

Maine Home

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Angela Adams
Meets her match

Falmouth Fusion

Merging country barn
and urban loft

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Now We're Cooking!

The transformation of unworkable kitchens
into beautiful spaces



Photo by Robert Mitchell

SPACES
by Debra Spark

Grand Prize—Best Overall: Elaine Murdoch's award-winning design features a room divider, which defines space without closing off the kitchen from adjoining rooms.



Being the winner of the “Ugly Kitchen” contest seems like an unfortunate honor. Right up there with starring in the Shag Carpet Follies or landing in the Lawn Ornament Hall of Fame. But the biannual contest—which is run by the Maine Chapter of the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA)—is actually about transformation, the remodeling of an unworkable space into something beautiful. This year, the prize for best overall design went to Elaine Murdoch, CKD, CBD* of Boothbay Harbor’s Knickerbocker Group, who converted a dark, cramped kitchen in a 1980s Southport home into an elegant, light-filled space. With its unattractive oak cabinets and vinyl flooring, the original kitchen was outdated, boxed off from the home’s adjoining living room, and created a traffic pattern that was, according to Murdoch, “totally bizarre.” The first step was to take down the kitchen’s two interior walls and visually open up the space—a complicated task given that a post hidden in one of the interior walls provided structural support for the home. The solution was a room divider that, in addition to holding up the second floor, sections off the kitchen from the rest of the first. Consisting of a counter topped by two glassed-in cabinets, the room divider allows one to look out of (and into) the kitchen without the appearance, as Murdoch says, “of

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SPACES

Photography Darren Setlow

FIRST PLACE LARGE KITCHEN TRANSITIONAL Dennis Tefft, Downeast Kitchens



Dennis Tefft remodeled this 1970s kitchen for homeowners who wanted an informal dining surface on which multiple cooks could work while having easy access to the oven and refrigerator, as well as the kitchen equipment now stored in the large central island's cabinetry. The new kitchen opens up a once-isolated room, while capitalizing on the home's expansive water views.

a mess hall." The room divider has the additional virtue of offering more storage space. Shelves, a microwave, and a cabinet with wine rack are tucked underneath the counter, while drawers for keys and mail hide the otherwise ubiquitous kitchen clutter pile.

The original kitchen had a large carrying beam and a seven-and-a-half-foot ceiling, which had to be further lowered during the renovation to accommodate the upstairs plumbing and electrical service. To deemphasize the ungainly beam, Murdoch designed trim details to suggest a coffered ceiling.

Though the structural accomplishments of Murdoch's design are what an architect might first admire—and while anyone can see how the new kitchen opens up the entire first floor of the house—a lay visitor might be inclined first to notice design details and some of the kitchen's fun extras. The palette of the entire kitchen is that of beach glass; a teal central island (complete with warming drawer, bar sink, and enclosed spice shelves) complements the homeowners' collection of blue and turquoise Fiestaware. The interior of the glassed-in cabinets is robin's-



FIRST PLACE LARGE KITCHEN CONTEMPORARY Karen Lewis, uncommon kitchen and bath





The labyrinthine river that runs by this Saco ranch home inspired Karen Lewis's design choices. She installed windows and relocated the kitchen (above, left), so it now looks out on the river below. The eating counter is a piece of distressed walnut, cantilevered out from a concrete wall.

Karen Lewis extends her river motif by using rain forest brown marble (left) on the countertop and natural cherry cabinetry below.

The oven (above, right) features a metal tile backsplash with a river rock insert.



To see all the National Kitchen and Bath Association Contest winning designs see the web-exclusive content at mainehomedesign.com.

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SMALL KITCHEN TRADITIONAL
Karen Lewis

SMALL KITCHEN TRANSITIONAL
Karen Lewis

egg blue, and the room divider is a pale, slightly purplish gray. The coastal theme plays out in Murdoch's choice of hardware. For the drawer handles and cabinet pulls, she used pewter cast to resemble beach stones and twigs of driftwood. All this reflects the home's location (on a tidal inlet) and the homeowners' predilections. They are enthusiastic sailors, and the window ledge of their kitchen is full of pebbles collected from the beach.

A twelve-inch-wide cabinet sits to the right of the Sub-Zero refrigerator. Though such long, deep cabinets are often cumbersome storage spaces, this sliding pantry pulls out from the wall so that its contents can be easily accessed. The exterior is made of eucalyptus wood (the kitchen's bamboo floor is another green element in the design) and features a pewter handle in the shape of a vine.

As an officer of the Maine Chapter of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, Murdoch explains that the very idea of the "Ugly





FIRST PLACE
SMALL KITCHEN THEME DESIGN
Dina Lennon, Sylco Cabinetry

To suit the French country tastes of the owners of this Ogunquit second home (page 23, bottom), Dina Lennon aimed for a floor plan that was open yet cozy. The brick backsplash and hood is meant to give the range a fireplace feel, while the cabinetry on the adjoining wall is a warm natural white wicker, distressed after painting.

Dina Lennon designed this L-shaped kitchen island (above) around one of the homeowners' initial picks for the room: an Herbeau faucet with a weathered copper and brass finish. The countertop's warm, golden tones are meant to pull the look of the kitchen's various surfaces together.

Kitchen" contest was to give local designers an opportunity to see one another's work. Murdoch was shocked to win this year's contest and modestly worried that others would find something untoward in the honor. But the judges had no doubt. "Ultimately," says Bar Harbor architect Geoff Fraser, who served as one of the contest's four judges, "We felt the winning design stood out from the rest due to its well-organized plan, careful attention to detail, and excellent material and color selections." All of which, he adds, combined to create a kitchen of "simple and inviting elegance." **MH+D**

For more information, see Resources on pg. 92