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# The Butler Did It

Pantries to serve every household need

SPACES

by Candace Karu

Photography François Gagné

Today's pantries serve a host of functions from storage to staging, preparation to cleanup. Whether it is a butler's or walk-in, formal or funky, pantries have become a must-have design detail in new construction.

Joe Waltman, who is an architectural designer for Anastos & Nadeau in Yarmouth, reports that his clients are taking a renewed interest in traditional butler's pantries. "They make a nice transition from kitchen to dining room," he says. "It's a classic but very functional buffer between the two areas." Perfect for staging a formal dinner or serving as a more casual buffet area, butler's pantries can be designed to support the functions of kitchen, dining room, and built-in bar, while retaining their own individual identity. Homeowners also

*Whitten Architects  
Boothbay Homebuilders*

Architect Rob Whitten carved out space for this traditional butler's pantry in a remodeled home by tucking it under a staircase, a practical solution that adds visual interest to the room. The oiled red birch countertops and brushed nickel cabinet hardware punctuate the painted wood custom cabinets. This pantry has abundant storage with additional open shelves ready to display china and glassware and an undercounter refrigerator for drinks.



like the convenience of having a sink and well-organized storage space near the dining room.

Jack Pilk, owner of Arlington Restorations in Cape Elizabeth, agrees. “Clients building new homes are definitely looking for the versatility, storage, and convenience that you get with a well-designed pantry.” Pilk finds that some of his clients prefer the straightforward, walk-in type. “This kind of pantry with open shelving provides easy access,” he says. There is another advantage to a walk-in pantry: if it’s not in perfect order, you can close the door and think about it some other time.



While deeply rooted in traditional design, butler's pantries are also a modern addition to current trends. "For today's active families, a butler's pantry is another area to gather and work, out of the cook's way," says Stephen Malcom of the Knickerbocker Group in Boothbay. Malcom also believes that with today's more open floor plans, a butler's pantry located out of the general traffic pattern can absorb some of the appliance and storage clutter, creating a more pleasing view from the nearby living areas.

Price can play an important role in choosing the right pantry. Butler's pantries traditionally include built-in

### *Arlington Restorations*

The butler's pantry (left) in this 1924 residence retains the practical charm and signature craftsmanship of the day it was built. The original walnut countertop and backsplash has a rich patina, developed over decades of use. The zinc sink has a sculptural divider that isn't seen in modern construction. In addition to the pantry creating a transition from kitchen to dining room, there is a pass-through in the dining room china closet for serving. The window above the sink offers a view into the attached greenhouse.

### *Banks Design Associates, LTD Rainbow Construction*

"Even if you don't have a butler, you still need a butler's pantry," says Linda Banks of Banks Design Associates, describing this Cape Elizabeth home. Rich yellow milk paint makes the custom cabinetry of this traditional butler's pantry shine. Thick Aroka wood countertops and antique mirrored backsplashes create a look of casual elegance. The antique mirror detail is repeated in the French doors to the adjoining dining room. Visual Comfort French Basin pendant lights in a bronze finish make a dramatic statement while providing task lighting above the bar area.



“Even if you don’t have a butler, you still need a butler’s pantry.”  
 Designer Linda Banks



cabinetry and often feature a sink and appliances such as icemakers, wine refrigerators, and, in some, even a second dishwasher. “Obviously a walk-in pantry is much less expensive to build,” says Joel FitzPatrick of FitzPatrick Associates of Cape Elizabeth. “It’s a better option if you’re on a tight budget.”

In the grand manor houses of Europe, it was not unusual for butlers to sleep in their pantries, keeping close watch on valuables like silver and wine. Today these spaces allow families to entertain, organize, and gather in style. Here are our favorite pantries in a vivid variety of spaces, places, and designs—all of them functional and fabulous.

See Resources for more information. **MH+D**

*FitzPatrick Associates*

This walk-in pantry offers a pretty, practical solution for kitchen storage problems. Fixed shelving holds glass canisters for food staples; colorful plastic bins keep canned goods, paper products, and root vegetables out of the way; and a festive striped curtain covers a multitude of organizational sins.



SPACES



*spacesnb  
Bowley Builders*

This modern take on a traditional butler's pantry incorporates bold design details with up-to-the-minute technology. The gray glass Waterworks subway tile creates a dramatic transition between the frosted glass doors of the Poggenpohl cabinets and the Antique Brown granite countertops. Included in the spacious pantry are an additional refrigerator and two Fisher & Paykel dishwasher drawers, as well as a wine refrigerator and an oversized sink. The rich walnut floors complete the look of a room that embraces the past and the present.