



THIS PHOTO: The kitchen's centerpiece is a 4x9-foot island made of cerused oak. Countertops throughout are Calacatta Gold marble. OPPOSITE: Matte-finish oversize subway tiles form a modern, understated backdrop for the room's bolder finishes.

great expectations



A coastal kitchen forges a fresh path with moody hues, modern finishes, and punchy patterned floor tile.

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TOP: Suspended over the island, this fixture is one of a pair of clustered porcelain-and-brass pendants that illuminate the primary work surface. “We wanted the look to be a little more ‘crafty,’” designer Cortney Bishop says. ABOVE: Unlacquered brass hardware and fixtures in a traditional style create a subtle design statement in a kitchen that pairs contemporary convenience with classic style.

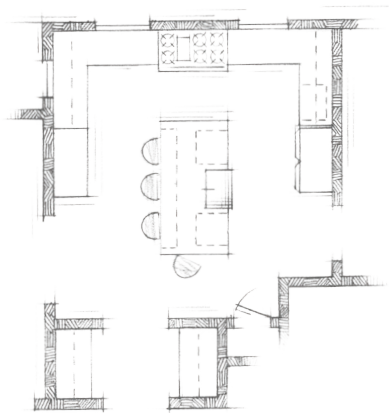
DREAMING OF A QUIET WEEKEND RETREAT ON KIAWAH ISLAND,

not far from their residence on the South Carolina mainland, a young couple envisioned a place with elbow room for their four children and a measure of tranquility for the whole family. The seaside property they eventually bought included a 1980s house that they hoped to refresh at some point—until their architect, Mark Maresca, proposed a more comprehensive plan.

“We convinced them that it could become a magical-looking Shingle-style house,” Maresca says. “Then we literally took down every interior wall and reconfigured all the spaces, including the kitchen.” The overall footprint of the house was unchanged, and the new kitchen was built in roughly the same place where the old one had been. But that space now forms an almost perfect square, where before “it had been kind of an awkward rectangle,” Maresca says. Though plenty roomy at 17×17½ feet, the new space was cleverly designed with a tight work triangle to minimize steps and enhance efficiency.

With the floor plan in place, interior designer Cortney Bishop layered materials, colors, and textures to give the room a fresh point of view. The resulting style is a little bit European, with simple forms, lots of texture, and high-contrast neutrals. “The owners didn’t want a lot of color,” Bishop says. But they made an exception for the encaustic cement floor tiles that the architect

the plan



It’s all about the view in this contemporary coastal kitchen, where windows and open shelves stand in for bulky upper cabinets. To avoid a storage shortfall, the design team installed floor-to-ceiling cabinetry along one wall and additional cabinetry above the built-in refrigerator for larger serving pieces and for seasonal items.



THIS PHOTO: Ample counter space, a fireclay apron-front sink, and two dishwashers—one at each end—make the island a workhorse. A wide opening to the breakfast nook welcomes sunlight and panoramic ocean views.

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proposed and she fell in love with. “I wanted to do a kitchen with that particular flooring pattern,” Bishop says. “Not many people would do that, but our clients were willing, and that really made this space the center of the house.”

Maresca designed the island and the perimeter cabinetry, including a towering range hood that complements the cabinets’ smoky hue. To supplement the cabinetry, the design team installed open shelves on two walls, providing visual relief—and an opportunity for display. “This kitchen was designed for efficiency,” Bishop says. “It has enough storage in base cabinets on all four walls so that open shelving could hold pretty things, instead of everyday needs that would have to be arranged there.” Visible behind the shelves are large-format white subway tiles. “What makes them an elegant choice is their matte finish,” Bishop says. “It’s different, more modern.”

A handsome French range in black sports brass knobs that echo the cabinets’ exposed hinges and elegant hardware. On either side of the range, large windows bring in plenty of sunlight to balance the room’s darker colors. It’s a picture-perfect scene—tranquil, stylish, and (thankfully) firmly rooted in the 21st century.

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DESIGNER INSIGHTS: MASTERING THE TRENDS

Creating a timeless look that still feels current is a delicate balancing act. Designer Cortney Bishop and architect Mark Maresca reveal which trends are worth embracing for the long haul.

- *Color and pattern.* Bye-bye, white kitchens: “They’ve been around too long,” Bishop says. “I think cozy and layered kitchens are more challenging but rich in storytelling and interest.”
- *Extra-tall ceilings.* For a sophisticated look, go taller and grander. (This kitchen’s ceilings are 10 feet high). “Of course, to complement the height, the scale of the space must be perfect,” Bishop says. “Otherwise, it’s like walking into a vault.”
- *Dramatic flooring.* The variety of available floor tiles especially—but not exclusively—for kitchen design has never been greater. “There are clay and encaustic-tile companies that are really creative, allowing us to be a bit more playful in our choices,” Bishop says. “Whether made domestically or in countries like Mexico and Morocco, the results can be handsome and definitely more colorful—individually cut tiles with original edges, not patterns cut from a sheet.”

ABOVE LEFT: No space is wasted. The 10-foot ceiling enabled architect Mark Maresca to provide storage for seldom-used items above the built-in refrigerator-freezer. A microwave drawer tucks into base cabinetry for a streamlined look. **OPPOSITE:** Suspended between windows, a custom blackened-bronze range hood makes a dramatic focal point. There are no privacy issues: The Roman shades can be pulled down for a cozy nighttime ambience.

