

florida table

Twice as Nice

By Brad Mee



One of the advantages of being an interior designer, and particularly one who specializes in kitchens and baths, is that, when it's time to create your own dream kitchen, you get to practice what you preach.

Such was the case for designer Shelly Preziosi, who, along with her partner, Peter Bridenbaugh, recently remodeled their Boca Raton kitchen.

“The first thing I ask my clients is, ‘How do you intend to use the space?’” says Preziosi.

So, when it came time for Preziosi and Bridenbaugh to remodel their own kitchen, they asked themselves the same question. Their answer was cooking and entertaining, so the couple used these activities to guide the decisions they would make throughout the design process.

They ended up with a customized kitchen that suits them to a T, a personalized space that prioritizes practicality without sacrificing aesthetics. Here's how they did it.

Functional work zones

Preziosi and Bridenbaugh are both avid cooks with entirely different styles—she describes herself as an everyday family cook and him as much more explorative and cutting-edge.

“Think Martha Stewart versus Charlie Trotter or Julia Child,” says Preziosi.

As a result, the couple designed their open kitchen around two independent galleys—one his, one hers— that share a common center island equipped with two facing duel-fuel Wolf ranges. Both galleys boast abundant storage and prep and serving space, and they are just steps from a common clean-up counter and spacious pantry.

These well-defined work zones maximize the room's efficiency by minimizing the amount of movement required while cooking, serving and cleaning up.

Storage

“Before we planned the kitchen, we took inventory of what we had and what storage we needed,” says Preziosi. “I encourage my clients to do the same.”

With this information in hand, the couple enlisted the help of kitchen design consultant Michael O’Byrn, with the Downsview showroom in the DCOTA. O’Byrn configured the space with Downsview cabinetry, professional appliances and specialized storage that suit the couple’s needs perfectly.

“For a kitchen this large, there isn’t a lot of upper cabinet space,” says O’Byrn. “As a result, we loaded the pantry with storage features and equipped the kitchen’s lower cabinets with plenty of drawers and shelves.”

The spacious pantry, behind the back wall of the kitchen, provides the lion’s share of storage and is open at both ends for easy access.

“We kept the pantry open to keep it light and bright and make it part of the overall room,” says Preziosi.

Of the pantry’s two main walls, one features built-in cabinetry while the other hosts a wall-mounted Metro chrome-plated grid to hang large cooking pans, cooking devices and aprons.



Accessibility

While many of the couple’s serving pieces, cookware items and tools are hidden behind doors and inside drawers, there are others stored out in the open for easy access. The everyday dishes, for example, are on open shelves at the end of the island directly across from the refrigerator, where they are most often needed.

“Most restaurants stack their dishes in the open; it just makes sense,” says Bridenbaugh, who is a staunch proponent of practicality.

The ergonomics and efficiency of commercial kitchens inspired the design of the couple’s kitchen.

“When a chef works in a kitchen, everything is within reaching distance,” Preziosi says.

To get this effect at home, the duo began with the galley kitchen format and then peppered function-first features throughout the room. Pots hang from overhead pot racks, long-handled utensils dangle from rods encircling the vent hood, knives are attached to wall-mounted magnetic strips and small canisters of much-used spices are suspended from magnetic panels mounted on the side of the island.

“When cooking complicated things, you need organization,” says Bridenbaugh.