

BEFORE & AFTER

PHOTOGRAPHY: NANCY NOLAN / STYLING: CHIP JONES

Family Style

FUNCTIONALITY AND VITALITY MERGE IN A
BUSTLING KITCHEN THAT'S ALWAYS HOME
TO A CROWD By Elaine Slayton Akin

BEFORE





JESSICA AND CLAY BARBER are no strangers to big crowds. As parents to five boys, they—and their kitchen—often play host to large groups. However, when “rubbing elbows,” segued from a playful figure of speech to a literal lack of space, the Barbers turned to Kathryn LeMaster of Kathryn J. LeMaster Art & Design. With her magnetic charm and sixth sense for space maximization, LeMaster gave the family a full-fledged lifestyle transformation by creating a kitchen with defined spaces for everything from cooking dinner to paying bills.

For starters, LeMaster rethought the space by taking an office nook at the far end of the kitchen and transforming it into a much-needed beverage station and pantry area. She also traded a divisive dining peninsula for banquette window seating, which opened up the room’s traffic flow.

LeMaster also removed an upper-cabinet and relocated the microwave it held to a new waist-high base cabinet just below it. The cabinetry was squared off to allow a wider walking path between this area and a nearby support column. The reconfigured space led to the creation of additional seating in a new bar area, which was a bonus for the busy family. Other space-making features include a smaller, custom-designed island with a built-in waste receptacle along with shelving for storage, as well as the aforementioned banquette, which opens to store larger pots and dishware.

To create the kitchen’s traditional look, which includes hints of Southwestern-meets-Tuscan flair, LeMaster selected engineered chestnut hardwood floors, a distressed mango-wood breakfast table,



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bronze hardware and faux ceiling beams made from stained wood. For balance, she also chose materials that add polish while still coordinating with the traditional theme. For example, the understated travertine herringbone-pattern backsplash, the earth-toned granite countertop and the contrasting espresso finish on the cross-back dining chairs all bring an air of elegance to the often-bustling kitchen.

In addition, an airy color palette helps to create the illusion of a more spacious room. The once sage-green walls and pink-washed cabinetry are now creamy white, and the once flat, opaque appliances are now a uniform blend of stainless steel. The Barbers also opted to forgo window treatments, which had been a major part of the room’s previous decor. Since the new design naturally frames the windows with either exquisite wood cabinetry or decorative accents and privacy is not an issue on their wooded lot, draperies were not a must-have on the Barbers’ wish list. Finally, the installation of several recessed lights, pendants over the bar and a chandelier over the dining area proves an ideal supplement to the in-streaming sunlight.

“I want each of my designs to reflect their respective clients, so it’s almost like inventing a new style with every project,” LeMaster comments. In this case, she wanted to keep the Barber’s taste for rustic, Southwestern décor intact, but represent it in a more modern and subtle way. “A fail-safe, transitional look will stay relevant for years to come,” she adds.



"A fail-safe, transitional look will stay relevant for years to come." —Kathryn LeMaster



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Design Resources

Contractor John Turner, Turner & Sons' Construction, Little Rock, (501) 993-6323, turnerandsonsconstruction.com
 Interior design Kathryn J. LeMaster, Kathryn J. LeMaster Art & Design, North Little Rock, (501) 626-0267, kathrynjlemaster.com
 Accessories Coming Home Interiors, Little Rock, (501) 225-3131
 Appliances Nino's Trading Company, Little Rock, (501) 565-1111, ninostrading.com
 Cabinetry Renaissance Cabinets, North Little Rock, (501) 256-3252, cabinetideas.com
 Fabric Cynthia East Fabrics, Little Rock, (501) 663-0460, cynthiaeastfabrics.com
 Furniture I.O. Metro, locations statewide, (888) 223-5623, iometro.com; Marshall's Cost Plus Furniture, Little Rock, (501) 907-7777, costplusfurniture.org
 Paint The Paint and Carpet Depot, Little Rock, (501) 225-1871, thepaintandcarpetdepotinc.com
 Tile—accent Acme Brick, Tile & Stone, Fort Smith, (479) 782-7974, Little Rock, (501) 812-5574, Russellville, (479) 968-6900, acmebricktileandstone.com