

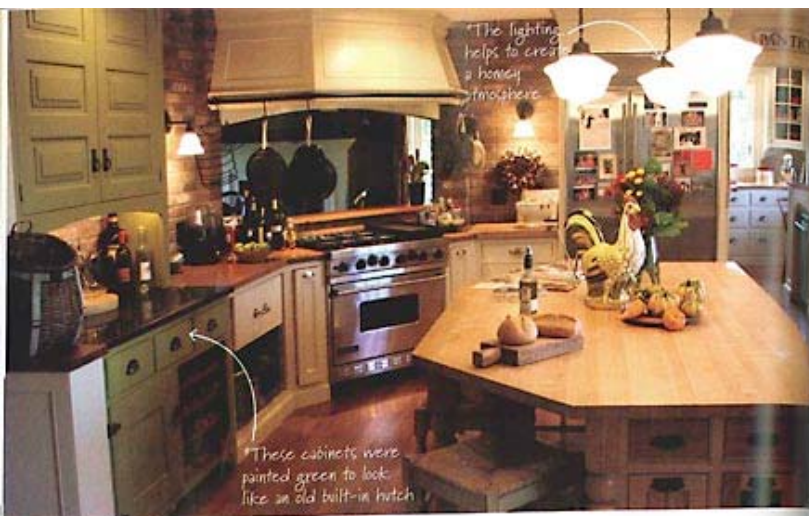
Stephen Saint-Onge

NO PLACE LIKE HOME



*Tips & techniques
for real
family-friendly
home design*





These cabinets were painted green to look like an old built-in hutch.

The Gathering

This farmhouse kitchen is probably one of my favorite kitchens because it looks like a vintage farmhouse space yet is in a newly built house. Its details, levels of light, and views to the outside all help create a mood that says there truly is no place like home.

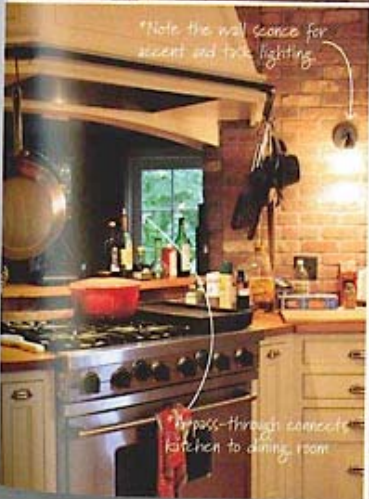
When I first walked into this home, we were there to shoot a television show and I fell in love with how it was put together. I found myself constantly turning around and finding something new to discover.

Mixing different finishes and styles of cabinets, countertop surfaces, and details can be a creative way to bring a room to life and give it an unfitted, collected-over-time feeling. Here, cabinets on the left side of the room have been painted green to look like an old hutch, while the rest of the cabinets are white. Although these are all new pieces, you could get the same effect with vintage or repurposed cabinets. It's also a good way to work with what you have and make it better. For example, instead of replacing all of your cabinets, bring in some stand-alone pieces that work with your old cabinets but give the

kitchen a fresh style. You could use an old armoire, a hutch, or even an old dresser as part of your scheme.

The fun part of this space is that it feels intimate yet is open to other areas—the pantry, the formal dining room beyond the opening above the gas range, and, through the windows, the garden. The openness creates a flow of energy. The large central island enables one person to prep on one side, another to do a project or homework on the other side, and others to help out without getting in each other's way. I can attest to this because I was in there with a TV crew and equipment, and it still worked!

This kitchen also uses lighting well. The schoolhouse pendants over the island, the under-cabinet lights, the interesting wall sconces by the range, and the recessed lights in the ceiling can be controlled individually to provide the right combination of task and mood lighting for any activity. No matter how well you design or redesign a space, it does not truly come to life until it is properly lit. A good lighting plan balances practical function, aesthetic, and mood.



Note the wall sconce for accent and task lighting.

Pass-through connects kitchen to dining room.

IDEAS

you can look for and use

There are many options for vent hoods over ranges. What are you drawn to? Do you like a basic hood, or do you prefer one that is more customized to look like furniture? Or do you like metals such as copper or brushed nickel?

This kitchen has an extra room for a pantry for food, baking items, an extra prep sink, a freezer, a home office area, a recycling area, and a bulletin board for messages. Could you create a space like this? If you have a closet off your kitchen or in the mudroom nearby, could you transform it into a pantry area? Is there another spot in the house—perhaps the garage—where you could put up open shelves for bulk supplies?

Could you live with glass-front cabinets? Some people don't like guests to see inside their messy cabinets. If you had glass doors, would you keep the items inside organized? If so, they are a nice way to display attractive dishes, bowls, crystal, or even boxes or cans of food with appealing labels.

The gas range area opens to the formal dining room beyond, giving the kitchen more depth and space. If the wall were closed up, this corner would have no natural light or view. Could you open a partial wall between your kitchen and dining area to gain a greater sense of space?

Note that the shape of the island is angled like the shape of the kitchen. Islands are a great way to add more work surface and storage. If you don't have a big space to work with, get a butcher-block rolling island. If you have a bigger space, think about how to bring in a built-in island.

Creative Ranch Renovation

Smaller-scale houses can be fun to work with because the limited space challenges you to be creative. In this typical one-level ranch-style house, the homeowners updated the 1960s-style interiors to make them modern, clean, and vibrant. I came in through what was originally the living room and is now their dining room. (See pages 114–115 for a look at this room.) From there I could see into a large sunken living room.

Here the family divided the space into different zones by constructing a curved partial wall. Along the outside walls of the room they created reading areas and a place for watching TV. On the other side of the curved wall, a leather sofa fits inside the curve and faces a Southwestern-inspired fireplace. Because the wall stops short of the ceiling and has openings punched through for display, it preserves the room's feeling of openness while defining a more intimate area for conversation and relaxation. This idea for managing space would also work well in a large great room.



*A reading area is tucked behind the curved wall

IDEAS

you can look for and use

Notice the openings in the divider wall to allow light through the space. Are there ways you could create openings in your space to gain natural light and an open flow?

Simple lighting really warms things up. Halogen lights in the top of the partial wall spotlight the objects on the glass shelves below. A system of tiny spotlights sus-

ended from cables mounted on the rafters sculpt the space with light. This type of lighting lets you draw attention to a piece of artwork, a seating area, or other features you want to emphasize.

Glass shelves in the built-in bookcases allow the light from above to shine down and through to illuminate objects you display.

Wood adds an organic feel. The mix of the wall finish, the wood tones of the beams above, and the finish on the wood floors gives the room an eco-friendly edge and a calm feel. Think about creative ways to use wood in your own home.

Can you add a window seat? In a smaller home, a window seat can be a space-saving way to work in extra seating and become a focal point of the room. If you can make it long enough and deep enough, like this one, it can also serve as a guest bed (or a nice place for a nap).

