

Elegant marble counters, mahogany plank floors, and rustic brick detailing ground the mostly white kitchen. The expansive island features entertaining-ready storage on one side and trash receptacles on the other.



A new Michigan kitchen prepares for guests—throng of them—with well-planned storage and classic style.



Crowd Pleaser

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Opposite: Everyday dishwashing occurs at the secondary island, which also serves as a room divider. Full-height upper cabinets with glass fronts usher light from the inglenook into the windowless core of the kitchen and separate the busy kitchen from the secluded sitting area.

Right: Space-saving bench seating tops practical storage drawers in the cheerful inglenook. An antique table from Italy conceals a small pullout drawer for silverware.

Below: Vaulted and trussed ceilings keep the room bright and airy; at night, illuminated upper cabinets create a glow. "There are numerous levels of lighting that occur in here," architect Kelly R. Kerlin-Ropposch says. "Together they're the key to the kitchen's success."



The demands on most kitchens are basic and few: a perch to enjoy a cup of hot tea or a sunny spot to relax with the morning paper. But in this Michigan house, dinner for more than 100 guests is often on the program. "It's not so much that this kitchen is needed for daily food preparation as it is for hosting catered events," interior designer Lynn Pettyjohn says. "The owner is active in music-oriented fundraising and opens her home regularly to the community—though she does little cooking."

In addition to large-scale entertaining, there is always breakfast to make and nearby grandchildren to spoil with treats, so casserole dishes, baking tins, and cookie sheets need convenient homes.

"The wish list for this kitchen was simple," architect Kelly R. Kerlin-Ropposch says: "Plenty of storage and lots of white."

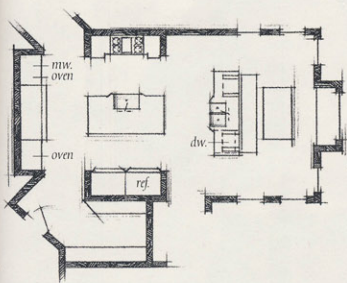


Opposite: A marble-tiled cooking alcove honors the kitchen's traditional aesthetic. The brick-edged stainless-steel range hood echoes the shape of the inglenook's Palladian window. Brass-accented drawers hold pots and pans. **Right:** A library ladder glides along brass rails to access the distinctive ribbon of high glass-front cabinets. As sensible as it is romantic, the system provides access to functional storage for infrequently used items.



Lessons Learned

Careful planning before construction begins boosts efficiency. "There's so much stuff everyone either displays on a countertop or needs to use on a countertop that the standard 24-inch depth isn't really enough anymore," architect Kelly R. Kerlin-Ropposch says. "I like to kick my clients' counters up to 30 inches, and then extend base cabinets accordingly. The space is there. You might as well make it functional." Kerlin-Ropposch also recommends building shelves directly into walls during construction.



Indeed, soft-white surfaces fill the light and airy room, from the peak of its 18-foot-high vaulted and trussed ceiling to its painted, paneled cabinetry.

"White creates the classic look we were after," Pettyjohn says. "And it certainly helps brighten Michigan winters." Though fresh and clean, it is far from cold. "It was important to choose the right white," Pettyjohn says. A chalk-color expanse of cabinets stretches from floor to ceiling in a variety of clever configurations, ranging from slender spice pullouts to a built-in pantry tucked between wall studs. Says Kerlin-Ropposch, "I like to utilize the insides of walls for functional storage. Everyone has load-bearing walls, so why not put them to good use and place linear pantries in them? It's easy to do. It just takes planning."

Equally well-orchestrated are classic architectural details that lavish the kitchen with living room-worthy style. Cabinets rest



Opposite: As in the rest of the kitchen, custom wood cabinetry distinguishes the butler's pantry, where shallow plate storage is built directly into the wall. A deep counter provides a staging area for entertaining. "Knowing people were going to cater out of this kitchen, I knew it needed to have as many flat surfaces as it could," Kerlin-Ropposch says.

Left: A trio of entrances—including this one leading to the butler's pantry—facilitates easy access to the kitchen. "It's the circulation destination within the house," Kerlin-Ropposch says. "A walk through it is practically inevitable."

Below: Vertically mounted appliance pulls ornament the food pantry's full-height double doors. "Knobs would never have been substantial enough to pull those large doors open," interior designer Lynn Pettyjohn says. Slide-out shelves house dry goods; drawers beneath store large serving pieces.

DESIGNER PICKS

Cabinets: Custom by Kelly R. Kerlin-Ropposch, AIA, through MasterCraft Cabinets; 231/276-9160; mccwoodworking.com

Cabinet hardware: Van Dyke's Restorers; 800/787-3355; vandykes.com

Lighting: New Metal Crafts; 800/621-3907; newmetalcrafts.com

Cooktop, ovens: Viking; 888/845-4641; vikingrange.com

Sinks, faucets: Kohler; 800/456-4537; kohler.com

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on furniture-style legs. Wainscoting wraps walls. A brass ladder rail lines the room, and paneling enriches the ceiling. "The kitchen has the same architectural elegance as the dining room," Pettyjohn says. "Kitchens don't have to be downgraded from the rest of a house just because they're kitchens."

In concert with that theory, rather than a standard-issue breakfast room, Kerlin-Ropposch conceived a cozy inglenook sitting area—furnished with antiques and draped in chintz—for casual dining and relaxing. Crowned by a Palladian window and graced on three sides by views of a stunning English garden, the intimate space integrates into the kitchen, yet stays separate from the often-bustling work area. "The real beauty of this room," Pettyjohn says, "is that it works just as well for one person on an everyday basis as it does for hundreds of people on a more occasional basis."



