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# Open Kitchen Promotes Entertaining

BY KIM BERNDTSON

Tearing down a dividing wall creates an open floor plan that showcases integrated aesthetics with cohesive design elements, which tie together the kitchen, dining area and family room.

**MANHASSET, NY** — Open floor plans are common requests from clients who want to create spaces that flow freely from one area to another. However, creating a cohesive design that is consistent throughout all the related rooms isn't necessarily a simple task, indicates John Starck, PKBP/ACSD, who helped a Manhasset, NY family transition from compartmentalized to more open living within their kitchen, casual dining area and family room.

“When you move from compartmentalized living to a more open floor plan, the challenge becomes how to integrate the aesthetics of all the rooms so everything works together as one collective design,” says the president/CEO of Showcase Kitchens, also in Manhasset. “Views from anywhere, in any of the rooms, need to feel cohesive.”

In this home, Starck, who worked in collaboration with Fox Diehl Architects and JRC Builders, started the process by tearing down a

dividing wall and moving a bathroom to create the open environment.

“They wanted to make the space one big living area,” he says. “My clients entertain their friends a lot...and their kids entertain their friends, too.”

## CABINETS PROVIDE CONSISTENCY

At the home's foundation is custom white cabinetry, which brightens the entire space and replaces the dated and dark 1980s-era cherry cabinets. Designed and supplied by Showcase Kitchens, its recessed panel and beaded inset design supports a transitional style requested by Starck's clients.

To promote consistency, the designer showcased the cabinetry throughout the kitchen, including at the island base and at the perimeter, which also incorporates several appliances such as a Wolf microwave, double Miele wall oven and Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer. He then

carried the cabinetry into the adjacent casual dining space and family room via a banquette and tall pantry in the former and as built-ins in the latter. All are outfitted with organizational accessories to maximize storage.

“When you take down walls, you lose a lot of storage because there isn't much room for upper cabinets,” he says. “That's the compromise of an open floor plan. However, in this kitchen, we made up for a lot of that lost storage by adding it back into other areas, such as in the casual dining room and in the family room.”

The cabinets make a repeat appearance in a nearby desk and in the butler's pantry. The desk area echoes several features of the family room built-ins, including an espresso-stained walnut countertop, which ties into the dark graining of the oak floor, and antique mercury glass-front doors on the upper cabinets.

“The mirror provides the charm of glass, without actually being able to see into the cabinets,” he notes.

While the cabinets in the butler's pantry maintain the same design style as those used throughout the rest of the renovated space, Starck painted them in a custom deep blue/gray hue topped with a glossy finish.



**FOCAL-POINT VENTILATION HOOD**  
Embodies the kitchen's overall design aesthetic

**MONOCHROMATIC DESIGN PALETTE**  
Maintains the home's transitional design vibe

**CUSTOM CABINETS**  
Serves as the foundation for the open-concept kitchen

Photos: Tim Cree/Creepwalk Media



At the home's foundation is custom white cabinetry, which is used throughout the kitchen and carried into the adjacent casual dining area and family room via a banquette and tall pantry in the former and built-ins in the latter.

The cabinets in the butler's pantry maintain the same design style as those used throughout the rest of the renovated space; however, Starck painted them in a custom deep blue/gray hue topped with a glossy finish to offer a fun play on color.

The custom white cabinets make a repeat appearance at a nearby desk, which echoes several features of the family room built-ins, including an espresso-stained walnut countertop and antique mercury glass-front doors on the upper cabinets.

Starck's client loves brass, so the designer integrated the brushed metal into many of the design selections, including the ventilation hood, potfiller and sink faucets. Cabinet hardware and pendant lights above the island highlight the metal, as well.



"The dark color breaks up the expanse of white cabinets," he says, noting that the pantry's location serves as a transition between the kitchen and formal dining room. "It's a small room and we wanted to include a fun play on color."

The designer added a reflective, mirrored tile/metal backsplash, which reiterates the vibe created by the antique mercury glass doors used in the desk and built-ins. Glass door fronts on the upper cabinets provide display space for personal items as well as for wine glasses, which can easily be accessed for wine stored in the Sub-Zero wine refrigerator.

#### LEADING THE WAY

The kitchen cabinetry's light hue is a perfect complement to the kitchen's Francois & Co. scagliola polished limestone range hood, which serves as ventilation for the 48" Wolf range.

"We found this hood and our client fell in love with it," he says in reference to the focal

point element. "It embodies the overall aesthetic she was looking for and it really captures the kitchen's design concept. It was the first product we selected, and everything else tied into it. The hood really started the ball rolling with the entire design."

Starck accented the hood with vertical bands of brushed brass, which is repeated several times throughout the space via products such as the Newport Brass potfiller. Accents at the apron-front sink, custom crafted by Handcrafted Metal, are brass as well, including a towel bar and Newport Brass plumbing fixtures. The designer also swapped out the traditional red bezels on the Wolf range in favor of brass. The homeowner furthered the brass touches by selecting brass cabinet hardware, a pair of lantern-style pendant lights above the island and the chandelier above the dining table.

"She loves brass, and it is integrated into many of the selections," he explains.

To maintain the home's transitional vibe, Starck continued a monochromatic color palette with the Imperial Danby marble countertops, which provide contrast and harmony with the dark stained wood tops on the desk and family room built-ins. For the island, the designer double laminated the natural stone.

"The island is the centerpiece of the room," he says, adding that it is now a spacious entertaining spot for his clients. "We wanted it to have some substance, so we built up the edge, giving it a Roman ogee profile."

The white hues of the cabinets and countertops are repeated in the Calacatta marble backsplash, which is laid in a basket weave pattern to highlight the variety of whites, creams and grays throughout the stone.

"The project was pretty comprehensive," he says. "But now my clients have a gracious and inviting kitchen/family room/casual dining area for family and friends." ■