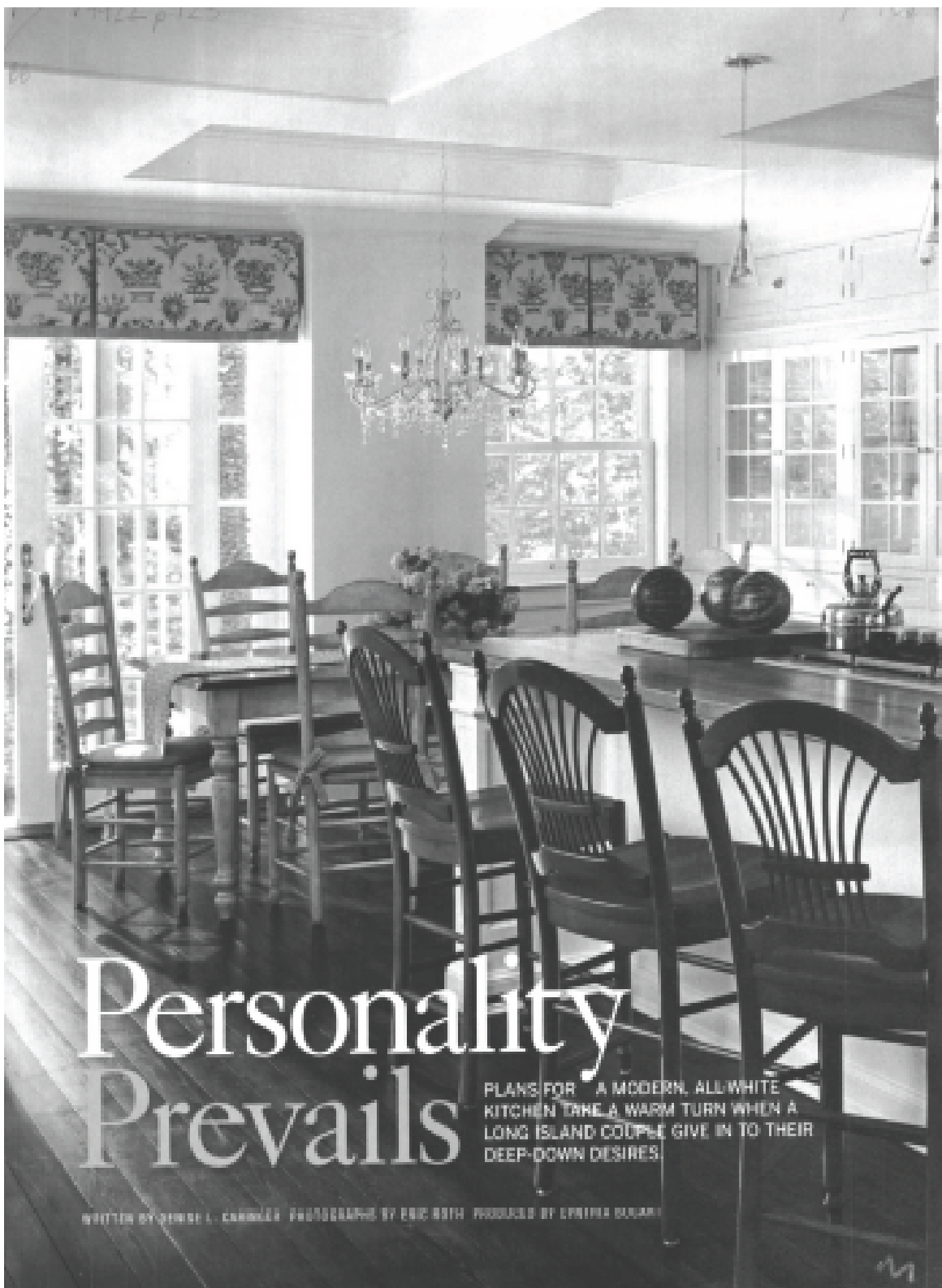


Better Homes and Gardens Special Interest Publications

# Remodel



## Personality Prevails

PLANS FOR A MODERN, ALL-WHITE KITCHEN TAKE A WARM TURN WHEN A LONG ISLAND COUPLE GIVE IN TO THEIR DEEP-DOWN DESIRES.

WRITTEN BY JAMES L. CARROLL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC BETH PRODUCED BY LINDA DUBAY



Replacing a small, closed kitchen and adjacent hobby room, the new open kitchen-dining area in this 1987 Long Island home is bright, airy, and elegant. A 5x24-foot island anchors the generous work and snack space. Beyond, a fanciful character and built-in china cabinet define the family dining spot.





