



KITCHEN ATTENTION

AFTER

AFTER: New counters, backsplashes and paint transform the kitchen and coordinate with the existing living room wall color. New black slate tiles and rearranged accessories highlight the newly painted mantel.

BEFORE: The kitchen's boring white scheme and pink laminate counters needed updating. A too-low white ceiling fan, white mantel and pale tile surround were problematic in the living room.



BEFORE

NEW COUNTERTOPS, UPDATED APPLIANCES AND COMPLEMENTARY PAINT HUES GIVE AN OPEN KITCHEN THE FRESHENING IT DESERVES

BY JOETTA MOULDEN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANET LENZEN

Right after Wendy Wetzel bought her house in 2005, she evacuated for Hurricane Rita. When the house was still standing upon her return, Wendy decided it was an omen to get serious about creating a place she wanted to come home to. After some design missteps she says were “desperate and expensive,” she called me.

Her kitchen needed work, she told me. “I am a microwave cook at heart, but even I knew that this kitchen was in need of some real help,” she explains. Since it sits right in the middle of an open first-floor plan, Wendy knew that if the kitchen didn’t look good, the entire first floor was going to fall flat. “I just couldn’t resign myself to living a laminate life,” she adds.

CABINETS & COUNTERTOPS

During the first visit, I reassured Wendy that the bones of her kitchen were great and that she did not need to replace the cabinets but to just paint them, as well as resurface the countertops.

TIP: Neutral tones are best for expensive kitchen surfaces like countertops and add tremendously to the resale value of your home. A shiny counter surface is definitely complemented by a matte backsplash. Save splashes of color for accessories, fresh produce and flowers.

After carefully listening to her concerns and color choices (she loves the dining room paint



AFTER

AFTER: Painting walls and cabinets and adding new hardware, granite counters, tile backsplash, sink, faucet and appliances dressed up this open kitchen. A simple furniture rearrangement and \$31 bar stools from Garden Ridge Pottery enhanced the kitchen area.

BEFORE: The kitchen had poor lighting and dated white appliances and was lacking hardware.



BEFORE

color, “Autumn Wind” by Lowe’s American Traditions), I knew it was obvious that painting the white laminate cabinets was a less expensive alternative than replacing them.

TIP: Yes, you can paint laminate cabinets if they are primed properly with a primer like X.I.M. and you choose the correct oil-based enamel paint.

APPLIANCES ANEW

Wendy really disliked her dated white appliances, so I suggested she could replace them with stainless ones instead. She desired granite counters, and I gave her a ballpark estimate and the name of a fabricator to install the granite.

TIP: Since the best kitchens offer contrast between the flooring, countertop, backsplash, cabinets and walls, I suggested she paint her cabinets darker than her light floors, resurface the counters in a medium-color granite and choose a backsplash in a contrasting neutral dull stone, like tumbled marble. A diagonal tile installation offers subtle excitement to the design.

Wendy selected an under-mount Blanco sink and a sleek new Danze Parma Collection faucet from Kiva Kitchen & Bath. When combined with The Home Depot’s Antique Gold tumbled marble and Giallo Esperanza granite from Lackstone Marble & Granite, the texture play is stunning.

THE PERFECT PAINTS

The trick to selecting paint was finding a color that flowed with Wendy’s existing fabrics and dining wall color. Painting sample poster boards lets you see what the color is going to look like at all times of the day and evening. It also allows you to hold the board behind your head and look at your face in the mirror. Some wall colors do not complement certain people’s skin tones. In fact, the wrong paint hue can drain your face of color and make you look sick. That paint color should be avoided.



DIY DECORATING



AFTER



BEFORE

AFTER: Removing the appliance garage and adding new paint, sink and appliances, tumbled marble tiles from The Home Depot and granite counters update this once-tired kitchen.

BEFORE: Yellowed ovens, an unwanted appliance garage, mauve laminate countertops, a white over-mount sink and white faucet were detracting from this kitchen's potential.

