

PITTSBURGH'S FINEST

# KITCHENS

## **Fantasy Kitchens**

Local designers share  
their dream finishes  
and materials

## **Classic and Timeless**

Choices that stay  
fresh for decades

## **Put a Spin on It**

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your personality

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MAGAZINE





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The Hillebrands, left to right: Terry, Jason, Don, Matt, Nick, and Tim.

# CREATING THE FINEST KITCHENS

The kitchen is the heart of the home, the place where we nourish each other not only with food, but also with time and talk, moments and memories, love and laughter. From the first jolt of java in the morning, to the last lingerers at a great party, the kitchen is where some of life's best moments take place. Since all of us at Don's Appliances live both our personal and professional lives in a kitchen-forward way, it's always a pleasure to think about the most important room in the house.

Our Fall 2021 issue of *Pittsburgh's Finest Kitchens* celebrates this centerpoint of life by highlighting the creativity of just a few of our talented designer customers. The selections were made by the crew at TABLE Magazine and this issue's illustrious Guest Editor, Stephen Treffinger. As a journalist and author with decades of experience covering lifestyle topics for the *New York Times*, *Domino*, *Architectural Digest*, and many other topnotch publications, Treffinger brings a finely tuned eye and a perceptive mind to the subject of kitchen design. In the work of Betsy Wentz, Colleen Simonds, Abigail Foster, Gerald Morosco, Jacob Evans, Alisha Gwen and Hardwood Interiors, he found beauty and skill, and a variety of ways to create a great kitchen.

Some kitchens are timeless in look, with a simplicity that will undoubtedly stand the test of time. Others explore color and texture in ways that reflect the lives of the families who will use them every day. But beyond aesthetic choices, a great kitchen needs to perform. The layout

needs to facilitate the creation of a meal rather than fight it. Storage needs to accommodate the needs of the house. Appliances need to meet and exceed the performance metrics of the people making kitchen-magic happen: bakers need cutting edge features in the oven, soup aficionados need flames that simmer, party-throwers need at least half-a-dozen burners, warming drawers, ice makers and great dishwashers. All of these folks – everyone, in fact – need great advice from their source for appliances.

At our family-owned business, matching you with what you need is central to our way of doing business. Great service is also one of our core values. Our in-house technicians are on call and ready not just with knowledge but with a smile and a sense of dedication to make things right. We are also hyper-focused on using our decades of industry connections and our buying power to bring you the highest quality offerings from the top brands in the business: SKS, JennAir, Thermador, GE, Sharp, Brizo, DXV, The Galley, True, and more.

As you look through this issue of *Pittsburgh's Finest Kitchens*, keep track of what you fall in love with. Talk to your designer, stop by one of our showrooms around the region, or contact us online. Start the process of creating the kitchen of your dreams. You'll be glad you did.

**Tim Hillebrand**  
*Principal, Don's Appliances*



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## Contributors

### Stephen Treffinger | guest editor

Stephen covers interiors, design, travel, and technology. He has written for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *Domino*, *Architectural Digest*, *House Beautiful*, *Interior Design*, *Elle Decor*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Vogue Living* (Australia), *Departures*, and others.

### Lisa Toboz | copy editor

Lisa is a self-taught artist with an MFA in writing from the University of Pittsburgh. Her recent photo books include *Dwell* (2020) and *The Long Way Home* (2018). In addition to copy editing for TABLE, she is the copy editor for photography journal *Analog Forever Magazine*.

### Erin Kelly | photographer

Erin is an interiors, architectural and lifestyle photographer. She has been capturing beautiful spaces and vignettes for international and national publications, interior designers and architects for over a decade. She resides in Pittsburgh with her two daughters and crazy-talented illustrator husband.

### Nicole Barley | writer

Nicole is a freelance writer and full-time content creator who loves nothing more than spending an entire day in the kitchen, cooking, baking, and snapping photos of her creations — with a soundtrack of Prince and Bruce Springsteen keeping her company.

### Hannah Lynn | writer

Hannah is a freelance writer living in Highland Park with her dog Sesame. She was previously a staff writer at *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

### Andrea Stehle | writer

Andrea's multilayered career has encompassed online news startups, magazines, and public relations. In addition to the storytelling in her professional life, she also spins yarns for her two young children.

### Dave Bryce | photographer

Dave Bryce is a Pittsburgh-based photographer with a focus on architecture and interiors. His attention to detail also brings life to food and objects.



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Photo: Dave Bryce Photography



# PITTSBURGH'S FINEST KITCHENS

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Colleen Simonds  
just happens to  
have great taste in  
dinnerware as well as  
kitchen design. Her  
Thermador Sapphire 7  
Program Dishwasher  
was irresistible.



## TABLE MAGAZINE

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## BEHIND THE SCENES AT DON'S APPLIANCES

SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES CONTINUE TO AFFECT LIFE IN THE KITCHEN

Story by Matt Hillebrand

People continually ask me, "Why can't I get the appliance I want? And please don't blame Covid!" I wish my answer could comply, but we all need to acknowledge that major supply chain issues due to Covid and weather disasters are realities in our corner of the world.

During the initial surge of the Covid pandemic, many businesses around the world shut down to help minimize the spread of the virus. By the time businesses came back online, albeit slowly, the supply chain had already started getting complicated.

