



# Time Traveler

A respectful renovation brings the kitchen in an old home—once listed in the Black motorists’ *Green Book*—into the 21st century

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**h**istory lives on Benefit Street in

downtown Providence, Rhode Island. Eighteenth- and 19th-century architecture lines the cobblestone lane, illuminated by the glow of old-time streetlights. Like moths to the flame, Dan Parent and Debra Halpin were drawn in.

The couple were looking to move from the suburbs to downtown when a friend bought and renovated a house on Benefit Street. “Debra went over to look at it and was like, ‘Oh, my God!’ It was incredible,” Dan says. “When the house next door came on the market, we snapped it up.”

Their house, built in 1864, was listed in the 1947 *Green Book* as a beauty parlor friendly to Black travelers. It was next door to a house that offered overnight accommodations. “The history is the neat part of owning this home,” Dan says.

He and Debra preserved character-filled details, like dips in well-worn stairs, while they reinvented the house for life in a new century—and their love for entertaining. “We wanted the kitchen to be a place where people can gather,” Dan says.

To get the elbow room they needed, the couple worked with Jocelyn Chiappone of Digs Design Company to take out a wall



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between the kitchen and former dining room, now a sitting area. They claimed additional square footage from a former pantry and a powder room, creating an open entertaining hub anchored by a new furniture-style walnut island topped with honed Danby marble.

While guests relax with a glass of wine, Dan and Debra can flex their culinary talents in a cooking zone outfitted with pro-style appliances, a roomy farmhouse sink, and cabinetry that provides a wealth of storage.

Contrasting dove gray perimeter cabinets, two glass-front display cabinets were inspired by one of the home's original de-

**Kitchen overall** Designer Jocelyn Chiappone wanted the island to be the kitchen's focal point, so she found seating that would tuck in on its sides. "The Lucite and brass elements lend to sophistication and seduction," she says, "as if you were in a posh European bar." **Chair detail** Luxe fabric and channeled backs on bar stools imbue elegance. **Exterior** The 1864 home exudes history. **Cabinet detail** Walnut detailing marries with the island and the warmth of brass hardware.



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tails: an arched window at the top of the stairs. “These offer an old-world sensibility—and display space for Debra’s pretty dish-ware,” Chiappone says. “We love the nod to the old and new.”

Chiappone’s deft mix of materials continues on the back-splash, where she created a custom mosaic of Calacatta and Thassos marble tile. The elegant stone juxtaposes workhorse perimeter counters topped in durable quartz.

A coffered ceiling finishes the room with luxurious polish, blending seamlessly with original details of the house. “It really is the best of both worlds,” Dan says. “Historical appeal blended with the best of the new.”

**Interior designer:** Jocelyn Chiappone

**For more information, see sources on page 94**

**Range area** Brass banding accents the custom stainless-steel vent hood over the range, which Chiappone paired with a marble tile backsplash. **Sink area** A brass-and-wood Herbeau faucet, based on a 19th-century design, complements a roomy farmhouse sink. **Lighting** Pendants from Urban Electric continue the glimmer of brass. **Homeowners** Debra Halpin and Dan Parent wanted the character of an old home.



