

Dream Kitchens & Baths

Why Design
Matters

24 Rooms That
Turn Heads

HOW TO ADD
CHARACTER
WITH COLOR

Worth the Splurge:
Elegant Millwork
Distinctive Islands
Luxurious Tubs

simply stated

A showhouse kitchen turns heads with its luxe materials and dazzling mosaic backsplash.

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Photographer John Bessler





Two islands—one for cooking and the other for dining and serving—ensure that this elegant Hamptons kitchen multitasks with ease. Old English-style barstools with barley-twist legs add heirloom texture to the transitional space.

SOMETIMES LESS IS MORE. THIS SOPHISTICATED KITCHEN HAD NO NEED FOR SATURATED COLORS or large-scale patterns; the gray-and-white space gets its style from warm nickel-silver fixtures, cool stainless-steel appliances, and delicately grained stretches of walnut. Plus, a show-stopping backsplash lights up the range niche with thousands of pieces of polished stone.

“I’m a big fan of accents and pleasant distractions in a room—whether through the subtle injection of color or shape or the drama of something like a custom-designed backsplash,” says designer Bob Bakes, president of luxury cabinet firm Bakes & Kropp in New York City. “Design should be fun and energetic.”

That impossible-to-ignore backsplash above the range stands out as the centerpiece of a balanced floor plan that uses two parallel islands to make the 450-square-foot kitchen flow. The marble-topped island closest to the range is part of a cooking center that includes a wall oven, convection/microwave oven, and warming drawer stacked on the exterior wall; a nearby door leads to a walk-in pantry. The island’s generously sized apron-front sink is paired with an integrated dishwasher and gooseneck faucet perfect for cleaning large pots and pans. The second island—with a marble countertop for food prep, a U-shape walnut overhang for the dining bar, and a second dishwasher—functions as a casual dining spot and as a serving area for the sunroom just behind it. An undercounter refrigerator keeps beverages perfectly chilled, and the island’s narrow rectangular sink doubles as a wine bucket—with its own drain—when needed.

Each island is paired with a counter-depth French-door refrigerator that stands on either side of a centrally located kitchen window. The surrounding white cabinetry—by the range as well as the refrigerators—sports full-inset doors and drawer fronts and sparkling nickel hardware. Crown molding and a handsome coffered ceiling top the room with traditional elegance.

Although most of the room is full of hard surfaces and straight lines, the mirror-image islands boast curved walnut-veneer columns on all four ends, with white cabinetry on the front and gray-painted interiors on the back. Both pairs of mirror-image columns are designed to be part of the same arc, albeit 4 feet apart. “There’s a feeling of balance,” Bakes says about the islands’ design. “You feel comfortable without quite knowing why.”



In fact, there’s a balanced approach to the overall design, Bakes says, with interest points that add emphasis but don’t become distractions. “It’s clear what function you would be doing where,” Bakes says. “There’s plenty of room to move about. And the backsplash serves as an exclamation mark.”

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ABOVE Thousands of hand-cut stone tiles make up the kitchen’s radiant range backsplash, which designer Bob Bakes set slightly off center. The placement is “just a cheeky little accent,” Bakes says. “It creates a wonderful imbalance behind the range.” A simple range hood allows the mosaic to take center stage.

OPPOSITE TOP The working island’s primary sink—a handmade brushed-nickel sink with a narrow walnut drip rail beneath the apron front—is flanked by a dishwasher on the left and a trash pullout on the right. An Edwardian-style bridge faucet arches over the large, deep basin. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT** Four 22-inch-square polished-nickel pendant lights with paper shades echo the coffered ceiling’s 90-degree angles. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT** Polished-nickel pulls adorn the six walnut drawers that flank the range. “Walnut has such a smooth texture and delicate grain patterning,” Bakes says. “There’s a natural earthy feeling about it.”