## WOOD COUNTERTOPS

Beloved for their warmth and durability, wood countertops have made a comeback in recent years. Choices range from standard hardwoods (such as oak, maple, cherry, mahogany, and walnut) to exotics (such as zebrawood, teak, and bamboo) to eco-friendly Lyptus and recycled woods. Besides classic butcher block, consider custom variegated tops using two or more wood types. Although urethane or lacquer finishes can be used, most wood countertops feature light oiled or darker stained-and-oiled finishes. Sand to repair scratches and reseal with mineral oil as needed (this prevents bacteria growth). Depending on the wood and whether the countertop is stock or custom, costs generally range from \$30 to \$100 per square foot.

**G**ena Scotto's personality fought to get out—and it won. In love with a chic and simple kitchen she saw in a magazine, and swayed by contemporary trends in her Long Island neighborhood, Gena and husband Stephen hired Susan Serra, a certified kitchen designer (CKD) and member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), to design the perfect clean-lined white kitchen. The goal was to turn two rooms—a tiny hobby room and a dated 1970s kitchen—into an open gathering spot just right for two cooks, two kids, and a slew of friends.

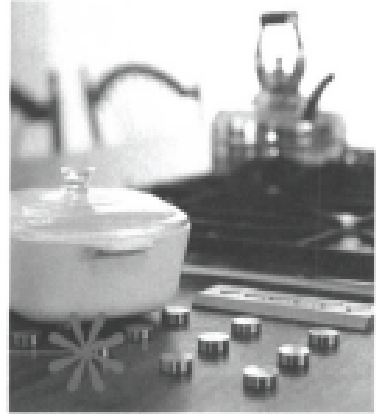
Serra drew up plans, which included tearing out a wall and creating a spacious work area and gracious garden-view dining spot. But things became more complicated once the shopping got under way. "I thought I wanted the white-white kitchen I saw in a magazine, but then I couldn't help myself," Gena says. "I would go to the tile store and think, *White tile? I don't think so.* Or I'd be shopping and look at simple metal or glass light fixtures, and they just didn't work for me."

Serra believes a big part of her job is listening to clients to ferret out their true desires. "Gena kept surprising me," she says. "You have to keep clients focused,



### PROJECT POINTER: BUILT-IN TRIVET

Next to the gas cooktop, a grid of stainless-steel pads serves as a built-in trivet to protect the island's walnut countertop. Although this was an option offered by the countertop manufacturer, you could adapt the idea with heavy-duty stainless-steel cabinet knobs secured from the underside with extra-long screws before the countertop is installed.

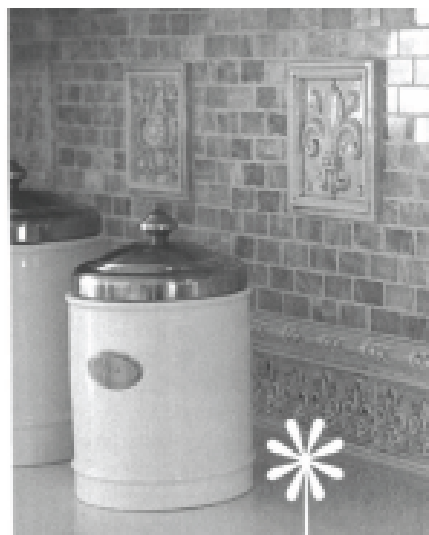


**LEFT:** A ready 4-foot-wide traffic lane allows two people to cook together comfortably. White-painted maple cabinetry and light buttercream-color veils create the airy atmosphere Gina and Stephen Scarfo wanted, while the island's walnut countertop and the dark pine floors provide rich, warm contrast.

**BELOW LEFT:** Three types of hardware personalize the Scotties' kitchen. Large drawers sport bin pulls, and classic latches secure some base cabinet doors and top cabinets (shown below). The surprise? Decadently dressy glass knobs on drawers and upper cabinet doors.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Just steps from the island, cabinets gauged together and detailed for a furniture look house double ovens and plenty of storage space.





### PROJECT POINTER: MIX-AND-MATCH TILE

Teamed with square decorative tiles and a fleur-de-lis border, the onyx backsplash—with a miniature subway tile look—warms the kitchen with color and texture. Beneath the tile, a glazed lava countertop with a crackled finish adds its own subtle glow. Though pricey, lava countertops come in a range of colors and do not require regular resealing. Lava's understated look offers an alternative to busier granite patterns.

but on the other hand, if something speaks to them, they should have it.”

Several things spoke to Gena. One of the most surprising? The fanciful, highly decorative chandelier she chose for the kitchen's dining area—miles away from her original vision of simple fixtures, but totally in sync with her personality. Then there was the tile. “I walked into the tile store and fell in love with the onyx mosaic tile,” she says. And somewhere along the line, clear-glass knobs joined the planned metal bin pulls and latches on the kitchen cabinets.

