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An Open-Plan Kitchen Ups The Modern in a Traditional Tudor-Style Home in Chicago

A \$200,000 renovation worked to expand flow and family living—and undo the havoc wreaked by a prior remodel that missed the mark

By *Adrienne Gaffney*

Oct. 14, 2021 10:51 am ET

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To open or not to open interiors, is the question facing many designers and architects these days.

When interior designer Rebekah Zaveloff began work on a kitchen and dining area in a 1937 Tudor in Oak Park, Ill., she struggled with giving the space a sense of modernity that didn't feel at odds with the home's traditional style. She also had to undo the havoc wreaked by a previous remodel.

Ms. Zaveloff, who runs Chicago-based KitchenLab Interiors, pressed for an open plan, reassuring the owners—a doctor and a tech employee with two small children—that “they will not feel like they're sitting in their dining room looking into a messy, practical kitchen.”

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To open the kitchen to the rest of the house, Ms. Zaveloff had to consider flow and family living. “And I had to make sure each room was attractive from every perspective,” she said.

What was perhaps her most ambitious decision was to set up the kitchen in the space that was once the breakfast room and vice versa. “The prior remodel had added an enormous breakfast room with a banquette that took up a ton of room and didn't really function very well. So, we flipped the kitchen over there,” Ms. Zaveloff said.

Here are some of the design elements of the \$200,000 renovation.

While Ms. Zaveloff normally gravitates towards black, white and brown, she also has a soft spot for pink, as seen in the Amalfi velvet stools. “The homeowner likes feminine things, so going with the pink counter stools was a no brainer. They're fun—and not something everybody would do.” // Price: \$556.50 each, from Modshop

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“If a client says, ‘Should I do a range or should I do a cooktop and double ovens?’ I almost always go for the range. A tall cabinet with double ovens is a very visually heavy object. Anything above counter height is eye level and anything that is deep is going to feel like it's encroaching into the space,” Ms. Zaveloff said. “If you want the space to feel more open and airy, having a range with two ovens is much better.” // Price: \$6,500, designed by KLI, built by Avenue Metal

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Vintage lighting is a favorite of Ms. Zaveloff, but it can be difficult to find in the appropriate size and amounts. She turned to Circa Lighting, which makes reproductions of vintage light fixtures. // Price: \$938 for a pair of sconces over the window

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For the tile, Ms. Zaveloff, chose a classic subway style with a gray grout. “It's this decision to go for a little bit more graphic pattern, but tonal,” she said. “People joke that I'm the subway tile queen and I know that people see it everywhere and think you're going to get sick of it, but we just never do. Price: \$2.50 per square foot

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The kitchen countertop is a marbled porcelain. “The homeowner didn't want an all-white kitchen,” said Ms. Zaveloff. // Price: \$19,500, for installation and materials from Laminam

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The custom cabinetry extends to the kitchen island as well as to the paneled dishwasher and refrigerator. “[When] you're sitting at the kitchen island and you're looking into the dining room, you've got these two beautiful cabinets that serve multiple purposes. One of them actually is a food pantry, on the right, and the one on the left is dishes,” Ms. Zaveloff said. // Price: \$85,000, from Greenfield Cabinetry

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