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Easy on the Eyes

Looks of Italy and France color a kitchen that glows with an improved view of the world.



A wraparound pot rack and Italian marble backsplash are focal points of a Seattle kitchen inspired by a couple's love of colorful European artisanship.

A Seattle couple took the blindfold off the kitchen of their 1920s home,

opening it to visual and functional wonders missed by generations of cooks. The homeowners wanted nothing less than a light, bright, modern kitchen with front-row seats for all. To get it, they pushed their new eat-in kitchen into old family room space, gave it an Italian accent, and drenched it in Mediterranean hues.

Now the couple serves up morning coffee amid views of Lake Washington, tranquil and dotted with sailboats or roiling as a storm moves in. At dinner, they marvel at vistas of Mount Baker and sunset colors washing over the Cascade Range.

Architect Keith Kodat wrapped the work core in new windows, turned the old landlocked kitchen space into a butler's pantry, and created an elegant loggia for outdoor dining beyond the kitchen's French doors. "We did quite a bit of rearranging inside," Kodat says. "Just by moving a few doorways around and adding some windows, we made a nice change in this house. The clients are big fans of Italian art and architecture, and they travel extensively, so that really drove the design direction on the project."

Besides capturing a premium view, the kitchen had to function efficiently for a couple who like to entertain. "Their love of food and delight in cooking together inspired much of the kitchen layout," interior designer Paula Devon Raso says. "They needed space where two or more people could cook together without feeling crowded or cramped and where friends could join in the cooking experience."

The couple's previous kitchen definitely had a pedigree—Julia Child cooked in it—so they incorporated favorite features of it into the new space. For



A bump-out let the once closed-off kitchen move into the old family room, where it captures light and vistas. Pots, pottery, and an Italian chandelier all add interest near the ceiling.



The floor plan promotes easy indoor-outdoor flow. Friends and family often ask to eat in this casual dining area off the loggia. The cabinet above the fireplace holds a flat-panel TV.

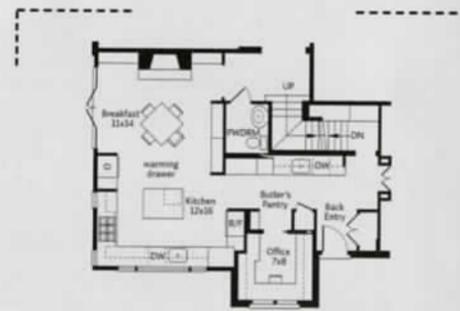
example, they replicated a low baking-center island with a mixer on a pull-up shelf and ample storage for baking gear.

The color scheme—yellow and soft green—is another encore from the previous kitchen. The hues not only convey the inspiration of Italy and Southern France, but also serve as a sunny antidote to long, gray, rainy Seattle winters.

Another focal point, a wraparound pot rack/shelf, lets the homeowners find the right pot without rummaging through drawers, and it displays the French and Italian pottery they collect. And, yes, they say they really do use all those pots.

Whether it's a gathering of the couple's five grown children—who all like to cook—or a big to-do with caterers in charge, the kitchen scores high marks for function and flow. The island and dining table work well as buffets, especially in nice weather, when everyday meals and special occasions alike spill out onto the loggia.

Even without a blindfold on, you might swear you were in Italy or France.



VIEWS AND VERSATILITY A new plan pushed the kitchen into former family room space and closer to light and views. Outdoor access and auxiliary areas enhance versatility.

- 1: A collection of glazed Italian earthenware inspired the color palette.
- 2: A double oven awaits close to the island, which serves as the baking center and includes a warming drawer.
- 3: Colorful table linens, part of the couple's entertaining style, hang in a custom cabinet.
- 4: A herringbone pattern puts a sophisticated twist on oak flooring.
- 5: Inlays of marble and semiprecious stones adorn a 19th-century tabletop found in Italy.
- 6: Rosso Damasco marble mimics the patina on the copper pots.



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FAR LEFT: With so much window space on the exterior walls, the island and interior walls provide an important storage boost, especially the tall cabinets that turn the corner from the dining area to the butler's pantry. LEFT: The cabinetry is of a simple Northwest Craftsman style, its clean lines deflecting attention to light and color. BELOW: A butler's pantry occupies much of the original kitchen space, providing a supplemental staging, storage, and cleanup corridor near the formal dining room, office, and back entry.

The layout lets light and people flow easily from the working kitchen into space-stretching auxiliary areas.



THIS PHOTO: The well-equipped office, painted a pale green, would be the apple of anyone's eye. Set just off the kitchen and butler's pantry, the space used to be a powder room and back entry. A pocket door offers privacy. ❧

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