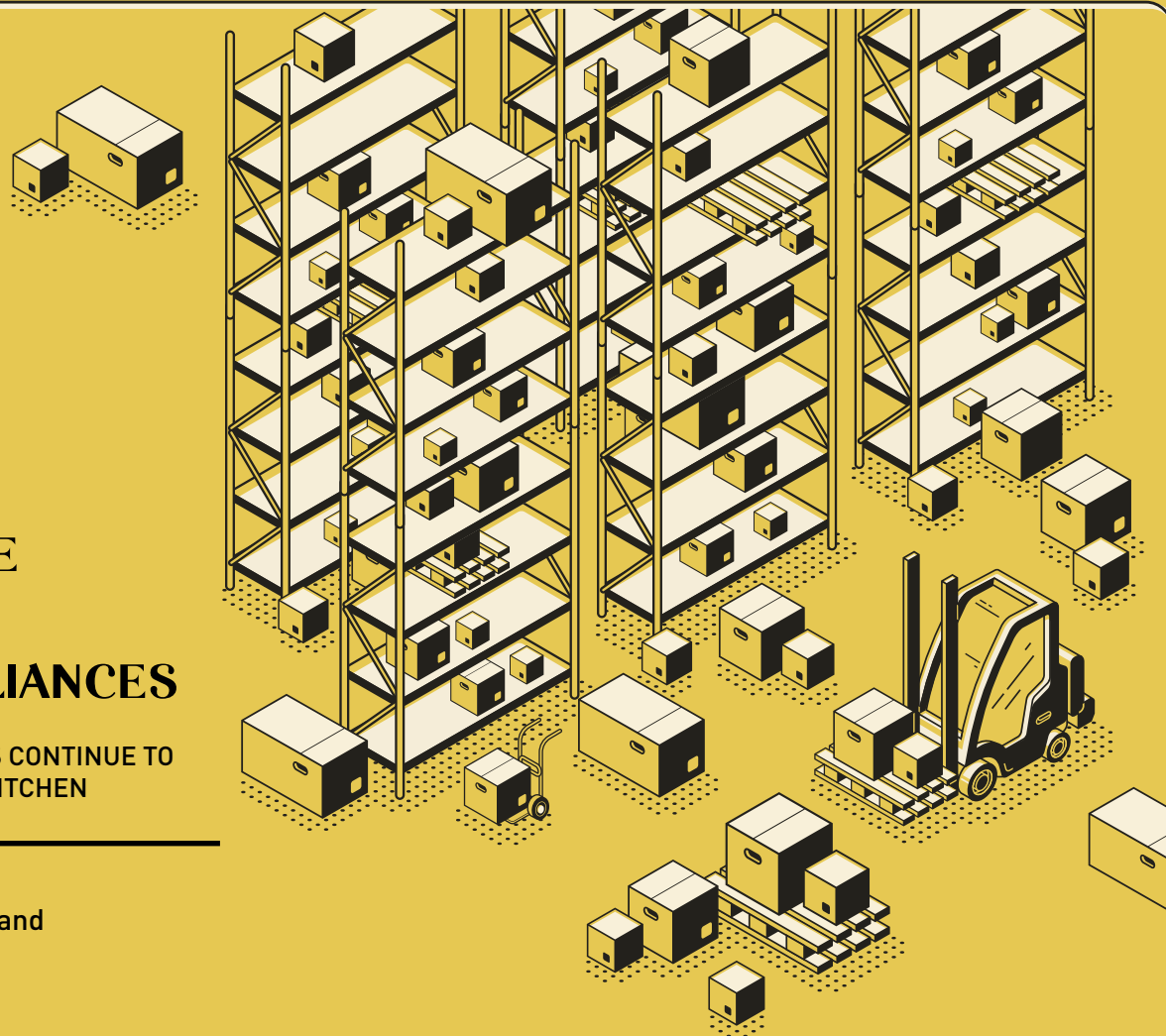
Container and shipping bottlenecks at all major ports created major delays. As of this writing there are over 65 ships waiting several weeks to be unloaded at United States' west coast ports. Not only are many appliances manufactured overseas on these containers, there are also vital components needed to complete American-made units.

Severe weather has only darkened the picture in 2021. For example, a February cold front brought freezing weather to Texas, which shut down electrical supply for weeks. Chemical plants went offline, causing shortages on foam insulation and resin used in components for appliances.

All of these issues happened just as consumers focusing on their homes began buying appliances at unexpected rates. Inventories are lean, and appliances have become very hard to get. It has been a struggle for manufacturers to get in front of backorders that began in 2020, with some suppliers predicting unstable inventory levels until late 2022 or 2023.

Here at Don's Appliances, we have worked closely with suppliers to increase our inventory holdings by 30 percent. We continue to monitor our demand forecasts and try daily to stay ahead of the supply issues. With our increased inventory, we have more in stock inventory than any other appliance company in the Tristate region. We are here to meet your needs by supplying what's in stock today or ordering with clear timelines for your future projects.

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# START WITH ART

Brenda Friday Design

When we asked Brenda Friday where she found inspiration for her fantasy kitchen, she did not hesitate. “Start with art,” she said. “Start a conversation between old and new. Build from one piece that makes your heart sing. Add modern classics with a worn antique patina. Mix in luxury fabrics that meet the practical necessities of a kitchen. Add a solid dose of happy color. And always sprinkle in a little black. The right mix brings life and emotion into the room.”

[brendafridaydesign.com](http://brendafridaydesign.com)

THE AIM IS TO STRIKE THE PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY. THE MOOD OF THE ROOM SHOULD EXUDE A SENSE OF COMFORT AND NOSTALGIA AS WELL AS A JOYFUL OPTIMISM.



- 1. Drawing by JD Naraine in a Paris flea market frame.
- 2. Floral wallpaper from Osborne & Little, covered with glass.
- 3. Modern metal cabinets with knobs by Classic Brass.
- 4. Vintage walnut table, preferably timeworn, with two black leather stools tucked underneath.
- 5. Outside upholstered with Dedar white textured fabric and inside upholstered with Dedar plush cotton/wool in a luxurious warm color.
- 6. Red metal sculpture by Fernando Diaz.

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# THE COOL FACTOR

Davin Interiors

Wallpaper: Queen of Spain in Platinum, Schumacher.

Upholstery: Nympeus, GP & J Baker.

Backsplash: Walker Zanger's Jet Set pattern from Tile & Designs.

Catherine Davin set out to create a kitchen that is classic yet current, understated and with a bit of a cool factor, grounded with a touch of masculinity. Her finishes are warmly rich, starting with base notes of floor and stone, and extending into metallic fittings and deep black accents. The results? A quiet sanctuary to be enjoyed all alone in the morning sun, or a stylish gathering place for an evening with family and friends.

davininteriors.com

Tile: Calacatta Gold Levigatto, Daltile.

Cabinets: Premium Alder Dusk from Crystal Cabinet Works.

Floor: Oolong Hickory, Hallmark Floors.

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# THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

James Mohn Design

Powder room wainscot: Stoneware from Ann Sacks Elements collection.

Floor: Oak Ryhl with textured finish, Havwoods Flooring.

Inlaid flooring details: Recycled brass tiles, Eco-Friendly Flooring.

Backsplash: Simena chiseled limestone, Stone Source.

NATURAL CHOICES DON'T HAVE TO BE BEIGE AND BROWN.

Powder room wallpaper, top right: Manila Hemp, Phillip Jeffries from Holly Hunt.

Center infill for cabinet doors: Satin brass woven metal, Kent Design.

Kitchen wallpaper: Perles from Elitis.

Cabinet fronts: Cali Bamboo.

Slab countertops: Basaltina, Stone Source.

Butterfly: Deryolle.com

Sewickley-based James Mohn contemplates an exotic butterfly he brought home from Paris, and its intense, shimmering palette inspires what he hopes will be his next kitchen design. "Nature isn't really neutral, so timeless natural choices don't have to be beige and brown," he says. "They can be rich in color and texture and still result in a comfortable and grounded place to live your wonderful life. Pictured here is a blending of two concepts, one rich and the other ethereal. I'm ready to help my clients choose a direction."

