



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 acrylic resin and brass elements lend sophistication and seduction," she says, "as if you were in a posh European bar."



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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THIS PHOTO: Brass banding accents the custom stainless-steel range hood, which Chiappone paired with a marble tile backsplash. The cabinets are painted Benjamin Moore Coventry Gray.

TAKE A STROLL DOWN BENEFIT STREET IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND,

and you will find a little slice of history. 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 Mary 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. “Mary 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.”

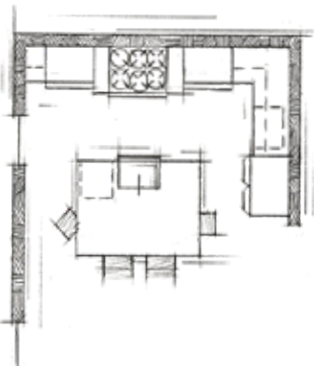
Their house, built in 1864, was listed in the 1947 *Green Book* as a beauty parlor friendly to Black travelers. It was next door to a house that offered overnight accommodations. “The history is the neat part of owning this home,” Dan says.

He and Mary 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 Co. to take out a wall 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-trimmed island topped with honed Danby marble.

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

the plan



The decision to absorb space from a pantry and powder room opened up the layout of this once-small galley kitchen and nearly doubled its square footage. Twin arched glass-front cabinets reflect light, making the kitchen feel even bigger. An island offers additional prep and gathering space without hampering traffic flow.



TOP: The refrigerator handles' walnut detailing marries with the island and the warmth of brass hardware. ABOVE: Pendants from Urban Electric continue the glimmer of brass. “We use these a lot on our projects,” Chiappone says. “They feel very sophisticated with the gilded-brass finish—but modern at the same time.”



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Two countertop glass-front display cabinets were inspired by one of the home’s original details: an arched window at the top of the stairs. “These offer an old-world sensibility—and display space for Mary’s pretty dishware,” Chiappone says. “We love the nod to the old and new.”

Chiappone’s deft mix of materials continues on the backsplash, 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.”

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ABOVE LEFT: A brass-and-wood Herbeau faucet, based on a 19th-century design, complements a roomy apron-front sink. **ABOVE:** Chiappone paired a custom backsplash of Calacatta and Thassos marble tile with quartz countertops. **OPPOSITE:** The velvet-upholstered barstools feel modern and sophisticated, a nod to the city dwelling, Chiappone says.



DESIGNER INSIGHTS: THE ART OF LAYERING

This kitchen's magic comes from its masterful mix of materials. Interior designer Jocelyn Chiappone shares her tips.

- *Take risks but trust your gut.* It's OK to introduce bold elements. Consider the brass strapping on the vent hood. Chiappone appreciates the contrast with the kitchen's gray tones but didn't want the entire hood to be brass.
- *Create interest with elements that take a visual backseat.* The island has slim wooden legs with novel structure and distinct curves. Tucked under the island, the acrylic stools juxtapose the kitchen's warm woods.
- *Incorporate textiles for variety.* The upholstered stools create a bit of luxury and a sense of place, Chiappone says, but can be easily changed down the road.