



OPENING LINES

WITH SUPPORT FROM PERIOD FLOURISHES,
OPEN-MINDED DESIGN WRITES A NEW
CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF AN OLD HOME.

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OPPOSITE: No upper cabinets block the sweep of mosaic tile from the countertop to the ceiling, opening up Cecilia and George Don's kitchen without sullyng the character of the historical home. THIS PHOTO: The red-painted island is a magnet not only for guests, but also for the couple's sons: Alex, 9, and Adrian, 8. The teak top resists moisture—including homemade lemonade.



Expanses of white make the most of natural light in the once dark space. The island's striking red color was inspired by a brick fireplace just off the kitchen.

THE GOAL WAS TO CREATE A COZY FAMILY SPACE WITH THE SUBTLE SOPHISTICATION BEFITTING A CENTURY-OLD HOME.

REMODEL OR GO HUNGRY. That was the choice for Cecilia and George Don and their two sons when they moved into a century-old home in Portland, Oregon. While other rooms laid out a welcome mat, the kitchen erected a barricade.

"You walked in and banged right into a peninsula," Cecilia remembers. "It was a 1970s kitchen, dark and uninviting. I immediately said to my husband, 'I am not cooking in this kitchen!'"

The former kitchen designer, now a tile showroom manager, had ideas for improving the space. But a home on the historical register was foreign territory to a devotee of the modern aesthetic.

"I like clean lines, so it was hard for me to put in embellishments like

curlicues and gingerbread," Cecilia says. "I just didn't want it to look cutesy." The goal was a cozy space with the subtle sophistication befitting a grand home.

A quiet color scheme is the backdrop for era-respectful minimalism. Elegant surface materials such as porcelain floor tiles and marble countertops enhance the effect. Removing the peninsula and forgoing upper cabinetry aired out the small cooking area, clearing the way for the signature pieces: open wall shelves with lacy scrollwork brackets.

"I'm a big advocate of not littering the walls with cabinets," Cecilia says. "Really, it's OK to have a blank wall." The walls here aren't blank, but shelves provide storage without hiding mosaic tile that extends to the ceiling. "People might worry that open shelves won't be easy to live with, but they really are," Cecilia says. "Most of the clutter is below in the cabinetry—you just can't see it!"

A furniture-style island topped with teak echoes the intricate trim and open storage of the wall shelves, but this time with a twist: a rich red paint treatment.

Guests like to gather at the island while Cecilia and George prepare meals. "We didn't have room for seating, but it's human to want to be where the food is prepared," Cecilia says. "That's where the action is. People's stomachs are growling, and it smells good in there."

Sounds like no one's going hungry.



A QUIET COLOR SCHEME OF WHITE AND GRAYS FORMS THE BACKDROP FOR HISTORICALLY RESPECTFUL MINIMALISM.



OPPOSITE: Cecilia, a tile showroom manager, covered the walls with mosaic tile. Porcelain tile replaced the unsalvageable original wood floor. ABOVE LEFT: Like the wall shelves, the island mixes fancy trims with open storage. Wire baskets hold produce. ABOVE: At both sinks, the ease of modern pullout faucets won out over the look of old-style fixtures. FAR LEFT: Marble "shows the nicks and etches of a well-used kitchen," Cecilia says. The cabinet pulls are rubbed-nickel reproductions. LEFT: Shelf brackets lend vintage detail without weighing down the light look. **KBI**

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