



Kitchens command more square footage in our homes today, but bigger isn't always better. The 18x31-foot kitchen in The Designer Showhouse of New Jersey sprawled into a 13x30-foot breakfast room. Big, yes. Inviting and functional? Not particularly.

Julia Kleyman, a kitchen designer at Ulrich in Ridgewood, New Jersey, stepped in with a new, balanced layout that made better use of the square footage without sacrificing the wow factor. "We preserved the openness of the space and created a nice flow between the two rooms," she says.

"We took out everything—cabinets and flooring—but didn't move or build walls," she adds. Two islands, including a large trapezoid-shaped one, were replaced by a two-level 15x4 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot granite-top unit. ▶

A large, new island offers seating for six, with "Amsterdam Bar Stools" in blue from the Suzanne Kasler Collection for Hickory Chair.

A Bright Balance

A LOGICAL LAYOUT AND A PRETTY PALETTE BRING HARMONY TO TWO BIG ROOMS

WRITTEN BY AMY ELBERT
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN BESSLER & PETER RYMWID
 PRODUCED BY JO'ANN McVICKER



“WE PRESERVED THE OPENNESS OF THE SPACE AND CREATED A NICE FLOW BETWEEN THE TWO ROOMS.” —kitchen designer Julia Kleyman



While definitely big, the new island is in keeping with the scale of the room, and its shape and center position introduce a sense of balance. The two-level surface diminishes its mass, Kleyman adds, and provides seating for up to six people. Plus, the sink is on the lower side, so dirty dishes are hidden from anyone in the breakfast room.

White-paneled cabinets on the perimeter extend to the ceiling, where they are trimmed with crown molding. The height provides a clean line from floor to ceiling—another trick for creating a calming visual unity. Lighted upper cabinets with glass doors break the monotony of a wall of solid cabinet doors, and the cherry base of the island is finished with a dark glaze for contrast.

“The white perimeter cabinets keep the space light and bright, and the cherry anchors the island,” Kleyman says. A mantel-style range hood complements the traditional architecture of the house and provides a place to display platters and colorful accessories. Framed botanical prints hang on the backsplash, attached with removable adhesive hooks.

A previously blank knee wall between the kitchen and breakfast room was put to good use with a run of granite-topped base cabinets, creating a convenient staging area for serving in the breakfast room and providing a logical connection between the rooms.

Because the kitchen is so large, Kleyman added two sinks (one in the island and another in a corner by the stove) and two dishwashers (one by each sink). ▶

Three nickel-banded pendants from Lauren by Ralph Lauren for Circa illuminate the kitchen and visually fill spatial volume above the island. The side-by-side built-in stainless-steel refrigerator and freezer, dishwashers, and the 48-inch dual-fuel range are Electrolux appliances.





The breakfast room ceiling is Pratt & Lambert's "Lovebird" blue, a color repeated in the Hickory Chair fabric on host chairs and valances. White Chippendale-style side chairs and table provide a crisp contrast with the dark wood floor. A cherry Hickory Chair hutch with a white interior holds glass and dishware in the kitchen.

A new tile floor in a warm wheat color with polished diamond-shaped accents was laid on the diagonal in the kitchen, and the wood floor in the breakfast room was refinished with a rich walnut stain.

New York interior designer Tony Manning chose a winning blue-and-white scheme for both rooms. The vaulted breakfast room ceiling was painted blue with white beams and trim, visually lowering it and making the room feel more intimate, he explains.

Simple valances (shaped to mimic the tops of the side chair backs) and white cafe curtains add softness without blocking views. The taupe hues in the valance fabric repeat those in the kitchen tile floor, Manning notes, "and make the two spaces really flow together." ❏

Kitchen designer: Julia Kleymen **Interior designer:** Tony Manning
 For more information, see sources on page 104

