

# Farm Meets Function

Updating a farmhouse kitchen for today

BY BARBARA CARLIN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREG PREMURU



**L**iving in a rambling farmhouse that dates back to 1688 brings with it a sense of responsibility—especially when it comes to renovating. “We were dying to have a more attractive and more functional kitchen,” says Paul Barclay, who owns this Boxford, Massachusetts, home with his wife, Heidi. “But we weren’t sure how to do that and still stay true to the history of the house.” Certainly the yellow laminate countertops, royal blue cabinets, and peeling linoleum floor—remnants of the 1960s—weren’t worth saving. And though the 20-by-20-foot space was plenty big enough, something really needed to be done about an awkwardly positioned structural column that divided the space in half. “It was like having two dysfunctional rooms,” says Heidi, who also wanted to open up the room to the backyard with its views of the farm. An animal lover, she has turned the farm into a haven for everything from chickens and geese to emus and alpacas.

With the couple’s concerns in mind, local architect Benjamin Nutter transformed the space while keeping structural changes to a minimum, bumping out a wall to create a small 10-by-10-foot dining alcove and replacing the awkward column with a structural beam concealed in the ceiling. He also fully exposed the original ceiling timbers and stripped the brick cooking hearth, which had been covered with paint. Pro-style stainless steel appliances added modern efficiency, while traditional Shaker-style cabinets helped the kitchen blend in with the rest of the house. Says Heidi, “Even though we have 15 rooms, we spend most of our time in our beautiful new kitchen. I love just sitting at the table sipping coffee and watching the sheep graze.”

*Exposed ceiling beams and a massive cooking fireplace (just showing, right) help tie this new kitchen into the rest of the historic farmhouse. Shaker-style cabinets, a honed granite sink and countertops, and reclaimed hardwood floors add to the time-honored feeling.*



## The Plan

Rearranging work areas and adding a dining alcove created a more functional layout.



**ABOVE:** The kitchen was shoddily built, and a structural column smack in the middle made the space seem like two separate rooms.

**LEFT:** The new floor plan unified the space and opened up a dark corner with a 100-square-foot dining alcove framed by glazing. It has a vaulted ceiling and large windows overlooking the backyard.

## WHAT THEY DID

**1 GUTTED AND OPENED UP THE ROOM:** The old 20-by-20-foot kitchen was taken down to the studs, and the structural column in the cooking island was replaced with an engineered-wood beam hidden in the ceiling.

**2 BUMPED OUT TO CREATE A DINING ALCOVE:** A 10-by-10-foot addition at the back corner of the kitchen allowed for an informal eating area.

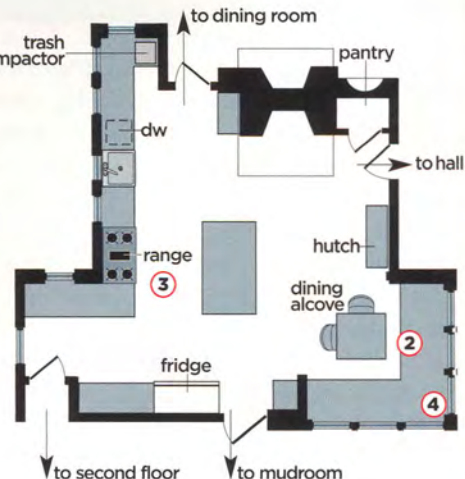
**3 ADDED AN ISLAND AND EXPANDED STORAGE/WORK SPACE:** Ganging the range and sink along one wall made room for a large island with lots of undercounter storage and a big work surface. Inadequate open shelving was replaced with custom-built Shaker-style cabinetry. A little-used second sink was removed in favor of more cabinet space.

**4 LET IN MORE LIGHT:** Six new double-hung windows were added at the dining alcove to bring in light and garden views. Existing windows were replaced and repositioned along the sink wall, and one was added.

BEFORE



AFTER



# The Details

Old-style touches make the new kitchen look like it's been there for years.



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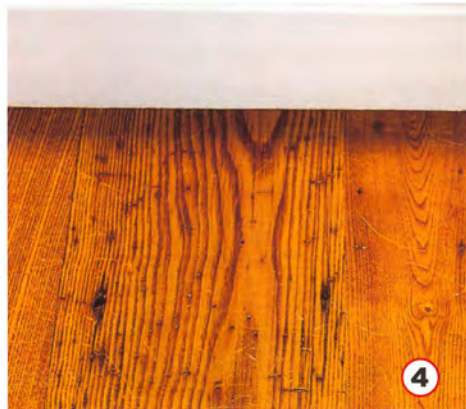
**1 BANQUETTE SEATING** in the dining alcove also provides hidden storage for table linens.

**2 A CUSTOM-BUILT PAINTED HUTCH** shows off a collection of antique pewter on top while concealing china and serving pieces down below.

**3 SHAKER-STYLE UPPER CABINETS** were fitted with handblown restoration glass to echo the antique windows in the rest of the house.

**4 THE SALVAGED CHESTNUT FLOORBOARDS** conceal a modern amenity: radiant floor heating.

**5 THE FARMHOUSE SINK**, carved from a single piece of black granite and then honed, provides a striking contrast to the mottled-green granite backsplash and countertop that surround it.



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For more kitchen design ideas, trends, and products go to [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com) or America Online. Keyword: This Old House and select Kitchen in the Know-how section.

