



SUBSTANCE & STYLE

WRITTEN BY *Eric Edward Brown* PHOTOGRAPHED BY *Dale Lang*

Subway tiles and other homey touches transformed the Wright home's "Grand Central" kitchen into something simply grand

When Portland-based designer Heidi Semler met client Susie Wright through a referral ten years ago, it was a match made in remodeling heaven. "With our similar tastes, we hit it off right away," Heidi recalls. Working her way room by room through the first floor of the Wrights' busy family home in Forest Heights has been easy and fun. The kitchen was the last frontier, the result of a leak that required Susie and her husband Tom to do the remodel sooner than planned.

Every inch of the old kitchen was torn out down to the studs. In collaboration with contractor Bill Scott of W. F. Scott Construction, Heidi designed a total makeover of the kitchen's bright, light-filled space, which boasts a gorgeous view. With three teenage children, the Wrights needed an inviting but functional layout for everyday use. Durable finishes were important because the kitchen is the center of the family's constant hospitality, which includes dinner parties and even dancing. "This room is the heart of their home," adds Heidi.

The client wanted an airy look with the cozy feel of English watercolor paintings. Adding a touch of French sophistication, Heidi used simple materials that provided a lot of value. "Not showy, but high quality," she says, "not pretentious, but warm and very welcoming."

The project's core design concern was the old, odd-shaped center island. "We built a rectangular one, and used Calcutta Gold marble sourced from Intrepid Marble & Granite, installed by Milan Stoneworks," says Heidi. The long, narrow prep area extends the space and finishes with a bookshelf. She always designs the end of an island or panel with space for cookbooks. "They're pretty. They make the house look like someone lives there. And they're comforting. You walk by and think, 'let's start cooking.'"

The flooring needed a makeover as well. Its 1980s-era honey finish was stripped off to reveal a near-



Inside and out, the Wright kitchen is all about natural beauty. Painted in pale greys and white, the hardwood shelves, cabinets and drawers showcase the owners' ironstone and glassware collection, accentuated by polished nickel lights from Circa

Lighting. Drawer and cabinet pulls from Restoration Hardware add a homey touch of elegance. Easy to clean, subway tiles accommodate practical, everyday use of the quartz countertop, fabricated and installed by Milan Stoneworks.



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Material Mix

The Calcutta marble-topped island can easily accommodate two chefs. To unify the cabinets and island, Heidi Semler painted them the same shade. The backsplash is crisp subway tile. The marble adds a timeless touch. A square edge gives a nod to modern styling. Completing this classically modern picture are open maple hardwood shelving from Rockwood Cabinetry and tiny polished nickel picture lights from Circa Lighting that wash the whole front areas of the cabinets.

Grey & White

The tone-on-tone neutral palette of soft grey and white sets the scene for the Wrights' collection of vintage ironstone and glassware. Semler used shades of muted, watery greys from Benjamin Moore on the island and walls to gently ground the brighter whites found in the countertops, subway tiles and cabinets. Stainless steel appliances and nickel finishes add weight and sheen. The result is both formal and welcoming at the same time, and the perfect canvas for hints of color in accessories and objets d'art.

Classic Modern

To breathe fresh life into this traditional kitchen, Semler incorporated classic kitchen design elements such as the custom range hood and English faucet with on-trend marble and PentalQuartz countertops. Pale wood floors hint at years past, while crisp hits of white in the subway tiles and kitchen sink spell new and now. Open shelving with gallery-like picture lights is the perfect transitional note for the homeowner to display vignettes of her old and new treasures.

white oak. Heidi appointed the wood in a white matte finish from England, Pallmann Magic Oil 2K, an oil/wax hybrid. While the newly restored floor looks unfinished, now this central spot of the house can stand up to continuous foot traffic with just a mop.

White subway tiles contributed both historically authentic charm and everyday practicality. The back wall is fully furnished in them, even over the doorway transom. "If you splash your spaghetti sauce, the tile is easy to wipe up when you're finished cooking," Heidi says. Less prone to staining, a white PentalQuartz was used on the perimeter countertops, but looks similar to the island's Calcutta Gold marble and blends well with it.

Enhancing the homey feel is a combination of open and glass-door hardwood shelving, cabinets and drawers, by Brian Berg of Rockwood Cabinetry, with cabinet and drawer pulls from Restoration Hardware. Painted in a creamy white, they showcase the owners' prized White English Ironstone plates, cups, saucers and other dishware. Illuminating the collection's beauty are polished nickel picture lights from Circa Lighting that wash the front of the cabinets.

Susie Wright's blue pheasant platters inspired Heidi to alternate them with handmade green ceramic plates along one section of wall. "What you have is art," Heidi says. The window remains unchanged, but new plumbing fixtures from Perrin & Rowe offer useful elegance. "You can't go wrong with anything that comes from England," says Susie. Taking a cue from the plates, Heidi asked local artist Heide Davis to paint the lantern (originally above the island, as seen in these photos) a nostalgic, citrusy green. Now hanging in that spot is a similar but larger fixture, with a zinc finish, from Urban Electric Company. The lantern shown here has been moved to the family's active mudroom, just off the kitchen.

What does Heidi love most about the Wright home? "Every time I go there, I just want to stay." What Susie loves most is "gathering my family and friends in a beautiful open space." Next on the Wrights' renovation list is the family room.

PROJECT SOURCES

CONTRACTOR: Bill Scott WF Construction

INTERIOR DESIGN: Heidi Semler Interior Design
www.heidisemler.com

CABINETRY: Rockwood Cabinetry
www.rockwoodcabinetry.com

Plumbing Fixtures: Perrin & Rowe; Kitchen Appliances: GE Monogram, KitchenAid, Kenmore Elite; Countertop Materials: Intrepid Marble & Granite, PentalQuartz

