



A KITCHEN THAT GLOWS

A Franklin Lakes homeowner learned from her fashion career how details matter. She put that insight to work in the elevated redesign of an indispensable room.

Design by **Aparna Vijayan, Ulrich Inc.**
Photography by **Dove Photography**
Text by **Donna Rolando**





For a modern style that's both functional and alluring, designer Aparna Vijayan gave everything a place, including a dog feeding station built into the cabinetry. Golden highlights, which bring out the richness of wood cabinets, are reflected in the slab quartz.



This page, top: While the kitchen is designed for easy care with minimal grout lines, the bar is the exception, with mosaic tiles from the Jazz Glass Collection (Artistic Tile). This page, bottom: Top appliances and plenty of them satisfy a family with two cooks. Opposite: Designing with details makes a wow out of a white oak table paired with satin-brass elements on the chairs and a gold-toned chandelier.



Returning to the scene of her design some 24 years later, Aparna Vijayan of Ridgewood's Ulrich Inc. no doubt felt a sense of déjà vu when tasked once again with infusing rich wood tones into a Franklin Lakes kitchen. But differences trump similarities in this transformation, which at the homeowners' request leaves traditional décor (cherry cabinetry) behind for a modern gut-job reno completed in May of 2025.

"I have a background in fashion merchandising," says the wife. "Everything to me is in the details. And I wanted it to look special but at the same time to be user-friendly. My husband loves to cook, and we wanted all the best appliances. Still, I wanted it to look fresh, clean and modern."

Often the wife would introduce research-driven design ideas, she says, like the glam in the Kuzco Alora pendants and gold-toned chandelier, as well as the backless island chairs from Perigold's Noir. Through it all, she found Ulrich "a great partner." It could have been a challenge to harmonize the newest design with the rest of the six-bedroom, postmodern home. But kudos to the rich brown stain of the rift-cut, white oak cabinets for a significant link to the home's flooring.

Supersized for storage, the New York-style cabinets grant the homeowners' wish for bespoke furniture charm, which Vijayan derives from textural elements like reeded doors and drawers. Taking it to the max, she also elevated the Wolf stove with stylish clear legs. Decorative glass and LED lighting further enhance the look, while a two-tone metal hood from Amore wows with pops of gold that resurface in bar shelving, honey-bronze hardware, island pendants and a chandelier.

Balancing the brown, Calacatta Caldia quartz immerses subtle gold veins in soft white on the backsplash, countertops and waterfall edge island. For further contrast, kitchen flooring meets the prime directive of easy care with large-format porcelain that mimics snow-white onyx.

The bar is both artsy and utilitarian, sporting what Vijayan calls a "nice, reflective quality" of mixed mosaic glass from Tambourine Traps Moonbeam and an appliance garage to tuck away eyesores.

"I think it came out exactly as we planned," says the wife. "It has an updated vibe with details that you don't see in everybody's kitchen."