

A sun-drenched remodeling provides fresh ideas for low-rise storage and easy-reach appliances that can work in any kitchen.



THIS PHOTO: Deleting a wall brought an existing breakfast room into the realm of Carl and Steve Recht's kitchen. LEFT: The use of elegant black accents against lighter colors is the core of the kitchen's appealing decorating scheme.

# perfect fit



*No matter how glamorous,*

Stately columns mark where the old kitchen ended. A well-placed skylight drenches the new area—the cleanup zone—with daylight. The built-in refrigerator, centered on the back wall, is convenient to both sides of the kitchen.

# *a kitchen* that can't meet the needs of its primary cook has to be considered flawed. Just ask Corki Recht.

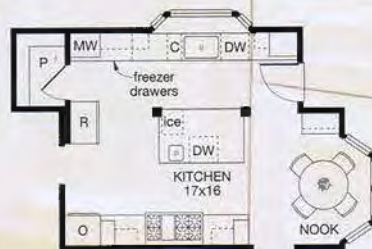
At 4 feet 9 inches tall, she knows the shortcomings of standardized kitchen design. When she and her husband, Steve, decided to expand and remodel the kitchen of their 60-year-old English Tudor home in Piedmont, California, Corki was resolute: This time, the kitchen would work with rather than against her.

Architect Pamela Seifert and kitchen designer Christine Lopez expanded the space by pushing the sink wall out 6 feet and taking down a wall between the kitchen and breakfast room, then tailored the layout to fit Corki. For example, tall wall cabinets in each corner extend from the ceiling to the countertops, providing better access to lower shelves.

The tall cabinets on the sink wall keep dinnerware and glassware between Corki's waist and shoulder level. Deeper than normal, the units store two stacks of plates on a single shelf, allowing for more storage down low. Upper shelves are reserved for seldom-used items.

On the opposite side of the room, tall units flanking the cooktop alcove feature pullouts for cooking and baking essentials. "For the first time," Corki says, "I can get to everything I need without straining to reach up."

Also catered to Corki is a cooktop set at 34 inches high, rather than the usual 36. Two inches is a big deal. "Finally, I can see into a stockpot on the back burner without standing



## enlightened expansion

- Pushing the sink wall out 6 feet made room for a large island that divides the kitchen into distinct cooking and cleanup zones.
- Refrigeration is decentralized, with an icemaker in the island, a pair of freezer drawers on the sink wall, and a built-in all-refrigerator unit.
- The existing breakfast room became part of the kitchen when a wall between the two spaces was removed.

A trash compactor and a well-camouflaged dishwasher flank the cleanup sink. Focusing storage on the ends of the sink wall gave Corki a view and a sunny display ledge.





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—homeowner Corki Recht



on my tiptoes or leaning over the front burners," Corki says. "Even my friends who are 5'7" or 5'9" say it's a better height for cooking."

Another convenience any cook would covet is a second dishwasher in the island opposite the cooktop. "It's a real step saver," Seifert says. "You don't have to lug pots and pans to the opposite side of the room."

The island adds not only function but also style. With perimeter cabinets a buttery hue, Corki chose a black rubbed-through finish for the island. "When I told people I wanted black, it raised a few eyebrows," she says. "We have black accents throughout the rest of the house, and I was looking for harmony." Fluted pilasters, turned posts, and applied moldings give the island base and other cabinets the kind of old-world architectural detail worthy of a traditional English Tudor home.

The Rechts kept the equally elegant black-granite countertops at standard 36-inch height, a nod to future owners, fellow cooks, and Corki's own food-prep posture. "When I chop vegetables, I often sit on one of the barstools or [stand] on a step stool that I've had for 21 years," she says. Either approach is fine with her, now that the kitchen is a perfect fit. **KBI**

Resources begin on page 129.

Written by Michael Walsh. Photographer: Jay Graham. Field editor: Carla Howard.

**1** Lowering the cooktop for Corki proved to be convenient for cooks short and tall. Turned posts and applied moldings add architectural charm. **2** The island's prep sink and second dishwasher are two step-saving amenities in the expanded kitchen. **3** Deep drawer fronts conceal storage for pots and pans as well as pullouts for lids. **4** Like bookends, tall cabinets on each side of the cooktop's alcove store cooking and baking essentials. **5** Fluted pilasters and a rubbed-through finish give the island a vintage look. **6** The breakfast room's floor-to-ceiling, divided-light windows provide a panoramic view denied to the old kitchen.

Give an already attractive kitchen a glamorous makeover with fabric, color, and tableware. See "Dress for the Occasion," page 54.