

DAVID DUPICAN/LEVERAGING

A pattern of success

The deft combination of materials, colors, and textures gives this remodeled kitchen pizzazz.

■ "I love vibrant colors from an earthy palette," says interior designer Catherine Macfee of Orinda, California. Her warm-toned aesthetic is exemplified in this kitchen, where the floor and the backsplash include rows of tumbled marble interspersed with accent tiles. The remodel balances traditional features—white-paneled cabinetry, limestone floor tiles, and beaded wainscoting—with contemporary elements such as concrete counters and stainless steel appliances.

The kitchen's eggplant-colored concrete counters make the boldest contemporary statement. The custom-designed surface includes precast openings for undermounted sinks and

a cooktop. The top of the slender island cantilevers on one side, creating a place to pull up a stool for snacks.

The cabinetry on the back wall combines solid-paneled doors with glass doors and open shelves, on which owners Joanna and Ken Dawson display their collection of colorful crockery.

• **Design:** Macfee & Associates Interior Design, Orinda, CA (510/254-2600)

• **Counters:** Buddy Rhodes, San Francisco (415/641-8070)

• **Tiles and installation:** Rhodes; Stile Italiano, San Francisco (415/255-5943); and Waterworks, San Francisco (415/431-7160)

• **Cabinets:** Ultracraft Company (800/262-4046)





THE 13x15-FT. KITCHEN successfully combines traditional cabinets and beaded paneling with sleek stainless-steel appliances, concrete counters and truly distinctive custom tile work.



BREAKING DOWN WALLS OPENED UP the once-dark kitchen to light and views from the well-windowed dining area and living room.

OPENING UP

The demolition plan called for taking out the walls that cut off the kitchen from the main living space. One of the most significant changes was slicing an 8-ft.-long stretch of wall that was shared by the kitchen and living room down to counter-height, creating a peninsula that links the two rooms and opens up the view.

Reshaping the kitchen. The kitchen itself was transformed into a U-plan by angling closets and appliances into the corners. New connections were made between the kitchen and the dining area and great room, two spaces already lined with windows and sliding glass doors that lead out to the patio and take advantage of the view.

New light. Even before the walls came down, Macfee was planning for all the natural light that would flood the newly remodeled space from the perimeter of the house. In the kitchen, she balanced that daylight with a 4x4-ft. skylight in the center of the room and pumped up the ambient illumination in the room with canister lights in the



tiles in updated earth tones—plum, moss, chocolate, sage and oatmeal—adds a playful element to the classic limestone field tiles on the floor and rough-hewn marble squares above the counter. One of the headaches of the project, according to the

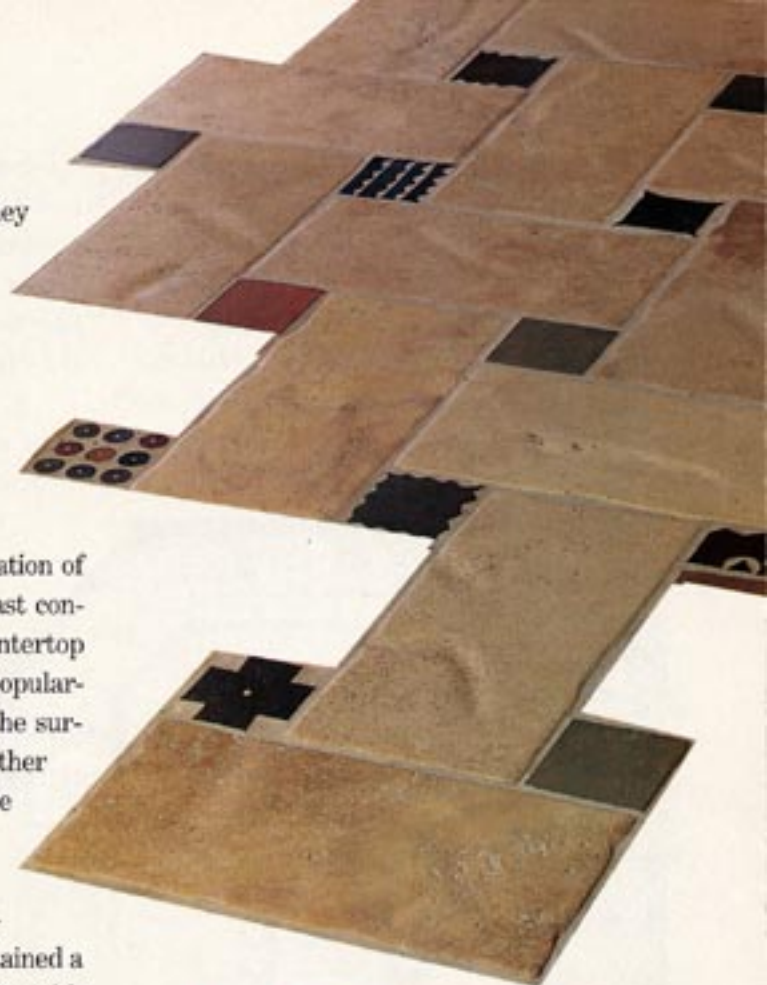


THE DESIGNER HELPED tie the kitchen and living room together by having the new tile in the kitchen echo the stone of the existing chimney, visible on the far side of the new breakfast peninsula.

designer, was waiting for the accent tiles to arrive. Because they were being made by a potter on the East Coast, “We didn’t know exactly what we were getting until it came,” Macfee recalls.

Unusual counters. Macfee worked with Buddy Rhodes, an artisan based in San Francisco, on the design and fabrication of the counter, which is made of precast concrete—not the most common countertop material but one that’s gaining in popularity. The slightly textured effect of the surface was achieved by pressing rather than pouring the material into the forms. While it must be sealed periodically, the countertop is highly durable and resists scratching and scorching. The concrete is stained a warm eggplant color, coordinating with trim found throughout the house. The stain is integral (the pigment is mixed into the concrete rather than applied to the surface), so as it wears over time, it will develop an interesting patina that complements the aged look of the cabinets and tile.

Although stainless-steel appliances are often thought of as very contemporary, in this case, their soft silver tone acts as a neutral hue, better suited to the color scheme of the room than the usual white or black. It also adds a bit of an industrial



THE STONE AND TILE floor is durable and low-maintenance. On the downside, it’s cold and tends to be noisy.

edge to the mix of natural materials of stone and wood in a final collaborative expression of the homeowners’ contrasting styles. ❖

For more information, see “Where to Find It,” on page 97.

Getting Ready to Remodel

To say the least, remodeling your kitchen can be extremely disruptive to your family’s routine. But with a little foresight and planning, you can function quite well for the duration of the project. We’ve taken some National Association of the Remodeling Industry guidelines for homeowners about to undertake a kitchen remodel and added a few of our own.

Before the project starts:

- **Pack up your kitchen goods.** Even if you’re only remodeling a part of the kitchen, you’re better off packing up everything and moving it to another part of the house. This will give you access to these items if you need them, make it easier to clean cabinets that have been near ground zero and save you from having to wash the plaster dust off every dish when the job is done.

- **Label each of the boxes with its exact contents.** This small step will prevent a frantic search for any item needed during the job.

- **Put aside indispensable items.** These basics include coffee, coffeemaker and filters; can opener; cutting board and knives; frying pans; microwave oven; utensils; paper plates and cups; and herbs and spices.

- **Remember to maintain access to a refrigerator.** You might have to move your refrigerator to another room in the house or into the garage.

- **Designate a sink for meal preparation and cleanup.** A large laundry sink works well for these tasks or you may even be able to pull your old sink with a section of countertop and hook it up temporarily—L.P.C.