

A designer turns the tables on an outdated kitchen
WRITTEN BY CHRISTY WRIGHT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY IVAN HUNTER

a clean SLATE

"IT WAS STRAIGHT OUT OF THE '70s," says Vancouver-based designer Juli Hodgson when asked to recall the before look of her kitchen. Brown linoleum flooring and dated cabinets aside, Juli saw the potential of the 12- by 20-foot room and set about creating a sleek new space. "As well as an updated look, I wanted the kitchen to have



The counter-height table is multipurpose – a workplace to prepare food, a hub for casual family meals, a homework centre and the spot of choice for guests to enjoy a glass of wine.



“I see the kitchen as the hub of our house, and the table is definitely the gathering place”

ABOVE LEFT Open shelving is right at home beside an industrial-looking stainless-steel range. The shelves keep platters and large serving dishes within easy reach of the stovetop. ABOVE RIGHT With six children, three of whom live at home, the Hodgsons wanted a family-friendly kitchen. Here, big sis Adrienne, 19, tends to Eliza, who's five.

a casual dining area,” she says, perfect for hanging out, entertaining and family dinners with her husband and six children.

First on the agenda: gut the entire room. Since the kitchen had never been renovated, Juli was able to start from scratch. “I wouldn’t have to live with a renovation that reflected someone else’s taste,” she says. Because the house is about 80 years old with a traditional exterior, she wanted “something clean and modern for the kitchen, but not too modern for the house.”

With that in mind, the linoleum was replaced with oak flooring stained ebony for a warm but contemporary feel. To maximize storage space in the narrow room, Juli had



“I loved that the kitchen had never been renovated – I was able to start fresh”

custom full-height pantry-style cabinets installed. “Full-height cabinets are key in an organized kitchen,” she says. “They allow one place for dishes, another for spices, and another for food, so you don’t have to open six different doors to find something.” Because Juli wanted a casual spot in the kitchen to eat, she designed a counter-height wooden table for the centre of the space rather than

an island. “Islands hold less than people imagine,” she says. “I didn’t feel I was sacrificing storage by forgoing one.” As proof that there’s still a place for everything in her kitchen, Juli laughingly recalls the reaction of one of her daughter’s friends when she saw the new room: “She looked around and asked if we had a special room where we keep the knickknacks!” That spare look, reflected in stainless-steel appliances and contemporary Italian chrome stools, reinforces the room’s modern appeal yet still complements its welcoming feel. “I don’t think this is a country kitchen,” says Juli, “but it has a very casual charm that invites people to linger.” WHERE TO FIND IT, PAGE 224