**ON THE JOB**  
pp. 18-24

*These Boots Are Made for Working—*

**Featured boot:** Pro Titan work boot, Timberland, Stratham, NH; [www.timberland.com](http://www.timberland.com). **Kevin O'Connor:** Timberland Pro; [www.timberland.com](http://www.timberland.com). **Norm Abram:** Dunham leather oxford; 800-843-2668; [www.dunhamfits.com](http://www.dunhamfits.com). **Roger Cook:** Dunham work boot; [www.dunhamfits.com](http://www.dunhamfits.com). **Tom Silva:** Carolina work boot; [www.workbootsonline.com](http://www.workbootsonline.com). **Richard Trethewey:** Herman's Survivor Boot; [www.hermansportgoods.com](http://www.hermansportgoods.com). **Our thanks to:** Red Wing Brands of America, Red Wing Shoe Company, Red Wing, MN; 651-388-8211; [www.redwingshoes.com](http://www.redwingshoes.com).

*Laser-Guided Saws—*

**Circular saw:** 7¼-in. model #CSB140LZ, Ryobi Technologies, Inc., Anderson, SC; 800-323-4615; [www.ryobitools.com](http://www.ryobitools.com).

*Smart Windows—*

**Andersen Windows,** Bayport, MN; 651-264-5150; [www.andersenwindows.com](http://www.andersenwindows.com). **Research Frontiers Incorporated,** Woodbury, NY; 888-773-7337; [www.refr-spd.com](http://www.refr-spd.com). **Velux America,** 800-888-3589; [www.velux-america.com](http://www.velux-america.com).

*Older May Be Wiser—*

Our thanks to real estate guru Thomas Lucier; [www.thomaslucier.com](http://www.thomaslucier.com).

*Try Before You Buy—*

**Maytag Corporation,** Newton, IA; 641-792-7000; [www.maytag.com](http://www.maytag.com). **Best Buy,** Minneapolis, MN; 888-237-8289; [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com).

*Off-the-Wall Color Trick—*

**Color samples:** Benjamin Moore Paints, Montvale, NJ; [www.benjaminmoore.com](http://www.benjaminmoore.com).

**HOUSE CALLS:  
FARM MEETS FUNCTION**  
pp. 26-30

**Architect:** Benjamin Nutter, Benjamin Nutter Associates, Topsfield, MA; 978-887-9836. **General contractor:** Steve Nutter & Rollie Cognac, Topsfield, MA; 978-887-3434. **Cabinetmaker:** Carman

Woodworking, Ipswich, MA; 978-356-4277. **Restoration glass for cabinetry:** Shards, Peabody, MA; 978-977-0460. **Honed granite countertop and sink:** Adrich Stone, Walpole, MA; 781-762-6111. **Refrigerator:** Sub-Zero Freezer Company, Madison, WI; 800-222-7820; [www.subzero.com](http://www.subzero.com). **Range, dishwasher, and trash compactor:** Viking Range Corp., Greenwood, MS; 877-834-8222; [www.vikingrange.com](http://www.vikingrange.com). **Antique chestnut flooring:** Carlisle Flooring, Stoddard, NH; 800-595-9663;



*On the Job, p. 18: Guess which TOH show guy puts on which boots to go to work.*

[www.wideplankflooring.com](http://www.wideplankflooring.com).

**Recessed lighting:** Lightolier, Fall River, MA; 508-679-8131; [www.lightolier.com](http://www.lightolier.com). **Windows:** Brosco, Brockway-Smith Co., Andover, MA; 978-475-7100; [www.brosco.com](http://www.brosco.com).

**ASK THIS OLD HOUSE**  
pp. 32-39

**Renovation plates:** Delta faucets; 800-345-3358; [www.deltafaucet.com](http://www.deltafaucet.com). **Sleeve anchors:** Dynabolt Sleeve Anchors, Red Head Anchoring Systems, ITW Inc., Michigan City, IN; 800-348-3231; [www.ramset-redhead.com](http://www.ramset-redhead.com). **Spray lubricant:** Slipit Industries, Inc., Highland, NY; 845-691-8400; [www.slipit.com](http://www.slipit.com). **Marine-grade polyurethane sealant:** 3M Marine Adhesive/Sealant 5200; 888-364-3577; [www.3M.com](http://www.3M.com). **Subfloor screw system:** Squeeeeeek No More fastening system, O'Berry Enterprises Inc., Crystal Lake, IL; 800-459-8428; [www.squeaknomore.com](http://www.squeaknomore.com).

**WALL-TO-WALL STYLE**  
pp. 42-46

**For more information:** The Carpet and Rug Institute, Dalton, GA; 706-278-3176; [www.carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com).

**TALKING SHOP:  
FILES AND RASPS**  
pp. 49-52

**Craftsman files:** Craftsman Hand Tools, Sears, Roebuck and Co., Hoffman Estates, IL; 800-377-7414; [www.sears.com](http://www.sears.com). **Simonds files:** Simonds International, Fitchburg, MA; 800-343-1616; [www.simondsinternational.com](http://www.simondsinternational.com).

**Nicholson files:** Cooper Hand Tools, Raleigh, NC; 919-781-7200; [www.cooperhandtools.com](http://www.cooperhandtools.com). **Collar files:** Tome Feteira, AngloAmerican Tools; 800-223-8600; [www.angloamericantools.com](http://www.angloamericantools.com).

