

## Add a Scoop of Contrast to Create Drama in the Kitchen

By [Rose Bennett Gilbert](#) Friday, February 03, 2012, 09:32 AM EST



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Q: I am worried about the floor plan in the house we are building. The kitchen opens to the dining room through a wide doorway. I like the openness, but I am looking for some way to set the kitchen apart from the next room. The builder suggests that we add a wide molding to the doorway. Do you think that would work?

A: It would certainly help distinguish one space from the next, as you can

see in this high, wide and handsome kitchen. The original plan ran the spaces together, but mega kitchen-designer John Starck (Showcase Kitchens, Manhasset, N.Y.) added wide molding to frame the doorway between the kitchen and the adjoining family room.

Not only is the architectural trim in-keeping with the traditional attitude of the house, Starck explains, it also demarcates the point at which the family room living area stops and the kitchen begins. Slicked bright white, the woodwork and cabinets create dramatic contrast with the "bronzed chocolate" Starck used on both the walls and the 10-foot-high ceiling to give his venturesome client the "chic, high-style" effect she wanted in her kitchen.

"The dark ceiling and dark-ebony stained floor of quarter-sawn oak add the punch," the designer points out. Even the double helping of chandeliers underscores the dark and light motif: They sparkle with crystals that are both black and clear. What about painting a lower ceiling a dark color? Lighten up a little, Starck suggests. The lower the ceiling and the smaller the space, the more light you need, he explains.

Other ideas to borrow from the kitchen design maven: There are cookbook shelves built into both ends of the center island, where he elevated the eat-on counter to obscure the view into the work area. And especially dear to the man of this house, the doors of the cabinet over the cook top open to reveal the TV he insisted upon. To keep the TV cool while the stove was in action, Starck had the entire cabinet lined with industrial grade insulation. "It was a real challenge," he recalls. "Sometimes a designer has to be an engineer, too."

See more of Starck's ingenuity at [showcase.ny.com](http://showcase.ny.com).

Q: You wrote a long time ago about a house with wall moldings that were gold-leafed or painted gold. I'd love to try the idea in my little home office. Can you tell me more?

A: I had come home from Denmark enchanted with my tour through Karen Blixen's (aka Isak Dinesen's) family home on the edge of the Sound between Denmark and Sweden.

Wait! You may be saying: Isak Dinesen lived on the coffee plantation she immortalized in "Out of Africa." Yes, and no. She began and ended her life in an 16th-century farmhouse named Rungstedlund, midway between Copenhagen and Elsinore (aka Shakespeare's inspiration for you-know-whose castle in Denmark).

I was struck by the wood trim the author added to the house: simple half-round moldings framing the walls, gilded so they glowed against the teal-green painted walls. With the cold ocean churning just across the way and the Danish winter wind prowling around the edges of the house, those gold accents warmed the room the way Dinesen's engrossing stories warmed the lives of her readers and radio audiences from the 1930s till her death in 1962.