[jamesmohndesign.com](http://jamesmohndesign.com)



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# GORGEOUS IS NOT ENOUGH

M Hill Rees Interiors

The thoughtful creativity of Melissa Rees and her company M Hill Rees Interiors always involves layered textures, an unexpected color palette, mixed metals, and rooms as fresh and peaceful as an October sunrise. Melissa's fantasy kitchen features a gently irregular tile backsplash, a practical vinyl wallpaper that reinforces the organic feeling, and a range of metallic finishes in lighting and hardware that act like the jewelry that completes the perfect outfit. All of the above, of course, work around a carefully planned layout and tons of storage because "just being gorgeous is never enough."

[mhillrees.com](http://mhillrees.com)

1. **Countertop:**  
Alexandrita Quartzite from Phoenix Granite Fabrication.
2. **Backsplash:**  
Tilebar 2 x 8 subway tile.
3. **Hardwood:**  
Cali Bamboo.
4. **Vinyl wallpaper:**  
Phillip Jeffries.
5. **Cabinets:**  
Oread Design, Bishop Line, Urban Bronze finish.
6. **Hardware:**  
Amerock.
7. **Glass:**  
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\*\*Based on single ice maker production rates during a 24-hour period, measured per IEC standard and manufacturer user's manuals, for brands identified in US and Canada TraQline as freestanding French door bottom mount refrigerators.



# GARDEN TO FRIDGE

Story by Stephen Treffinger | Photography by Dave Bryce | Location: Eddy Homes



Those raised vegetable beds in your backyard have turned your kitchen into a veritable farm stand. You had better stow your horn of plenty in cool storage to keep it fresh until you cook it, can it, or give it away. This **JennAir French Door Refrigerator** has you covered. It's super-cool looking, with an obsidian interior that makes your carrots, and everything else, look surprisingly appealing. Ditto the clear glass shelves that keep you beautifully organized. Separate evaporators for the refrigerator and freezer sections provide twice the humidity of refrigerators with shared cooling systems. Extra humidity crisper drawers are ideal for ethylene-sensitive produce like cucumbers and leafy greens. Most fruits, by the way, fare better in the pantry, except for cherries and ripe apples which last longer in the cold. Ditto tomatoes, unless you want them to ripen quickly—then pop them in with those cucumbers. A special air filter means your strawberries never taste like broccoli, or vice versa. This baby even has a special dedicated herb container to keep all that extra rosemary and thyme fresh.

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# GET READY FOR THE RUNWAY

Story by Stephen Treffinger

Does it seem like every day is laundry day? And that every item requires special care? It's enough to drive a person, well, out of the laundry room, if not all the way to drink. After all, you love clothes and certainly have a lot of them—but you don't want to spend your life taking care of them. Also, a whole room for just the washer and dryer seems like too much real estate. Enter the LG Laundry Center, a sleek, stacked pair that takes up half the space, leaving plenty for a built-in, floor-to-ceiling shoe rack or more hanging space. It's a swell-looking black steel monolith, with the control panel right in the middle, at the ideal height. (Many stacking pairs have two different controls, neither of them convenient.) What's more, this one is both pretty and smart: It has an app that can remember your preferred settings, the washer can tell the dryer a compatible setting, and built-in sensors will detect fabric texture & load size, then customize everything for extreme laundry TLC. It'll even tell you when you need maintenance. That's a lot of time saved . . . time you can use to shop for more clothes!



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# DO IT LIKE A PRO

Story by Stephen Treffinger



Whether your specialty is baking croissants that are the envy of all who taste them, roasting chickens that bring tears of joy to your guests, or manning four burners at once to simmer, sauté, steam and stew multiple entrées (someone forgot to mention his husband was a low-carb vegan)—you need a stove that can keep up with you. **This LG Pro Style Dual Fuel Range** is just that. It goes high, it goes low: two super high burners (23,000 BTUs for better searing and stir-frying) and two super low ones for that fussy béarnaise sauce or candy making. (It even does sous vide right on the cooktop, an industry first.) The two cooking zones can be combined when you want to use a griddle or show off your Teppanyaki acumen. Inside, the 18-inch oven does both steam and convection for incredible sourdough boules or the juiciest roast beast ever. The other side, a full 30 inches, is convection with a rear-wall element and fan for even baking of everything from racks of great cookies to a big bird in far less time. There's even a speed clean feature that de-grimes your lightly soiled oven in 10 minutes using only water. C'est magnifique!

Visit [donsappliances.com](https://donsappliances.com) and search for model SKSDR480SIS for complete details.



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# THE AFTER-PARTY

Story by Stephen Treffinger | Photography by Dave Bryce | Location: Eddy Homes

A great dishwasher will get your stuff clean, but your status as the ultimate hostess demands something more. After all, you didn't gain your moniker by welcoming guests into a disastrous kitchen or asking them to pitch in when the meal is finished. Whether you're having a couple over for Thai or hosting your extended family for Thanksgiving, you need to be ready.

This **JennAir Trifecta Dishwasher** is the quietest luxury model on the market, so guests won't hear all that slogging and splashing emanating from the kitchen. (It also means you can cleanse away all the detritus of meal prep while you serve the meal, so you're ready to tackle the dishes as soon as the guests leave.) The model provides lots of options, including a removable third rack that holds spatulas, whisks, or overflow flatware. Hinged tines fold down to reconfigure on the fly for large pots or that tumescent turkey platter you got as a wedding present. Or fold everything up to fit service for 14. Integrated stemware holders on the upper rack cradle costly glasses so you can stop drying them on a towel on the counter. (We've all been there.) It even reminds you how chic you are with its striking obsidian racks. Who's the mostest? You are.



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# Best of Both Worlds

INTERIOR DESIGNER ABIGAIL FOSTER MAKES A COUNTRY KITCHEN IN THE HEART OF THE CITY.

Story by Stephen Treffinger  
Photography by Studio Lithe  
Design by Abigail Foster  
Appliances by Don's Appliances

**Sometimes a couple with conflicting wishes will come to a beautiful compromise.** So it was for interior designer Abigail Foster and her husband when it came time to move out of his bachelor pad and into their own home. (They had two toddlers at the time.) “He’s from the suburbs and wanted to stay there, I’m from the city and wanted to stay there,” she says. They found a sort of gentleman’s farm on an acre of land in the middle of Pittsburgh, and one of the oldest houses in the area. It was, in many ways, the best of both worlds. The original structure was a mansion, no longer there, that was built in the 1880s and torn down in the 1930s, replaced by a simple Colonial next to a carriage barn. Oddly, the original had no proper kitchen, so they built one to connect the two structures. It was, incidentally, her first large-scale personal kitchen project.

