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# PARTY KITCHEN

## Austin homeowners transform their kitchen into a hybrid commercial-grade kitchen and open entertainment space

In most homes, the kitchen is much more than a place for food storage and preparation. It's a gathering place, entertaining space and a nexus for the entire house. The kitchen is just where people naturally come together.

One family in Austin, Texas, sought to take this concept to the next level. Their exist-

ing kitchen, although large in terms of square footage, was somewhat closed off to the rest of the house and had a layout that wasn't serving their needs. The homeowners often entertained large groups of friends and family and wanted a space that would better accommodate that. To accomplish this, the family reached out to a trio of

design and build professionals that included an interior designer and a father-son architect-remodeler team.

"With a large extended family, including a member with disabilities, there were too many tight turns and small doorways [in the existing kitchen]," recalls Christy Bowen, CKBD, owner of Twelve Stones Designs, the

project's interior designer. "The walls, corners and base cabinets were gouged from the motorized wheelchair, and the eating bar was so far away and dimly lit that no one wanted to sit there."

"Though the original kitchen was not small, its layout overlapped the entertainment area with the cooking area, leaving the client without ample space



# After

## COMPANY INFORMATION

Realty Restoration LLC, Austin, Texas  
realtyrestoration.com  
Full-time employees: 4  
Average annual revenue: \$1-2 million  
Annual remodeling projects: 7-10  
Residential: 95 percent  
Commercial: 5 percent  
Single-family: 100 percent  
Design-Build: 75 percent  
Bid: 25 percent

## PROJECT INFORMATION

Talbot Lane Kitchen, Austin  
Completed: July 2012  
Square footage before: 5,396  
Square footage after: 5,449

## PRODUCT INFORMATION

Cabinets: Custom  
Countertops: Granite (Typhoon Bordeaux)  
Sinks: Julien  
Faucet: Hansgrohe  
Range: Blue Star  
Exhaust hood: Best  
Ovens: Wolf/Miele  
Drawer appliances: Wolf  
Refrigerator: Sub-Zero  
Freezer: Sub-Zero  
Wine cooler: Sub-Zero  
Dishwashers: Bosch/Fisher Paykel  
Microwave oven: Miele  
Ice/trash: KitchenAid

Photos: Christopher Davison, AIA

The homeowners wanted a kitchen space that would better accommodate entertaining large groups of family and friends. To store the required items for either function, or ample space to prep the foods he was cooking," explains Christopher Davison, AIA, of Realty Restoration LLC, the project architect. "Therefore, items that would be behind cabinet doors were left out on the counters, and the one small island in the kitchen was used for food prep and entertainment."

The family decided it was time to remodel and upgrade their kitchen. "They each had their set of goals for the redesign of the space," recalls David Davison, CKBR, of Austin-based Realty Restoration, the remodeler on the project. "Hers was to have an island with comfortable seating for 10 people and integration of universal design. The husband, a product of culinary school, wanted a comprehensive list of appliances in the new space." Ultimately, the remodeled space would have to

accommodate 13 commercial-style appliances to satisfy the husband's needs for the latest culinary technology, ample storage for gadgets, cookware and large serving pieces, an island with seating for 10, and walkways and seating space for a wheelchair.

the kitchen proper, but the client felt like [guests] would just skip the outer bar and congregate in the cook's work space anyway. The solution was to separate the refrigerator from the freezer and make two 'cold zones.' Since the freezer is visited less often than the refrigerator, we placed the



## LONE ISLAND

"The homeowners were adamant that they wanted one single island, not multiples," Bowen says. "But designing an island large enough to hold so many appliances plus seating for 10 was proving to be a challenge. That's when we decided to use the 135-degree angle to our advantage and continue the island toward the living space. By placing the seating area toward the living room people are able to congregate without being in the cook's space."

"We struggled with the single island concept," Christopher admits. "With the refrigeration and the range top being on opposite sides of the kitchen, we thought having one enormous island would be too far for the cook to walk around to get cold items. We wanted to do a two-island configuration to keep the entertaining out of

The kitchen had a layout that wasn't fitting the owners' lifestyle or accommodating a family member with disabilities.

refrigerator closer to the cooking zone. Now, guests still feel connected to the cook due to the seamless island configuration, but the cook has a separate path to the major cooking and prep zones. Also, the wife and her daughter [with a disability] like to bake together so we created a baking zone opposite the range elevation to give both cooks ample lay down space on the island with convenient access to the refrigerator."

## ANGULAR DESIGN

For good or for bad, angles were a part of the home as a whole and they needed to be taken into consideration and worked with. "The entire house had 45-degree angles between each room it





Taking advantage of a 135-degree angle, a single island gives guests a place to congregate without being in the cook's space.

This “wow” factor did not come easily, however. “Integration of the barrel ceiling with all of the different material elements proved to be the most challenging part of the construction process,” David recalls. “Christopher’s utilization of Revit coupled with our on-site use of multiple laser plumb and level tools allowed us to coordinate intersection and transition points. Our superintendent/lead carpenter could create templates in the field and then create the material elements in the shop.”

The project design phase took about 10 weeks, and the actual remodel took about 10 months. The homeowners are loving their new kitchen and the project team takes a great deal of satisfaction in a job well done.

“The best compliment is the many referrals our team has received from this project,” Bowen says. “The homeowners invite friends, family and neighbors over to check out every detail of the kitchen to get ideas, and a reputable design and build team to refer to for their own projects.”

“Over the years of creating some awesome projects, we have been rewarded with some incredible friendships as a byproduct, and this project continues that trend,” David says. “The most awesome part for me is being invited to many gatherings and parties with their family, friends and business colleagues and feeling like part of the family.” **QR**

**Allen Barry** writes about remodeling and construction from Chicago.



A bar area extends the entertaining space beyond the kitchen in this Austin, Texas, home.

actually beckons one to continue to explore the space.”

A little extra space was needed to make it all work, and that space had to come at the expense of another room. “We also incorporated an unused guest bedroom along with a small addition of space to correct one of the odd angles in an obtrusive location for integration in the new design format,” David says.

To further enhance the grandeur of the new kitchen, the project team incorporated a barrel vaulted ceiling. “It’s the first thing everyone notices and comments on,” Bowen says. “Architecturally, I think, without it the kitchen may not be quite so unique and breathtaking.”

seemed,” Christopher says. “The house is set on a horseshoe but within that there were right-angle walls. The existing kitchen was a diamond shape rotated 45 degrees off a diamond-shaped living room.”

“The odd angles actually

worked to our advantage by creating visual interest,” Bowen says. “We used rhythm and repetition in the materials around the angles to help move one’s eye continuously around the room. By utilizing the angles instead of fighting them, the new design