

THE DISTRICT

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# local living

## THE KITCHEN ISSUE

In Chevy Chase, a kitchen in disguise. **8** The cool factor of fridges. **12** Are granite counters Stone Age? **13**



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KITCHEN PHOTOS BY JOHN McDONNELL, THE WASHINGTON POST; PORTRAIT BY JOYCE BOGHOSIAN

Amy and Richard Zantzingers Chevy Chase kitchen is always ready for a party, with cabinets that feel like furniture and a center table appropriate for a sit-down meal or a soccer-team meeting.

# DESIGNED TO DISAPPEAR

BY JURA KONCIUS

During the two years Chevy Chase interior designer Amy Zantzingers served as White House social secretary to George W. Bush, she planned a state dinner for Queen Elizabeth II, helped produce two White House china collections and orchestrated an evening of quail and lamb for 20 world leaders gathered for an economic summit.

The whole time, in the back of her mind, she was putting together her plan to renovate her own worn-out 1970s kitchen.

Two days after organizing the 2009 Inauguration Day coffee the Bushes hosted for President-elect Barack and Michelle Obama, Zantzingers and her builder husband, Richard, met with their architect to finalize the plans for the project.

When the Zantzingers bought their 1933 clapboard colonial in 2004, they were already thinking about replacing the cramped kitchen and its tired Formica

With cabinets concealing appliances and a table instead of an island, this Chevy Chase kitchen is a soothing gathering place

counters and linoleum floors. They both love to cook and have people around them as they're working. Their vision was a kitchen that looked more like an elegant paneled room than an industrial food-prep area.

They imagined a free-standing wooden table at counter height, not an island. Although they have a formal dining room and a round dining table in the family room, they wanted to have casual meals in the kitchen, too. For their kids — Audrey, 10, and Richard, 9 — the reclaimed oak table would be a homework center and soccer-team gathering place.

They saw the table more for socializing and dining than vegetable chopping. It was an unorthodox choice; free-standing islands loaded with built-in sinks, griddles and fryers are the heart of many 21st-century kitchens.

"Although islands can be very functional, they are not particularly attractive," Amy says. "We were able to lay out the kitchen and make it work without needing an island." She says today's large islands may look dated in a decade or so.

"I like to do my cooking on the perimeter and then join everyone at the table."

Amy keeps an orderly house, as you'd expect a former social secretary would. She was looking forward to having proper cabinet space for her cooking and entertaining gear, and enough storage to have clutter-free counters and no open shelving.

"We wanted the cabinets to feel like furniture and be painted, creating a softer, gentler room," says Richard, whose firm, Mauck Zantzing & Associates, builds custom homes.

Washington architect Christopher Snowber of Hamilton Snowber Architects designed the space, which was built by Richard's company. The room was part of a larger renovation that included a two-story side addition with a family room on the first floor and a master bedroom suite above, Snowber says. Another addition at the rear of the house incorporates the kitchen under the roof of a new porch. A continuous, old-fashioned, tongue-and-groove ceiling ties the two spaces together.

"A room that's great to be in makes a room that you want to cook in," Richard says. Their cookware and china are all accounted for in the custom cabinets, which were glazed grayish-blue. A small bar adjacent to the kitchen, with a counter of reclaimed oak, added shelves for barware and crystal and a wine cooler.

"I cared about the basics: where I was going to put my pots, flatware and everyday plates," says Amy, who mapped out designated places for cake platters, muffin tins, school telephone directories, cookbooks and place mats. "I wanted food, plates and drinks to be accessible to my kids."

A bonus is a wall of windows to connect the room with the outside and bring in lots of natural light.

The addition took six months to finish. By July 2009, the family was enjoying bacon-and-leek omelets for breakfast at the center table with all the windows flung open.

Some of the best times, the couple says, are weekends when the kitchen becomes a lunchtime hangout for starving kids and, later, a place for parents to grab a stool and a glass of wine.

"It all happens in this room," Amy says.

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Top and above left: Amy Zantzing loves to open the refrigerator and the spice drawer and see everything neatly lined up. When the refrigerator and the cookbook cabinet doors are closed, the room appears elegant and uncluttered. Above right: The appliances and dishes in the morning coffee station, all stored behind a pocket door, let all members of the family help themselves to breakfast.

## Organizing with Amy Zantzing



Do you know where your crab mallets are? Amy Zantzing knows where hers are. Her zeal for arranging pantry shelves and freezer drawers is rewarded with a comfortable, orderly and beautiful environment for

cooking and entertaining. Here are some of her organizing secrets.

**Like with like.** Zantzing's No. 1 rule for kitchen organization is keeping all like things together. Then, when she's looking for something, it's in an obvious place. She has a designated drawer for measuring spoons and cups, a cork-lined slotted knife drawer, and a cabinet with three narrow roll-out drawers for platters.