You can’t see the home from the street, but you drive up between two houses and it suddenly appears. Do they use it as it was in the past, a working farm? “My little flower beds would never be called farming, although I do have a very



large basil patch and do a lot of pesto making.” The couple is lucky enough to have a place in the actual country from which comes a bounty of produce that Foster makes into sauces, jams, and jellies, most of which she gives away.

There is a separate butler’s pantry, but that is used more for entertaining than for storing the fruits of her labor. Drinks, the glassware, and the better china are kept there, across from the dining room, through swinging doors. The kitchen itself is more on the family side of the house, and acts more as a workhorse, with the pantry as a place to pause so things can be served in a more gracious manner.

The family eats together every night, a meal al-



**THE KITCHEN ACTS AS A WORKHORSE BECAUSE THIS FAMILY EATS TOGETHER EVERY NIGHT.**





most always cooked by Foster, plus breakfasts and lunches. A lot of food is prepared there every day. She also takes on big projects like making toffee for everyone she knows at Christmas. The island is often covered with sheet pans and mixers or canning supplies for several days at a stretch. They also host Christmas dinner and frequently have friends and family over. It's a real working kitchen. Her husband does not cook much. "He's really good at making me a drink, though." He does grill, however, and they put in a Dutch door that leads to the barbecuing area, through which things can be handed back and forth for convenience.

An original plan had the kitchen being much larger, extending further out into the yard and with two islands. But after several rounds with her architect, they decided on something less expansive. "I didn't want to wear roller skates every time I had to make a meal. I wanted a smaller, more compact kitchen that I could really cook in," she







## Appliances

Thermador® Masterpiece® Pedestal Star® 36" Gas Cooktop-Stainless Steel

Thermador® Professional Series 30" Electric Double Wall Ovens-Stainless steel

Thermador Professional Series Sapphire 24" Dishwasher, panel ready, with a custom panel by Shutler Cabinets

Thermador® Freedom® 19.4 Cu. Ft. Panel Ready Built-In French Door Refrigerator, with custom panels by Shutler Cabinets

Sharp Drawer Microwave

Thermador Vent System in custom hood by Shutler Cabinets

says. She also didn't envision it as a central hangout. It's more of a cook's kitchen in the proportions that made the most sense for day-to-day use. "I think most prolific home cooks would agree that you want a workspace where you can walk to everything in just a few steps". After they eat, the family tends to go elsewhere in the house. "We're in there a lot, but it's not where I want everyone to be all the time."

Foster isn't a fan of open layouts, either, but sees their utility because of the children, who are now school age. The kitchen opens up to a hallway she calls "the command center," where there's a desk, shelves for her cookbooks, etc. The hallway, in turn, opens to a paneled room where the family hangs out. It's a large and somewhat formal-looking space, so the kitchen needed to speak to that and couldn't be ultra-modern with lots of stainless steel.

The palette, built around a soothing green, was inspired by English kitchens that Foster really loves, and she thinks of it as a timeless choice—and different

## THE COLOR PALETTE WAS INSPIRED BY ENGLISH KITCHENS.

from typical white. The color also plays off of the lush foliage in the backyard that can be seen through the windows, which breaks down the indoor-outdoor barrier. "It's really an enveloping color." Like many who live in Pittsburgh, she also took into consideration the winter gloom. She says the green wraps around you and makes it feel cozy, a great spot to have some tea.

Foster had the counters, backsplash, and island made of quartz, opting not to use marble for functional as well as aesthetic reasons. "I love natural stone, but I also love my children, and didn't want to be after them all the time about what they put down on the counter." Single slabs were employed for similar reasons. "I cook so much, and I don't want to spend all my time cleaning grout lines."

Foster chose a suite of appliances by Thermador because they were well-priced and offered an excellent panel system, allowing her to hide some of the bigger units. She is especially enamored of the range because it is both powerful and can go really low for simmering. Some of that country produce gets dehydrated in the oven, too. "It also has styling that melts into the background. It sits quietly there, doing its job beautifully."

Although the project was all new construction, she did incorporate a piece of the old barn into the decor—a weather-vane in the shape of a horse now lives on the windowsill. (She was afraid it might get damaged when they were re-doing the roof, where it used to sit.) "I really wanted it inside the house because it's a nice connection to the history of our home."

[afosterinteriors.com](http://afosterinteriors.com)







Architect: Jeffrey Wetzel  
Kitchen Design: Jacob Evans Kitchen & Bath Design  
Kitchen Cabinetry: Mouser Cabinetry  
Interior Design: Von Walter + Funk  
Contractor: Century Interiors, Inc.

**Shawn Aversa and Jamie McAdams know design.** They own the Lawrenceville shop and event collective Von Walter + Funk, which is named after their maternal grandmothers. The exuberant business is a “modern-day mercantile” with ever-changing offerings, everything from balloon bouquets to custom pendant lamps to eclectic home, garden, and apothecary items.

When it came time to renovate the kitchen in their 120-year-old Highland Park home, the goal was to create “a functional, usable space that was really modern and works with how we use a kitchen today,” says Aversa. At the same time, they wanted to honor the house’s original Victorian vibe.

There was, however, a major detour along the way. Nearly nine months into the project, the Covid-19 lockdown forced a complete work stoppage. For four months, they made do with a very basic, but habitable, in-progress room, using space heaters and running extension cords out of a hole in the floor. “Not ideal to not have a kitchen in the middle of a pandemic,” says Aversa. “But, in a way, we had this chance that a lot of people don’t have. Normally, you’re solving problems super fast. It was a blessing in disguise to pause and really re-evaluate.”

During the downtime, one thing became glaringly apparent: the wall separating the kitchen from the rest of the first floor had to go. Uncertain if the major pivot would be possible, Aversa and McAdams broached the

# Creating a Sanctuary

RENOVATING A KITCHEN IS NO SMALL FEAT – ESPECIALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC. THESE HOMEOWNERS TURNED AN ORDEAL INTO OPPORTUNITY.

Story by Nicole Barley  
Photography by Erin Kelly Photography  
Appliances by Don’s Appliances





## INTEGRATED APPLIANCES CREATE A SEAMLESS INTERIOR.

subject with their team, which included kitchen designer Michael Bonato of Jacob Evans Kitchen & Bath Design, architect Jeffrey Wetzel of AE7, and contractor Mark Labella of Century Interiors, Inc. Together, they made it all happen, working through “a very large, thick masonry exterior wall and one fireplace left in place above the opening we created,” says Labella. Two steel beams were installed within the wall to reinforce the structure.

