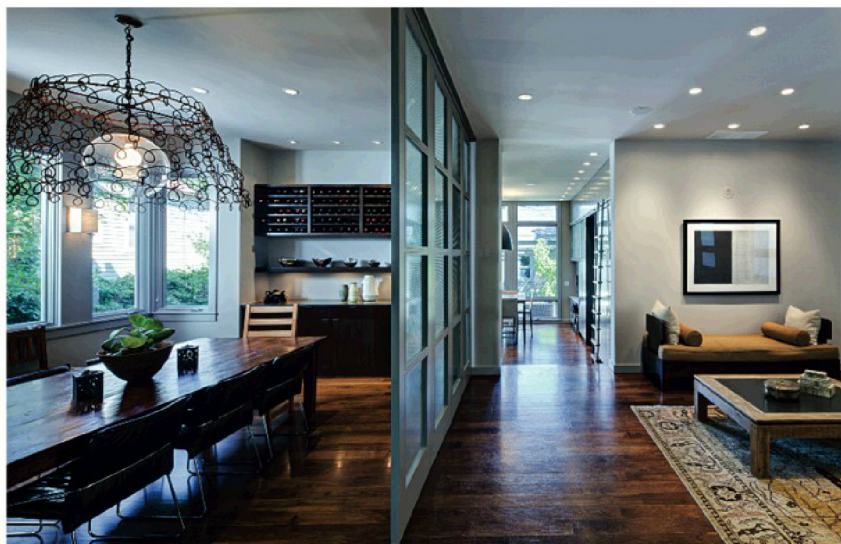
"The design explores the concept of layering, starting with the translucent glass doors that slide along cantilevered walnut shelves on the marble tiled backsplash," says the architect. "Using long marble tiles on this wall instead of slabs gives it a whole other dimension. The pattern of the tiles adds a lot of visual interest. And on a more practical level, the tiles were more cost effective and easier to install."

Left: Bar stools provide a place for family and friends to sit, without getting in the way of the chef. The kitchen, which was originally the family room, opens out to a landscaped outdoor living area.

Top and above: The rear wall of the kitchen features a bank of gray lacquered cabinets with frosted glass doors along the top. A sliding library ladder provides access to these units. The opening within the gray cabinets leads to the mud room and back door.

Architect: Peter Nicholas, Nicholas Design Collaborative (Chicago, IL)
Interior designer: Allison Baskes, Allison Baskes Design; with Michael del Piero
Cabinet company: Ericano Construction Co
Builder: Goldberg General Contracting
Cabinetry: Walnut veneer
Countertops: Quartz on perimeter; Calacatta Gold marble on island; teak on tabletop
Backsplash: Calacatta Gold marble tile
Sink: Whitehaus
Faucets: Danze
Kitchen and dining furniture: Crate & Barrel
Kitchen pendant light: Artemide
Dining room pendant light: Custom by Lucy Slivinski, through Michael Del Piero
Range and microwave oven: Viking
Ventilation: Custom raw steel hood by Iron & Wire
Refrigeration: Sub-Zero
Dishwasher: Miele
Sliding steel and glass panels: Sand Studios
Ladder: Akzent Ladder System

Story by Colleen Hawkes
Photography by Eric Hausman



Top right: Architect Peter Nicholas, commissioned to design the new kitchen, designed the original house several years earlier. Large sliding doors separate the formal dining and living rooms.

Above right: The doors, which feature reeded glass, can be moved to frame an attractive outlook.

The sense of layering extends to the island, which incorporates an oiled wood table top that overlaps the main marble slab.

The island repeats materials seen elsewhere in the kitchen. For example, the custom black-coated steel that frames the glass screens over the shelves is echoed by the steel framework of the breakfast table. And the custom hood is waxed raw steel – its color is echoed by the large pendant light.

While the island cabinetry and cabinets near the cooking center feature dark-stained walnut, there is a bank of sleek gray lacquered cabinets

on the opposite wall. The top row of cabinets have frosted glass doors.

“The glass breaks up the mass of cabinetry, so it is not too monolithic,” says Nicholas. “It lightens it up a little. We also added a sliding ladder to access the top cabinets.”

This cabinetry incorporates a coffee center, with its own marble countertop and backsplash. An opening in the center leads to the mud room and back door.

Baskes says she also consulted with designer Michael del Piero on certain objects, including the dining room pendant by Lucy Slivinski.