**Shelf liner.** Ribbed clear plastic shelf liner is perfect for the bottom of deep pot drawers. It makes a nice cushion for pans and protects drawers from getting scratched.

**Easy access.** If you have children, consider stocking a cabinet where they can reach their own dishes and glasses. The Zantzing's built cabinets down to the counter with no backsplash to bring them closer to kid level. Consider installing a lower refrigerator drawer as well, and stock it with water and chocolate milk.

**Fridge aesthetics.** Have you considered artfully arranging the contents of your refrigerator and freezer shelves? When you open the door, it will be a calming experience.

**Coffee station.** Zantzing calls her morning coffee station a "modern version of an appliance garage." She has corralled her coffeemaker, filters, toaster and mugs in one cabinet. It has a pocket door that can be kept open during breakfast time and closed the rest of the day for an uncluttered look.

**Fruit display.** An arrangement of fresh fruit on a counter adds color and encourages healthful snacking. Zantzing uses a tiered white ceramic stand to display her fruit.

— Jura Koncius





JOHN MCDONNELL/THE WASHINGTON POST

With a wall of windows that provide great light and a counter-height table at the center, the Zantzingers kitchen is the hub of their household.

# An orderly transition in the kitchen

Amy and Richard Zantzingers' Chevy Chase kitchen is not just a cooking and refueling station. It's a sanctuary for tired athletes, a homework zone and a window-lined space to catch spring breezes while polishing off a homemade chocolate chip cookie. Amy has seasoned advice for anyone getting ready to launch a kitchen makeover.

**Cleanup.** As you pack up a kitchen for renovation, get rid of rarely used items, donating to charity what is still in good condition.

**Sink.** Although the trend is to install multiple sinks, the Zantzingers prefer to live with one large rectangular sink, which left room for more counter space. Theirs is a white 28½-by-17-inch sink made of a heat-resistant clay.

**Pantry.** Instead of using kitchen cabinets for canned and packaged food, the Zantzingers built a walk-in pantry a few steps down a hall. "I'd rather open my cabinet doors and see stacks of beautiful plates than a stack of tomato cans," Amy says. Pantry shelves are organized by type of food: baking supplies, pasta and rice, cereal and kid-friendly treats.

**Microwave.** The microwave was placed on a middle shelf in the pantry because Amy

## More online

At [washingtonpost.com/home](http://washingtonpost.com/home):

**Chat Thursday at 11 a.m.** Architect Christopher Snowber, who designed the Zantzingers kitchen, joins staff writers Jura Koncius and Terri Sapienza for our weekly online Q&A about design and household advice.

**Galleries** See more photos of the Zantzingers kitchen, as well as a gallery of beautiful kitchens featured in past issues of The Post.

**Read past articles** on kitchen renovation by columnist Domenica Marchetti: Eight questions to ask before starting a project, and details of a kitchen transformation in a 1764 Frederick County farmhouse.

**Twitter** Follow @JuraKoncius for home and design news, observations and photos.

doesn't often use it and finds it a clunky eyesore.

**Countertop.** The family chose white marble for the counters, eschewing the dark granite that adorns many of today's trophy kitchens. They like the look of a white surface because it lightens up a room and develops a patina over time. Because marble is porous and stains easily, the family is careful to quickly

clean up spills and always use cutting boards.

**Kitchenware.** The completion of a renovation is a good time to treat yourself to some classic new kitchenware. Amy shopped Williams-Sonoma for white organic waffle-weave hand towels, three sizes of Siena glass tumblers and Apilco 12-inch porcelain plates.

— Jura Koncius

## INSIDE THE ZANTZINGER KITCHEN

**Cabinets:** Custom-made from poplar by the Master's Woodshop in Hagerstown, Md.

**Countertops:** White Carrara Select Marble.

**Sink:** Rohl Allia model in Fireclay.

**Faucet:** Rohl Perrin & Rowe Bridge.

**Table:** Counter-height table from Second Empire Furniture.

**Stools:** Crate and Barrel's Village (\$249) 24-inch black counter stools.

**Hardware:** Restoration Hardware's Lugarno eight-inch pulls in nickel, Baldwin Hardware's Dominion 1¼-inch knobs in nickel.

**Lantern:** Paul Ferrante wrought-iron design from John Rosselli in the District.

**Floors:** The reclaimed fir floors are salvaged and remilled roof rafters from an old Georgetown house, by Atlas Floors in Gaithersburg.

**Paint:** Benjamin Moore's Cloud White for walls and trim. Farrow & Ball's Light Blue for cabinet base coat. Cabinet faux finish by Marion Del Priore Studio.

### APPLIANCES

**Range:** Wolf 48-inch Pro Range with six burners and griddle.

**Dishwasher:** Bosch, 24 inches wide.

**Refrigerator:** Sub-Zero, 36 inches wide with double drawers.

**Freezer:** Sub-Zero, 27 inches wide with double drawers.