It was a definite turning point. Not only did it cut a clear sight line to the front of the house bringing a sense of breathing room and openness, but it also created an inviting flow, ideal for entertaining. “It was the best decision we ever made,” says Aversa.

“Compared to the old home’s very segmented lifestyle to what it is now, [the finished product] is transformational,” says Labella. Kitchen designer Michael Bonato agrees, commenting, “I love working with clients who are creative and can think outside the box.”

The final plans expanded the kitchen area into a bright and welcoming 15 x 15-foot room, along with a 21 x 18-foot addition. As desired, the kitchen is designed in a way that “creates cohesion between the existing home and the new, more modern, more open space,” says Bonato.

The layout emphasizes aesthetics as well as organization. Integrated appliances deliver a streamlined look. Lidded, built-



in dog food bins make storage and feeding easy. The island’s power outlets feature USB ports for convenient charging. There is even a drawer-mounted knife block insert and pull-out unit for spices and cooking oils next to the rangetop, both providing easy access while cooking. The large pantry cabinet is equipped with roll-out shelves and a storage space designed to house and charge a cordless vacuum. A tall, integrated wine column and a faucet that dispenses chilled, filtered water complete the bar area.

As interior designer for the space, Aversa worked with Bonato to find the right look and feel for fixtures and finishes, including custom cabinetry by Mouser Cabinetry, hardware from Top Knobs, a Blanco sink, Brizo faucet, and Pella windows and doors. The white-veined black marble countertops from Primo Marble & Granite feature a custom sheen. “Not a high-gloss polish and not a dull, honed finish, but right in-between,” says Bonato.

Aversa’s favorite element is the striking floor. “A true terrazzo floor wasn’t going to be an option, so we did a lot of research,” says Bonato. They landed on a terrazzo-inspired porcelain tile. It’s complemented by the cabinetry, which has with a unique, soft-touch finish. “It feels really sleek and smooth, and it’s extremely durable and easy to maintain.”





### **Appliances**

Thermador® 30-inch  
Double Built-In Oven

Thermador® 36-inch Gas  
Rangetop

Thermador® 36-Inch  
Built-In French Door  
Bottom Freezer  
Refrigerator

Thermador® 24-Inch  
Microdrawer® Microwave

Thermador® 18-  
Inch Built-In Wine  
Preservation Column  
Refrigerator

Thermador Sapphire®  
7-Program Dishwasher



***AVERSA KEEPS THINGS  
WARM AND LIVELY WITH  
POPS OF COLOR AND  
VINTAGE ACCESSORIES.***

The décor is enlivened by touches that pop with color and life. With a neutral palette and surfaces that, on their own, could feel cold, the challenge was how to keep things playful and warm. Aversa's solution was to incorporate a few unexpected details, such as the light fixtures' neon green cords and a perfectly pink door.

"We made some interesting decisions after we had some time in the space and saw how we felt in there," says Aversa of the pandemic-induced pause. "We're both super busy all the time, [so] in this sort of sanctuary, in a place we're looking to relax and unwind, [we asked]: what brought us joy? What brought us happiness?" Worthy questions for all of us to consider when making our house feel like home.

**[vonwalterandfunk.com](http://vonwalterandfunk.com)  
[jacobevas.com](http://jacobevas.com)**



# Fresh As A Flower

ALISHA GWEN CREATES A GLOWING KITCHEN FOR A GROWING FAMILY.

Story by [Stephen Treffinger](#)  
Design by [Alisha Gwen](#)  
Appliances by [Don's Appliances](#)

**Call it a classic tale of the best-laid-plans variety: A young couple with two small children sets out to build their first home from the ground up, but along the way is taken under the spell of an old house.** The story is, however, never quite that simple. What they thought would amount to a quick fix of the found structure turned into a total gut renovation. Interior designer Alisha Gwen had consulted with them on their new build project, but then the pair found their (almost) dream house on a whim and fell in love with the neighborhood, the building (well, at least its bones), the yard, and swimming pool. “The interior . . . not so much,” says Gwen, who worked with them throughout, advising on everything from construction to décor.

The family didn’t have a strict move-out date for their current situation, so there was ample time for the thorough plan needed for the extensive remodel. “Upon first seeing the kitchen, laundry room, and primary bedroom, I knew a little facelift wasn’t going to be the best long-term investment.” And even though a gut reno hadn’t been the original plan, all parties involved realized it was best for all-around happiness down the road.

In terms of a brief, the couple requested a beautiful and functional space. Other than that, Gwen drove the design, tapping into her experience about how families actually utilize spaces. (As a teenager, Gwen worked nights and weekends in her family’s large restaurant, an experience that gave her a deep understanding of how one moves in a kitchen and the importance of proper layout and storage.)

When Gwen first toured the original house, she identified several critical flaws. In the kitchen, for example, the cabinets stopped a foot short of the ceiling, losing a ton of valuable storage space in the process. A corner pantry was badly conceived and of little use, the island was too small, and an odd nook constructed around the range chopped up the counter space.

She eliminated the pantry, moved the location of the refrigerator, and centered the Wolf range to create symmetry. The island was enlarged and as a result—in addition to extra space for baking projects—provided additional storage for items only periodically used, such as holiday platters. (Gwen is pictured with the client’s children decorating cakes and cupcakes.)







#### Appliances:

Sub-Zero Side-by-Side Refrigerator

Wolf Pro-Style Gas Range

Bosch 800 Series Dishwasher

Dacor Professional Integrated Warming Drawer

Sharp Stainless Steel Microwave Oven Drawer

XO Stainless Steel Frame Beverage Center

One of Gwen's signature designs is to have two sinks in her kitchens when possible, one for food prep and the other for washing dishes, pots, and pans. "When a kitchen is being used for intense meal preparation, there is almost always someone cooking and someone cleaning up behind them." So one sink is placed strategically across from the range, the other beside the dishwasher. (This arrangement is especially helpful when mother and daughter-in-law are working in tandem.) The dishwashing sink has a view of the pool so the owners can keep an eye on the kids. From the island, one can see into the great room beyond the kitchen, a place where the children play and watch television.

For the palette, the couple wanted it to feel timeless but also wanted to incorporate some color so it wouldn't feel like every other plain white kitchen they'd seen. Gwen chose pinks and (mostly pale) blues and greens to predominate, along with several shades of wood in the floors, island, and breakfast table for contrast. This somewhat unusual pairing provides unusually deep visual depth and character. (People don't often think of mixing pastels with darker woods, but they absolutely should!) The blues and greens occur in not only the stools, curtains, and shades, but also on parts of the pendant lamps over the island and in the backsplash tile, a subtle mint and white pattern. (Gwen calls it "a match made in heaven!") In addition, the pinks of the dining chairs are echoed in appliances and accessories. Mixing metals in the lighting and hardware is another Gwen signature, another depth-adding technique.