Although details changed, the basics—including white Craftsman-inspired cabinets, simple painted walls, and dark pine floors—did not. “As the planning process went on, something inside Gena said, *Formal, dressy, feminine*,” Serra says. “Because the basics were simple, we could add the texture, color, and detailing that she wanted.”

Another element high on the Scotts' wish list was a large island. “That drove a lot of the plan,” Serra says. The 9x1½-foot island includes storage, a gas cooktop with downdraft ventilation, and stool space for kids and friends. A pantry, next to double wall ovens, includes deep drawers for small appliances. “Traffic flow is the most important thing in any kitchen,” Serra says. “It's a narrow room, and I tweaked the plan, inch by inch, to make the island work.”

Looking around, Gena and Serra both comment on the room's function and easygoing comfort. The path may have been circuitous, but in the end it led the Scotts straight to the heart-of-the-home kitchen they wanted. “I love Sundays when girlfriends come over with their husbands and kids,” Gena says. “The kids pile up at the island, the adults sit around the table, and everybody is together.”

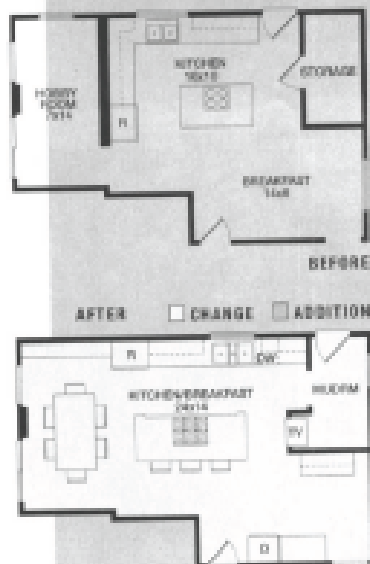
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### THE CHANGE

A warm, welcoming, and up-to-date family gathering spot emerges from a dated 1970s kitchen and adjacent hobby room.

### WHAT IT TOOK

- Knocking out a wall between the original kitchen and hobby room to gain space.
- Dividing the resulting long and narrow room into two open yet distinct areas: a hardworking kitchen with a large island, and a gracious family dining space.
- Installing custom Craftsman-inspired cabinetry and dark heart-pine floors to forge a link between the new kitchen and the rest of the 1917 home.
- Defining the room's spaces with a bi-level ceiling designed around second-floor plumbing lines and structural beams.





**THIS PHOTO:** With its fanciful crystal chandelier and antiqued cottage chairs and table, the kitchen dining area welcomes the family with traditional charm and a touch of formality. New built-in custom cabinets with glass doors look so, if they were original to the 1917 home.

**OPPOSITE LEFT:** "It's 'Ivies in the kitchen,'" says Gene, pictured here with her son.

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**Kitchen designer:** Susan Serra, CKD, Susan Serra Associates, Inc., Northport, New York; 631/754-0464; [kitcheninteriors.com](http://kitcheninteriors.com); e-mail: [info@kitcheninteriors.com](mailto:info@kitcheninteriors.com).

**Builder:** Island Wide Builders, LLC, 223 Wall St., #155, Huntington, NY 11743; 631/261-3100; [islandwidebuilders.com](http://islandwidebuilders.com).

**Cabinetry**—Quality Custom Cabinetry; 800/909-6006; [qcc.com](http://qcc.com). **Crystal cabinet knobs**—LB Brass, Long Island City, New York; 718/786-8090; [lbrass.com](http://lbrass.com). **Nickel latches and pulls**—Van Dyke's Restorers, 800/787-3355; [vandykes.com](http://vandykes.com). **Backsplash tile**—Walker Zanger; 877/611-0199; [walkerzanger.com](http://walkerzanger.com). **Sink**—

[Elkay Manufacturing Co., Oak Brook, Illinois; 630/574-8484; \[elkayusa.com\]\(http://elkayusa.com\)](http://Elkay Manufacturing Co., Oak Brook, Illinois; 630/574-8484; elkayusa.com).

**Faucets**—Rohl; 800/777-9762; [rohlhome.com](http://rohlhome.com). **Refrigerator, cooktop**—Sub-Zero/Wolf; 800/222-7820; [subzero.com](http://subzero.com). **Ovens**—Thermador; 800/656-9226; [thermador.com](http://thermador.com). **Wood countertops**—Kobenhavn; 800/582-1939; [kobenhavn.com](http://kobenhavn.com). **Fabric for valances**—Brunschwig & Fils; 800/538-1880; [brunschwig.com](http://brunschwig.com) [T]. **Table, chairs**—Country-Tique Home Furnishings, Huntington, New York; 631/271-6961; [country-tique.com](http://country-tique.com). **Chandelier**—Gracious Home, New York City; 212/231-7800; [gracioushome.com](http://gracioushome.com). **Table runner**—Williams-Sonoma; 800/541-2233; [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com).