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The newly renovated kitchen combines traditional elements with transitional colors and accents. The classic cabinetry has columns and raised-panel doors but is painted pure white. A dark walnut island is topped with the same white marble as the countertops, backsplash and breakfast table. The homeowners selected the glass lantern lights over the island and the round fixture, whose shade features polished chrome stripes, over the table.

A designer removes a wall to create one large space for a Bergen County kitchen

# All Together Now

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Peter Salerno used 2½-inch-thick marble for the countertops — instead of the standard 1¼ inch — to fit the scale of the kitchen with its 11-foot-high ceiling. Built-in appeal is provided by the curved architecture of the room with arched windows that bow out to a patio. The cabinetry follows the curvature of the wall.



*“Whatever the kitchen is, that’s your life with your family,”*

says Peter Salerno, a certified master kitchen and bathroom designer and owner of Peter Salerno Inc. in Wyckoff. Salerno’s update of a twenty-something kitchen for Bergen County homeowners meant enhancing that life by combining the former kitchen and breakfast room — separated by a wall — into one large space to serve as the new heart of the home.

Salerno had designed the kitchen in the couple’s

former home, where the kitchen opened onto a sitting room. “They loved the way that worked,” he says.

However, when the couple downsized into this new home, they wound up with a kitchen and breakfast area separated by a load-bearing wall, making it a challenge to create one space out of the two. The solution: replacing the wall with a steel I-beam recessed into the ceiling.

**OPEN YET INTIMATE**

Salerno fit a new kitchen, large island and breakfast table and chairs — along with a sitting room at the far end — into the new open space. Despite the many elements, the kitchen has an intimate feeling. “The magnitude is large but it’s not intimidating,” Salerno says.

Although breakfast rooms usually have a rectangular or oval table, Salerno says, a round table better fit this square space and also provided ample seating.

Along with the open plan, updated style was a priority for the new kitchen. The original kitchen was contemporary with a high-gloss finish on lightly stained maple cabinetry and a tile floor. However, the homeowners wanted something classical in terms of the cabinetry — columns topped by capitals, raised panel doors — but nothing that would evoke the 1990s, the designer says. He came up with a traditional-leaning design with transitional elements.

The range hood and corbels strike a balance between traditional and transitional style. The range backsplash is white marble with a grid of dark brown marble.



A wall that separated the kitchen and breakfast room was removed, creating one large space. The sitting room, formerly the breakfast room, is open to the kitchen. The kitchen's chocolate brown walls extend into the sitting room with its chocolate brown sofa and white-framed chairs. Peter Salerno had a fireplace installed here and placed a television over it.

#### A BEAUTIFUL BACKDROP

The cabinetry, for example, has the classical look the homeowners wanted but is painted pure white and paired with white marble countertops and backsplash. In contrast, the island is dark walnut, also with a white marble top. The range hood incorporates a bit of a traditional touch with a corbel, but the corbel is minimal. The range backsplash is white marble but with a dark brown marble grid.

The breakfast table is also topped with white marble, and the chairs flanking it—as well as the stools at the island—have dark wood frames with cream-colored upholstery. The walls in the kitchen and adjacent sitting room are chocolate brown, and the sitting room furnishings include a chocolate brown sofa.

“White has a purity; it’s a beautiful canvas for something dark,” Salerno says of the kitchen’s white cabinetry, countertops and backsplash. “This is what

everyone is looking for—clean and sophisticated.”

“People used to be afraid to use marble,” Salerno adds, because it’s not as durable as some other countertop options. “You need to be more careful with marble, but people are becoming more willing to do that and not sacrifice its beauty. In probably one out of four kitchens we do now, we use marble.” **DNJ**

*Robin Amster, a regular contributor to Design NJ, is a Madison-based writer and editor.*

SOURCES design and custom Mastro Rosolino cabinetry, Peter Salerno Inc. in Wyckoff; countertops, Stone Surfaces in East Rutherford; backsplash, Stratta—The Tile Boutique in Wyckoff; breakfast table and chairs, island stools, light fixtures and sitting room furnishings, homeowner; appliances, Sub-Zero refrigerator, freezer and refrigerator drawers; Wolf range and ovens; Miele dishwashers; Best hood, all through Oberg & Lindquist in Westwood.

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