Otherwise, the layout stayed largely the same, although she enlarged the range, added that additional sink and a dishwasher to the island. A Dacor warming drawer is used both for keeping plates toasty for serving but also as a dough-rising area. The Bosch dishwashers were paneled to keep the lower cabinets unified.

Contemporary kitchens often need to strike a balance between being super-traditional and super-modern. Appliances can often pull a project into the latter camp, but there are ways to change that. Gwen chose a curved, old-school Faber ventilation hood instead of a gleaming stainless model. "Kitchens can often become so streamlined and square, so we incorporated softer, rounded shapes in the hood, hardware and lighting," she says.

As it is for many families, the kitchen is a hub in this household. In the spring and summer, they entertain more often, taking full advantage of the pool and enjoying having over lots of people. His parents live with them part of the year and during those times his mother does the lion's share of the cooking, although her daughter-in-law often helps with the preparations, and takes over as the primary chef when her in-laws are not there.





In the end, the success of such a project—especially one that starts in one lane and pulls into a completely different one—depends on trust. Gwen easily identified what wasn't going to work for them and was able to orchestrate the perfect solution. "We had a great relationship and I understood their vision for their future, forever home." And they all lived happily ever after.

[alishagwen.com](http://alishagwen.com)



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# A Working Kitchen

INTERIOR DESIGNER COLLEEN SIMONDS BRINGS TO LIFE A CENTER FOR FOOD AND FAMILY AND FUN.

Story by **Stephen Treffinger**  
Photography by **Dave Bryce**  
Styling by **Keith Recker**  
Design by **Colleen Simonds**  
Appliances by **Don's Appliances**

**Sometimes a renovation goes on for so long that your home takes on a sort of local notoriety.** “Oh, you live in that house,” people would say to Colleen Simonds of her two-and-a-half-year-long project in Shadyside. The location on a relatively busy corner made it even more visible to the neighbors, and took some getting used to after living in an apartment in New York City for 15 years.

Like most construction projects, what started out as a fairly quick process eventually blossomed into something much larger, including building an addition to the house and gutting the kitchen and elsewhere. Everything was basically rebuilt from the ground up. The kitchen itself, in this traditional circa 1911 Foursquare, had high ceilings — pretty much the only thing that was retained. The major layout change was that the current eat-in dining area was swapped in for the separate original, and more formal, room.

Simonds admits she is not a great cook, although she wishes she were; rather, her husband is the chef in the family, and he had a fair amount of input into how the kitchen should operate. “We did spend a lot of time thinking about where things needed to be and the functionality,” she says. “It’s definitely a working kitchen that we use a lot.”

The overall footprint of the original structure wasn’t altered, so there were certain limitations. There was no room for an island, for example, because the kitchen couldn’t be made wide enough to incorporate one. Instead, it is a generous galley kitchen with plenty of counter space and cabinetry, much of the latter floor-to-ceiling.

One of the first striking things about the space is the cabinetry, which is painted a dark blue shade, Railings by Farrow & Ball. “It’s a very dark navy that some people think is dark gray. I chose it because I love navy, but also because it’s easy to live with. It’s not anything I’m going to get sick of.” Such a dark hue could be risky in the cloudiest city in the US (says the *World Atlas*), but the kitchen possesses several attributes that make it work, including high ceilings and a large window that lets in a lot of (often gray) light. “I was never going to have a plain white kitchen.” A peek at her website shows most decidedly that Simonds is not color-shy.

An expanse of soapstone countertops, also in a gray-navy with veining that can sometimes look green, constantly changes color depending on where you are standing and the time of day. “I love marble . . . for other people. But for here it didn’t seem like the right choice.” Soapstone isn’t indestructible, but Simonds is okay with that. “It does scratch a little bit, is a little softer, but that doesn’t really bother me.” She also likes how it plays with the blue of the cabinets and other elements in the room. “I like the drama of it. It almost makes the cabinets look a little bit more blue.”

Appliances were chosen for function and, of course, their good looks. The dual-fuel Wolf range has a continuous top rather than separate ones for each burner, a plus for moving around lots of heavy pots and pans in the heat of meal preparation. The Best Eclipse range hood was chosen for its minimal profile, again providing lightness. Likewise, the Wolf microwave is a drawer model that lives under the counter. “I don’t like to look at a microwave up on a shelf.” Those shelves are custom-made and more or less float, allowing the white subway tile to reflect and scatter the available light.





The bar area has plenty of storage space for wine and glasses, and includes a mini sink, small Sub-Zero refrigerator for wine and nibbles, and a small Fisher & Paykel drawer dishwasher. Nearby a breezeway connects the garage and her office (the addition) to the house, and includes a long row of blue floor-to-ceiling cabinetry that matches that in the kitchen.

For the now-integrated dining area, Simonds opted for an exuberant color mix. She began with a classic, the Saarinen table, and layered on from there. “We’re a young family with kids and I wanted the space to feel not so serious, kind of fun. And practical because this is where we eat all the time.” She bought vintage chairs and rehabbed them, something she loves to do for clients as well. “You get something one-of-a-kind, interesting looking, and less expensive than brand new.” The two large panel paintings on the wall above the sideboard are by Pittsburgh artist Mia Tarducci, who’s also a friend. They never had room to put them up in New York, so it was always planned they would be used here.



The wallpaper, bold as it is, actually came later. “I didn’t plan that up front, but the room needed one other thing. It was too white with all the walls and ceiling, and it needed another element. I didn’t want to put in a rug—I don’t put rugs under kitchen tables because they get gross—so I ended up adding the wallpaper.” (It’s Peter Dunham Fig Leaf in blue on white, a particular favorite of Simonds.) With the ceilings being so high, the graphic pattern draws your eye upwards but doesn’t overwhelm. “It pulls in the darker tones from the cabinetry and the brighter blues in the chairs and the paintings. It’s happy. I like spaces to feel optimistic.”

[colleensimonds.com](http://colleensimonds.com)

***“I WAS NEVER GOING TO HAVE A PLAIN WHITE KITCHEN.”***





- Appliances**
- Wolf Transitional Drawer Microwave
  - Best Eclipse 36-inch Wall Mount Chimney-Style Range Hood
  - Wolf Legacy Dual Fuel Range
  - Sub-Zero Designer Undercounter Beverage Center
  - Fisher & Paykel Integrated Single DishDrawer™ Dishwasher







Story by Nicole Barley  
Photography by Dave Bryce  
Styling by Keith Recker  
Design by Betsy Wentz Interior Design  
Appliances by Don's Appliances



# Minimalist with a Twist

BETSY WENTZ BLENDS BLUE HUES, TEXTURES, AND SCALE TO  
BRING THIS KITCHEN'S SIMPLICITY TO VIBRANT LIFE.

