



this photo: Maria Juergens' Knoxville, Tennessee, kitchen is a small space, so much so that the island barely fit. A carefully designed teak countertop, with just enough room to seat two, worked. **opposite:** An intricately carved corbel adds interest to open shelving.



Small is
Beautiful

English style thrives
despite the size of this
Tennessee kitchen.

BY CHRIS HAYHURST | FIELD EDITOR SANDRA L. MOHLMANN | PHOTOS BRIE WILLIAMS





Maria Juergens knew just what she wanted. “A modern kitchen with all the conveniences, but not one that looked new,” she says. “I wanted a beautiful kitchen that wouldn’t look out of place in our 1919-era house.” And then she saw it: “In a magazine—it was bright, cheery, and had this old, English charm.”

Maria describes her home as a “pretty, Southern-type of house,” one of many in an older part of Knoxville, Tennessee. Her original kitchen was tiny, so she hoped to expand. But size, she says, was less important than style. “Maintaining the architectural integrity of the house was critical to me,” she says. “I didn’t want it to look like an addition.”

With that in mind, and with designer Heather Hungeling standing with her at the helm, the renovation began. Before long, they’d bumped out an exterior wall 5 feet and demolished a closet to reveal an aging brick fireplace. “We also widened the opening between the kitchen and the adjacent family room,” Hungeling says. “Even with the expansion, the kitchen was going to be small, and we really wanted to include an island. So, the idea was to open the space up as much as possible.”

The new room is “very open and inviting, but not in that big, contemporary way,” Maria says. Her new marble countertops are beautiful, and she loves the strikingly old-fashioned look of her European-made range. In the recessed cooking niche—capped with a stately mantel—a delft blue-and-white-tile backsplash features pretty, hand-painted scenes of the countryside. Flanking it, delicate mullioned cabinets seem to float above the countertops.

The fireclay apron sink was handmade in England, while to its left, an arm’s reach away, a built-in plate rack occupies its own corner in the upper cabinets. “The rack harkens back to an earlier English kitchen,” Hungeling says. “You would wash your dishes and place them there to dry.”



opposite: The renovation created additional space by bumping out the sink wall about 5 feet. Ceiling beams were added—and hand-distressed with chains by the entire Juergens family—to complement the big chestnut column by the fireplace (not shown). **above left:** The cooking niche includes a classic French-made range and a heavy, eye-catching mantel. Symmetry—in the double ovens and in the cabinetry—creates a space that’s both functional and beautiful. **left:** A storage wall, with a central built-in refrigerator and pantries on either side, keeps the kitchen clutter-free. Floor-to-ceiling pilasters add Victorian flavor and texture to the space.



“It’s important to pick your focal points in a small kitchen. Choose your elements carefully and then be dramatic only where it calls for it.”

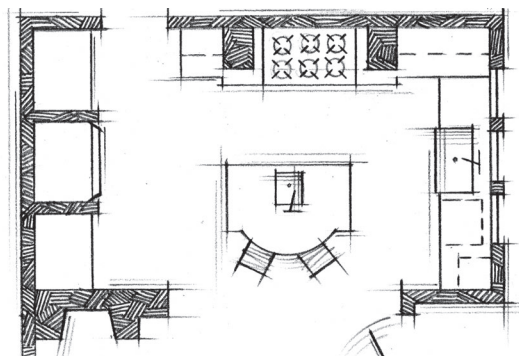
Heather Hungeling
designer



With the exposed brick of the fireplace, the distressed wood beams that cross the ceiling, the hardwood flooring salvaged from an old distillery, and the distinctly English color palette—a cream that Hungeling describes as “antique”—the space has become everything Maria hoped it would. “It’s sunny,” she says. “It’s warm and cozy, full of character, and it feels old. It fits the house perfectly.”

And then there’s the island, with its gentle curves, its dark teak top, and its tidy prep sink a spin from the range. “We managed to fit it in,” Hungeling says, “but it wasn’t easy.” Maria, for her part, says her new island—her original kitchen lacked one—is indispensable. “I can make dinner there and watch my kids as they’re doing homework in the family room. It may be small, but I use it all the time, and I love it.”

RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 118



top left: Handmade delft tiles line the niche around the range. **above left:** Maria wanted a bright, cheerful kitchen. Antique cream on the walls, white marble countertops, and abundant natural light did the trick.

left: Materials mingle: white Calacatta gold marble countertops, a fluted fireclay sink, and cream cabinets with brass knobs. **opposite:** The renovation unearthed an old fireplace that limited the opening between kitchen and family room, and Maria chose to keep it. “That old brick is just so beautiful,” she says.



DESIGNER TIP

Squeeze Play

When a homeowner with a relatively small kitchen really, really wants an island, it can present a challenge for the designer, who is educated in the appropriate clearances for an efficient work space.

The virtues of the kitchen island are well-known, yet not every kitchen has one. Here, in a relatively tight space, getting an island to fit was a priority. “We really played with the numbers to make it work,” designer Heather Hungeling says. “There were moments when we thought we wouldn’t have enough room.”

At issue, Hungeling says, was the clearance at the proposed island’s corners—thanks to the “rediscovered” fireplace, which wasn’t going to budge, there was little to work with. “We wanted an island with a prep sink and seating,” she says. “Something not just cute, but functional, too.”

The solution, Hungeling says, lay in the structure’s shape—having the countertop curve out in the middle before tucking back at the corners. The design permits two to sit and traffic to pass, and it’s also pretty. “This wouldn’t have worked if the rest of the kitchen was really big,” she says. “A tiny island would look silly in a big space, where you’d be better off using a large island or even two islands.”

Hungeling also made sure the island reflected the “very English” style of the kitchen, adding architectural corbels and fluted pilasters on its corners. “Every detail conveys a sense of age,” she says.