

This kitchen features Shaker-style, flush-inset cabinetry painted in Dove and Ocean. The countertop is Colonial Ivory with a polished finish.

BY KATHERINE P. COX

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHAKER HILL GRANITE AND DOMUS BUILDERS

Thoughtful Design and Functionality

SHAKER HILL GRANITE AND DOMUS BUILDERS CREATE
A FAMILY'S PERFECT KITCHEN





When Lyme homeowner Sarah and her family were redoing the kitchen and other spaces in their house, she gave it a lot of thought, knew exactly what she wanted, and had rough sketches in hand when she consulted with her contractor, Domus custom builders in Hanover, and her cabinet designer, John Napsey at Shaker Hill Granite Company in Enfield.

“I wanted a really practical space, space for entertaining, and space for my busy family. We’re in the kitchen a lot,” Sarah says. She credits Bruce Williamson at Domus and John at Shaker Hill with helping her design her perfect space. “They kept saying that design is the most important part, so it’s worth putting the time into it. So while it looks beautiful, it’s also extremely functional. There’s nothing we would change.”

Details Make a Kitchen Work Well

Sarah designed her kitchen around the way she cooks and her family’s lifestyle. There’s what she calls the business end of the kitchen and what she calls the kids’ end. “My main workstation is at the end of the island that has a compost bin on one side with cutting boards below that and on the other side knives in the top drawer and trash and recycling. Everything you need (to cook) is there.”

Opposite: The beauty of the room is enhanced by the abundance of natural light.

This page: This small, centrally located wet bar enables the kitchen and living spaces to work together harmoniously.





Above:

Many homeowners combine cabinet types. Doors provide a classic look, and drawers can give the kitchen a more modern feel while handling bulky items with ease.

Opposite:

Dowels or dividers can be placed to accommodate whatever you wish to store and organize in drawers.

Sarah says Bruce helped her customize the kitchen around her family. One suggestion she originally pushed back against was the 90-degree seating configuration at one end of the island, which is a little over eight feet long. Instead of side-by-side seating on one side of the island, the stools are at 90 degrees at the end. “I couldn’t envision it, but I’m really glad we went with it because that’s where the kids sit, have breakfast, and do their homework. It’s a really practical layout. It’s the number-one thing I was really excited that we did because we use those seats all the time. It worked out really well. Bruce kept saying it’s so worth putting the thought into the design and functionality because it’s going to look great regardless.”

“We like to think about the flow of the kitchen. You want traffic to flow well,” Bruce says. “I like to think big picture, stepping back and looking at something, to start. After you get a direction, you start getting specific.” It’s the details that make a kitchen work well, he says.

“It’s always a pleasure to work with smart, caring people who are willing to participate in the design,” says Bruce. “We love working with people who are active in the design process because it is for them, after all. We can make recommendations based on general principles, but everybody has a way of thinking about their specific space.”



One example in the Lyme home are two large windows, one over the stove and the other over the sink, that bring in abundant light as well as views to the outside. “We have a great view,” Sarah says, “and I wanted to optimize it.” John, cabinetry design specialist at Shaker Hill, adds, “She put her range under a window so she can look outside while she’s cooking. You very seldom see that in people’s designs.” The windows over the stove are unobstructed by a unique hood that the homeowner likens to a glass canopy over the stove. “It’s almost dainty and draws your attention to the window.”

Smart Storage

Other features that she hadn’t thought about but ended up loving were putting the plates in drawers in the base cabinet instead of in upper cabinets. “John showed me drawers with dowels in them. They’re next to the dishwasher and super handy. The kids can empty the dishwasher and are not lifting plates above their heads. Those drawers that house flatware and plates and bowls are super handy. That was a great insight from John.”

Bruce says it’s important to get down to the details, from where cereals and crackers will go to where the pots and pans and utensils for various tasks will live. “You want




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to store at the point of first use. If you're at the range frying, you want to reach for a spatula nearby." Sarah was very focused about her storage needs and how what she needed to store was going to fit, John says. "She took my drawings and made notes on everything she was storing."

Shaker Hill works with seven cabinet manufacturers, four of whom offer custom designs. They work closely with their brands, and at Shaker Hill, John says, "you get a team that's very knowledgeable." Sarah came to him with preliminary drawings and concepts. "She had really worked through her design quite a bit." Using specialized design software, John was able to provide her with two- and three-dimensional drawings. The layout was tweaked and revised over multiple meetings and emails back and forth before the final design was determined and Sarah visited the shop to pick out cabinets, colors, countertops, and tile.

Function Meets Beauty

"Sarah had a pretty good idea of what she wanted for cabinets. She wanted an inset style and ended up going with the Cabico's custom Unique series." The upper cabinets are painted a creamy white called Dove, and the island is a slate-blue hue called Ocean. "That's a very popular color combination right now," John says. The granite countertop is Colonial Ivory with a polished finish. "We

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Choosing an accent color for the island adds interest and contrast and has been a popular trend for the past few years.

knew we wanted granite because it's more unique and varied than quartz and we wanted a warm feel," Sarah says. "The granite has blue-grays in it, which matches the island and it also has splotches of a coral color. It's very warm. We're very pleased."

For people considering remodeling their kitchen, Sarah says to focus on the design. "If you get the design right, the rest will follow." She also advises people going through the remodeling process to be patient and "don't go with the first idea. Listen to other ideas." Find a contractor that's going to really pay attention to the design "and sees the value in that," she says, and can offer suggestions and options. Work with people who have experience and knowledge in the field. Finally, "do some work on your own. Get the graph paper out and put in the time to move things around and see what it looks like so you have something in hand before going to the designer and contractor." ^{rw}

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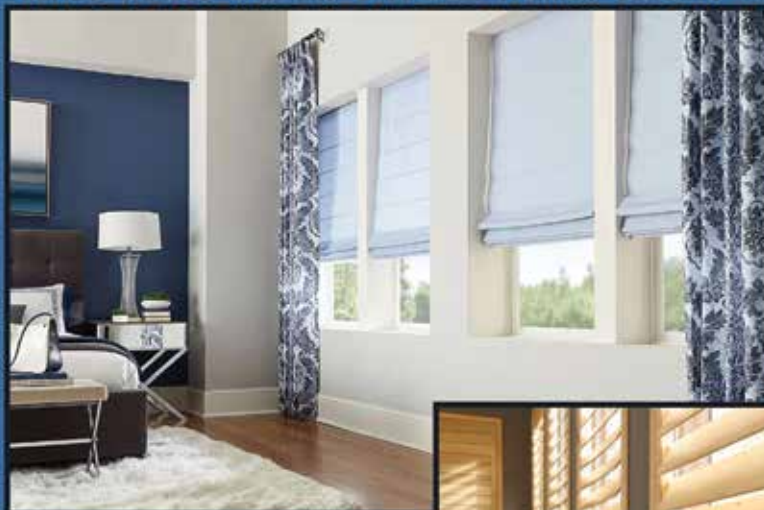


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