After living in a series of old houses — including a 100-year-old-plus structure with single-pane windows and horsehair insulation, and another that had undergone multiple renovations — this Sewickley couple was ready for a refresh and a “simple, pared down design.” It was perfect timing: Their youngest child had left for college and just as they were exploring one-level living, a small ranch-style house nearby went up for sale.

Initially, they planned to renovate the single-floor space, but in order to create the open floor plan they desired, architect Mike Linder determined a new build would be necessary. The owners called on Dion McMullen of Londonbury Homes to build the house and Betsy Wentz of Betsy Wentz Interior Design to bring it to life. “I am very much a minimalist, but needed help making the house look like a home,” says the client.



## Appliances

Thermador® 36" Stainless Steel Gas Cooktop with 5 Raised Pedestal Star Burners

Thermador® 30" Masterpiece Stainless Steel Single Wall Oven

Sharp 30" Smart Built-In Convection/Microwave Oven

Thermador® 24" Stainless Steel Fresh Food and Freezer Columns

Bosch 800 series 24" Top Control Stainless Steel Dishwasher

KitchenAid 15" Under Counter Ice Maker and 24" Refrigerator/Wine Chiller





A new build is essentially a blank slate, so together, they began gathering inspiration, including the client's love of the beach and the color blue. "Betsy helped me keep a fresh, more modern design without looking too coastal," she says.

The client was also set on all-white countertops, cabinets, and tile. Initially, "I was concerned about how to get a little color and some warmth into the space," says Wentz. However, "You can do an all-white kitchen and have it be really interesting — you just have to mix up size, texture, color, scale."

Wentz's checklist was satisfied in many forms. The island's base is painted a light blue — Sleepy Hollow by Sherwin Williams — and serves as the room's anchor. The sink is located in the center of that island, facing outward to the place where family and friends gather. "It's where you spend the most time in the kitchen," says Wentz, so positioning the sink centrally is "the number one most functional thing to do."

Slightly oversized swivel stools surround the island and add an element of scale and "presence to help carry the space." Their white vinyl upholstery is kid-and food-friendly. To ground the area, Wentz installed two custom-colored Urban Electric light fixtures that "really dressed it up and made it special."



Vibrant rugs bedeck the stained, solid wood plank floor, which runs throughout the entirety of the first floor. It was a beautiful and functional choice — the dark shade helps hide brown pet hair.

The stainless steel stove and hood, ovens, refrigerators, and dishwasher are from Don's Appliances. "I had every intention of buying a certain brand, but after testing the different models chose something very different," says the client. "I loved the hands-on, no pressure approach" of Don's Robinson Experience Center location.

Plenty of natural light and high ceilings bring a spacious feel to the kitchen. The cabinets, painted with White Dove by Benjamin Moore, extend to the ceiling to create a fluid look and are finished with exaggerated crown molding for scale.

Although the designer pushed for an iridescent blue tile on the backsplash, the client was set on white. "So, we had to find a way to give her white with a twist," says Wentz. The end result is an oversized, subtly textured white subway tile, which lends visual interest to the neutral palette. Instead,

that ethereal blue tile borders the nearby fireplace.

While the kitchen is the heart of this home, design work actually began in the family room. After selecting a "really gorgeous, really soft, medium-bright floral drapery" for the space, ideas for the kitchen and dining room began to flow. "[The drapery] encompassed everything the client wanted the house to feel like — light, bright, fresh," says Wentz. Not just that. "The family room really afforded me the opportunity to infuse these colors and patterns into the space, which I think made the client more willing to take risks in the kitchen," she says.

Blue tones abound throughout the home - from the custom paint color detailing the island's light

fixtures, to the dining room's unique chandelier, an old piece lacquered to match. The blue-striped wallpaper in the mudroom offers an element of delight and depth with each walk past the doorway. "It's just enough to give it a little something," says Wentz.

On the opposite end of the kitchen, a coffee bar rounds out the floor plan and provides additional serving space for setting out breakfast foods or drinks when entertaining.

"This house has that really great combination of minimalist and transitional, and I think those things can definitely live in the same place," says Wentz.

[studiobpittsburgh.com](http://studiobpittsburgh.com)







# Timeless Design

ARCHITECT JERRY MOROSCO SHARES A KITCHEN THAT LOOKS AS FRESH TODAY AS IT DID WHEN HE DESIGNED IT TWO DECADES AGO.

Story by Hannah Lynn  
Photography by Ed Massery  
Appliances by Don's Appliances

**There are certain tells that make it obvious a kitchen was designed in another era.** Avocado or harvest gold cabinets might indicate the kitchen is from the '70s. A Tuscan-style kitchen is usually from the early aughts. Sometimes the age of the appliances gives it away, or the backsplash tile. But when a kitchen's style and utility is timeless, the era in which it was built remains elusive, giving the sense that the design was intended to last. Such is the case with a kitchen designed by architect Jerry Morosco, of Gerald Lee Morosco Architects, in the Pittsburgh home of Michelle Palecki.

Jerry originally designed the kitchen nearly 20 years ago after Michelle, formerly the editor of *Pittsburgh Magazine*, mentioned in an editorial that she was hoping to one day design her dream kitchen. Morosco wrote her a letter saying that when she was ready, he could help her. In some ways, it was a perfect pairing; Michelle wanted a kitchen for heavy-duty cooking, while Jerry has studied at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture at Taliesin, where part of his apprenticeship involved cooking for large groups at the school.

Michelle had previously written about the process of designing and building her ideal kitchen, and had described the "blueberry jam test" as an indicator of what she wanted the kitchen to be able to handle. This meant that the countertops and flooring would be durable enough that dropping a boiling hot jar of freshly-made blueberry jam on them wouldn't damage the surfaces.

Jerry describes many of the finishes as nearly commercial-grade. The flooring is made from recycled rubber, a type of material often used in gyms, because it can handle a heavy object or a knife falling on it without showing scars. In the



center of the kitchen are a heavy-duty butcher-block island and steel countertops. The 60-inch range has two ovens, including a proofing oven for baking bread.

"Stainless steel was and is pretty timeless," says Jerry, commenting on both countertop and appliance choices. "So is the tin ceiling, which has been a kind of a constant through time," he says.

With its dark blue cabinets, tin ceiling, and metallic finishes, the kitchen has a stylish utility, like a work boot you could also wear out to dinner. Jerry has worked extensively in historic preservation, so the project was a bit unusual for him, but was nonetheless in line with his philosophy of durability.

