

Condo Kitchen



Traditional meets modern in a hardworking yet social space

BY NICK SCHIFFER

WARM WALNUT

The cabinets are painted Sherwin Williams Naval, a warm navy. The clients wanted something with warm undertones to play off the walnut wood tones.

My company, NS Builders, teamed with Amy Lynn Interiors to revamp this one-bedroom condo in Boston's Fort Point District. The old brick-and-beam building underwent a mediocre renovation in the 1990s, and we were hired to brighten it up and reconfigure the entire home, with the focus on a full kitchen remodel.

The clients asked that we strike a balance between their differing tastes; he likes a modern look, while she prefers a traditional aesthetic. They wanted the island to take center stage, but also had previously bought a nearly 7-ft.-tall Fisher & Paykel refrigerator that needed to be incorporated into the design without drawing focus. Because

of its size, the refrigerator dictated many of the design decisions. Along with a full-height pantry, it brackets the space to define the limits of the kitchen.

We did a few things to make the cabinetry read as one big unit and make the space feel cohesive—starting with a walnut enclosure for the refrigerator. We built a pantry to match the height of the fridge enclosure, and aligned the top of the walnut trim above the upper cabinets on the same plane. This small trim detail—essentially a flat piece of walnut—takes the place of crown molding and ties the two sides of the L-shaped kitchen together.

For this to work while keeping the distance between the upper and lower cabinets the standard 18 in., we had

Reimagined



to shrink the height of the upper cabinets down accordingly. We also kept the range hood in line with everything else, rather than extending it to the ceiling. This anchors the composition without visual disruption, while supporting the island as the focal point. The open shelving provides additional surface space without cramping the sink, which is not centered on a window or wall where it might stand out—as with the hood, we didn’t want it to draw the eye’s attention.

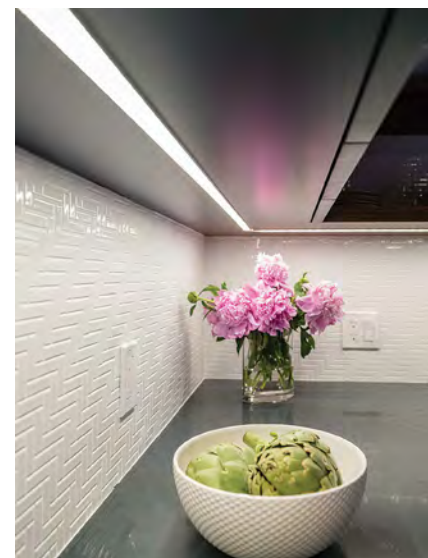
Because this condo is in a multifamily building, relocating the plumbing and electrical wiring was not an option. Instead, we had to open a wall to resituate the water lines to make it around the corner, and to get the right pitch

for the new drain. The previous island did not have any electrical wiring, so we channeled out the subfloor and installed protective conduit to get from the wall to the island to satisfy code. The island is a true workhorse, including a drawer-style microwave, a trash unit, and a few outlets beneath the overhang for charging electronics, as well as seating for two. To enhance the performance of the kitchen on the whole, we added a dry bar and tucked an office nook into one corner.

We were working with three wood species—walnut for the paneling, upper shelves, and island baseboard; pine on the ceiling; and maple floors, which we sanded down and finished with Bona Naturale. This gives the

PARTY PARLOR

The dry bar offers out-of-sight vertical storage for spirits and a beverage fridge for keeping wine chilled at the preferred temperature.



SOURCES

BACKSPLASH TILES Ann Sacks, Savoy Classic Mosaics in Herringbone

TRACK LIGHTING WAC Lighting

PENDANT LIGHTING Circa Lighting, Anders Small Cylindrical Pendant

CABINETRY PAINT Sherwin-Williams in Naval

COUNTERTOPS Silestone in Charcoal Soapstone

HARDWARE Myoh, Jazz Bar Pull

RANGE Thermador, 30-in. Pro Harmony Standard Depth Dual Fuel Range

REFRIGERATOR Fisher & Paykel, 36-in.

DISHWASHER Thermador

MICROWAVE DRAWER Sharp

POT FILLER AND FAUCET Brizo, Litze

floors a muted look, and helps the walnut appear more vibrant against the navy.

To satisfy the modern aesthetic, we painted the entire space white and added track lighting with exposed wiring conduit. We juxtaposed this treatment with traditional elements, including the Shaker-style cabinets with handles rather than more modern integrated finger pulls or push-to-open hardware.

One element that bridges both of the clients' tastes is the tile backsplash. They showed us photos of the look they wanted—essentially a climb-

ing herringbone. Conventionally, herringbone tiles are installed on a 45° angle, oriented to suggest arrows pointing straight up and down. The arrangement they wanted creates the illusion of arrows pointing at 45°—a new twist on a traditional pattern.

All told, the kitchen is a refined space in an otherwise industrial building, meeting both of our clients' desires. □

Nick Schiffer owns NS Builders. Photos by Sabrina Cole Quinn Photography.



EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE

To keep the space from becoming cluttered—which is particularly important in an open loft, where closing things off from sight is not an option—we loaded the kitchen with diverse storage options to accommodate everything from hefty books to tall bottles to oversize pots.

The Kessebohmer MagicCorner (photo above, bottom left) is one of our go-to corner solutions because it turns an otherwise unusable space into a storage dynamo. The corner-mount frame houses two stacked basket-style shelves that tuck side by side with the interior shelv-

ing when the unit is closed. The pantry (bottom right) features a deep lower drawer for larger items, and the top drawer is subdivided into two shallow drawers.

The dry bar houses spirits and other tall bottles, while the wall shelving over the sink—supported by steel

brackets bolted to the wall studs—provides a place for dinnerware and decor.

The bookshelf at the end of the island (see p. 30) was discussed during every conversation leading up to the project. The clients wanted a place to not only store, but also display their cookbooks.