After painting sample boards, we saw it was clear that Benjamin Moore's "Alexandria Beige" worked best for Wendy's cabinets and island, Benjamin Moore's "Davenport Tan" was perfect for her stair banister and fireplace mantel and Sherwin-Williams' "Sesame" was the choice for her kitchen and living room. The stairwell was painted Sherwin-Williams' "Irish Cream."

TIP: Lay paint chips and sample boards directly against fabrics and existing art and wall colors to test their compatibility. Staying on the same or adjacent paint color strips narrows down the choices, providing smoothest color flow.

LIGHT MAGIC

One big change was replacing the dated lighting. I suggested she remove the ceiling-lowering fluorescent fixture and replace it with recessed cans — and eliminate the unattractive faux-Tiffany light altogether. She shortened the fan's rod and replaced her ceiling fan with a sleek halogen, Minka Aire's "Artemis" fan with translucent blades designed by George Kovacs, from Lighting Inc.

NOOKS & KNOBS

Since Wendy does not eat at the breakfast table, we moved her Indonesian bench from the living room into the kitchen, added cushions and flanked it with two matching \$49 tables from Hobby Lobby. "It is the perfect spot to sit and watch the birds in my garden," she explains.

"I wasn't sure I needed hardware on the cabinets and was concerned it would be too busy. You assured me I needed knobs and pulls, so I found a pull online at www.myknobs.com that was so beautiful. I even spoke to the mother of the architect who designed it, so I know a little about the designer, a lot about his mother and I have great pulls for my kitchen!" Wendy says with a laugh. She admits she probably spent too much on the pulls, but bought round knobs she found at the Great Indoors on sale for \$1.39, so together they were a good balance using dollar cost averaging.

With a few simple rearrangements, the living room came together by moving existing tables from upstairs down and vice versa. Wendy bought two small oval tables from Needless Necessities in Dallas and a pair of lamps from Eclectic Home to put on her existing console, which we

moved in from the dining room.

"Over the summer I spent some time in the Georgia O'Keefe Museum in Santa Fe and came home with a number of her prints," she says. "I really enjoyed working with you to blend the mats and frames together to work with the existing Edward Hopper I have hanging over the console. Art gives the room such depth and texture."

Looking back, Wendy laughs at how she would sit on her stair steps in the middle of the night writing me e-mails on her Blackberry as she panicked about paint colors. "The next day another color would go up and I would think, 'Maybe this could work.' By the time all the walls were painted, it just glowed. It is perfect," she says.

Joetta Moulden offers home makeovers using your own home furnishings to create the home you've always dreamed of. Joetta believes your pieces that have been collected through the years are a reflection of your personality and can be artfully arranged.

Her ability to focus on your personal style and not let her own preferences influence the design of your home makes her unique. See more makeovers on her Web site at www.shelterstyle.com, e-mail her at joetta@shelterstyle.com or call 713.461.2063. Shelterstyle.com recently was given a "Pages of Happiness" rating and "Super Service Award" presented to the rare 5 percent of companies that achieve and maintain a superior rating on www.angieslist.com, a word-of-mouth network for satisfied consumers.

TRADE SECRETS

TO ELIMINATE COSTLY MISTAKES, hire an objective professional to help you stay within your budget.

MAKE A LIST of the things in your kitchen that most irritate you on a daily basis and correct them.

YOU CAN PAINT laminate cabinets if you use the correct primer and paint. Paint consistently gives the most bang for the buck.

SOMETIMES THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGY is to not gut your kitchen, but to rethink the cabinets that are already paid for.



AFTER

An under-mount Blanco sink, sleek new Danze Parma Collection faucet from Kiva Kitchen & Bath combine with The Home Depot's Antique Gold tumbled marble and Giallo Esperanza granite from Lackstone Marble & Granite for a winning texture play.