I very deliberately try not to pick up on current trends, whether it's colors or materials or finishes," he says. "I try to make something that works with the house and will endure with the house."

[glm-architects.com](http://glm-architects.com)





# Kitchen with a View

FIND FRESH INSPIRATION IN THIS CLASSIC, TIMELESS KITCHEN  
WITH BREATHTAKING VIEWS OF CHEAT LAKE.

**New trends come and go all the time. But if you're a classicist, investing in a traditional kitchen with optimal function—not to mention top-of-the-line appliances—is a no-brainer.** This elegant aesthetic may look simple to achieve, but the design team at Hardwood Interiors & Design carefully considered each element.

This 5,300-square-foot French Normandy-style manor located in the peaceful, gated community of Miramichi in Morgantown, WV, features a custom-built gourmet kitchen with quartz countertops, a walnut top island, inset cabinetry, and a spacious butler's pantry. The latter was moved into the hallway during the design phase to make a more functional kitchen wall. "We wanted something fresh, timeless, aesthetically beautiful, in keeping with the style of the home, and a very functional chef's kitchen," says Hardwood Interiors & Design show-room manager, Michele Messenger.



Story by by Andrea Stehle  
Photography by Dave Bryce  
Design by Hardwood Interiors & Design  
Appliances by Don's Appliances





The team chose white cabinets, which is a style that's here to stay. "They are timeless for sure and can look great for years," Messenger says. "How the cabinetry is accessorized with knobs [or] pulls can influence the overall look as well as the countertop chosen, tile backsplash, and decorative lighting." She advises clients to not necessarily follow a trend, but to make their kitchen timeless so they can enjoy it forever and have it not be dated. "A good example of something dating a house would be avocado green or harvest gold appliances. They were beautiful and 'in' in the '70s, but in the '90s — if you still had those in your house — it definitely dated the space and hurt the resale."

Hardwood built the French estate-inspired home on speculation and provided all of the wood products for custom cabinetry and millwork. This included the walnut island countertop, white oak wide plank floors, custom mahogany front door, wood beams, trim, and custom inset cabinetry. All were fabricated by its sister company, WoodArtisan Custom Cabinetry.

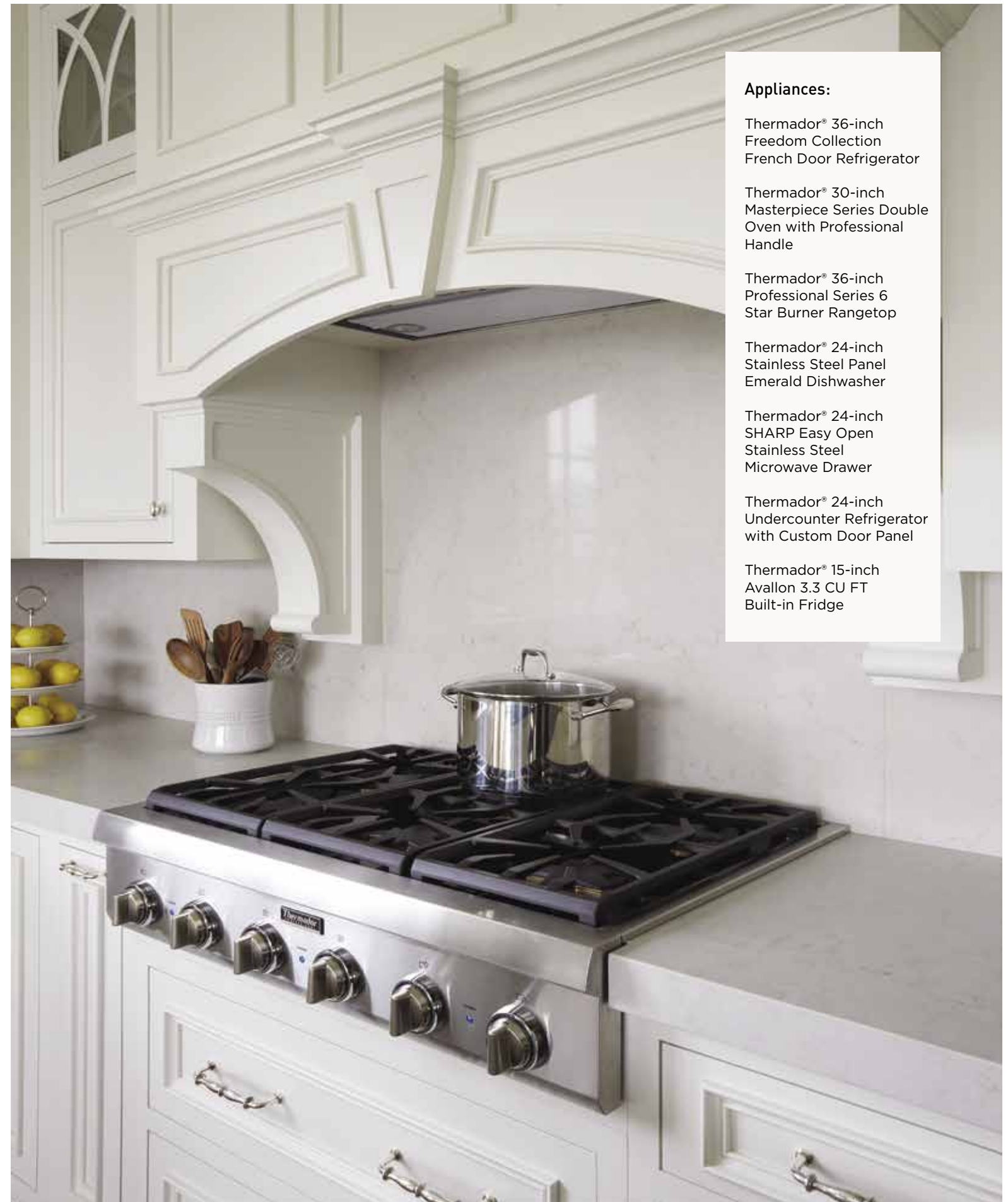
The cabinets extend all the way to the 10-foot ceilings and feature mullion doors, which elevate the look, as do the full quartz backsplash and Thermador appliances. While some kitchen designers might shy away from white kitchens, the Hardwood Design team makes a very compelling case for how classic and enduring they can be.

[hardwoodinteriorsdesign.com](http://hardwoodinteriorsdesign.com)





*“WE ADVISE OUR CLIENTS  
TO NOT NECESSARILY  
FOLLOW A TREND, BUT  
TO MAKE THEIR KITCHEN  
TIMELESS SO THEY CAN  
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