

who's in the kitchen?

In the room they saved to redo last, a Tenafly family finally has space to gather.

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Quartz, Carrara marble and metal make for a chevron pattern for the backsplash, a mix of marble in the kitchen and appliances and gold pendant lights make the Tenafly style story and gray wood floors make dining a snap.

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It wasn't a nest for takeout food that landed the Kazams' kitchen on the back burner of a sweeping remodel at their Tenafly home. Both Tal and Jonathan, along with their three children, are culinary aficionados, and there's nothing like the hearty aroma of dinner cooking to draw them close. Unfortunately, the old kitchen was more of a solo act than a recipe for family togetherness.

"It created a traffic jam at times if there was more than one person in the kitchen," recalls Tal, faulting a center island that left no room for seating.

So, why didn't the kitchen—the true heart of this now-contemporary colonial—lead the design parade after the couple's 2012 move from NYC? "The original kitchen was quite large and functional, so coming from the city we were quite satisfied," says Jonathan, a Franklin Lakes native.

Yes as the first floor shed its Southwestern décor reminiscent of the '80s with terra-cotta tiles, the kitchen's time had come. "It was so not their style," says Aparna Vijayan of the Ridge-wood design firm Ulrich Inc. "The rest of the house was very slick and sophisticated."

While other designers couldn't reimagine the old layout, Vijayan impressed the homeowners with plans to set them free of that island. Her vision: a peninsula breakfast bar that would offer just-right-for-kids stool seating while a small prep island maximized style on stainless-steel legs. "Now, with the new layout, we can both work in the kitchen at the same time," says Jonathan. Other perks are the stainless-steel appliances such as

a steam oven and a 60-inch galley sink, all meant for the serious cook. There's also a new bar area in place of a seldom-used desk, perfect for a family that loves to entertain.

But if this kitchen gets the job done, it's also a style star. In rich plum, the stainless-steel-based cabinets over the bar match up with other color accents in the open floor plan. "We think a little pop of color here and there gives it something extra," says Tal, who chose plum to make the contemporary neutral palette unforgettable. No ho-hum subway tiles for the backsplash; Carrara marble and metal team up to create a chevron pattern and just the right accent for the kid-friendly quartz countertop, positioned below pale gray cabinets that climb to the ceiling for extra space.

Another design connection Vijayan provided is a combination of metals, from the chrome facets to the stove hood in polished satin and stainless steel. "We have a mix of gold and metal throughout the kitchen, and stainless-steel appliances contrasted with gold pendant lights over the island and peninsula," says Jonathan.

Even the gray wood-effect flooring has this family in mind, with its easy-to-clean vinyl, Vijayan explains. Completing this dash act, the kitchen is now bright and warm, with new baseboard heat cleverly disguised as a footrest with its quartz cover and, naturally, more lighting.

"They love it," says Vijayan of the new design, which puts this family of chefs right where they want to be, at home cooking up a storm—together.

This page: The smiling faces of the children, ages 6, 7 and 10, joined by mom Tal Kazam, say it all. There is a table for family meals, but this peninsula with gray stools is ideal for snacks and breakfast. Designer Aparna Vijayan even built drawers into the kitchen side of the peninsula to store kids' utensils and the like for uber convenience. Opposite page: Plum hues in the cabinets above the stainless-steel-based bar prove that this family is not afraid of color and play nicely against the neutral contemporary palette. Instead of a seldom-used desk, they now have a bar to entertain with ease.



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