



LOS ANGELES, CA

# Gothic light

Instead of updating their 1960s kitchen, these homeowners and their architect turned back the hands of time.



before

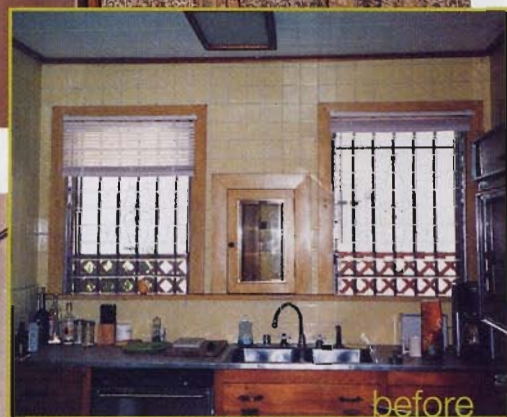
# before & after

PRODUCED BY COLETTE SCANLON ORTIZ PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN COOLIDGE WRITTEN BY SUSAN KLEINMAN STYLED BY CHAR HATCH LANGOS

Blender and floral napkins: Williams-Sonoma.

**Inset** Before the renovation, the kitchen was dingy, cramped, and outdated. **This page** Now, period details and modern appliances combine to create a new kitchen that is both efficient and elegant.

before & after



**T**he Realtor called this house ‘Bavarian-style,’ says homeowner Lydia Bottegoni. “It’s not really Spanish and not really English. We just thought it was whimsical and fun.”

The kitchen was another story. It had been rebuilt in the 1960s and it had all the hallmarks of an amateur job: “The cabinets,” says Bottegoni’s partner, Kristen Trattner, “were actually made of plywood. We knew the second we saw the place that we would have to rip the kitchen out.”

**Top** Brettler added a third window between the original two to bring in additional light. **Above right** Fleur de lis fabric lines a leaded glass-front cabinet for a heraldic touch. **Above far right** Although the neighborhood is safe, the former owner had installed gates and bars across the windows, making the space feel grimly cheerless.



“I kept having to remind them,” jokes the architect, “that we were building a kitchen, not a cathedral.”

It took the couple two years, however, to decide exactly what they wanted to do with the space. “We kept looking at new kitchens to get ideas,” says Bottegoni, “but nothing looked like it would fit in the house. And we met with a lot of architects who wanted to expand the space by knocking out beautiful built-in bookcases and

original details in the living room. The big challenge was to find a way to redo the kitchen without sacrificing the original character.” Finally, she and Trattner met architect Linda

Brettler, who understood their desire to play with—instead of against—the 1927 home’s quirky charms.

To expand the kitchen without cutting into the breakfast room or living room, Brettler suggested relocating the adjacent laundry room. The washer and dryer were relocated to a rarely used back bedroom closet, ➤



thus freeing up more space for the kitchen. In order to keep the kitchen's look consistent with the old-world charm that attracted the owners to the house in the first place, they hired furniture maker Brian Hughes to build their worktable and cabinets.

"Lydia had given me this coffee-table book about the English architect

Pugin," says Trattner. "Basically, we used it like the Sears catalog. I would point to a picture and ask 'can you build me that?' and 'can you make me that?' After a while, that book became the theme of the entire project."

"I kept having to remind them," jokes Brettler, "that this was a kitchen we were building, not a cathedral."

**"The triumph of this project," explains one of the homeowners, is that the kitchen fits in perfectly with the rest of the house."**

**Inset** The washer and dryer that once took up valuable space have been moved to a seldom-used back bedroom closet. **Above** Brettler transformed a former closet into a storage nook shaped like a cathedral window. The spice rack, built in a niche between wall studs, has wrought-iron catchers to keep spices from toppling down. A six-burner stove was also added. See *Resource Guide* for details.

That didn't stop the team, though, from putting in stained-glass windows, arched nooks, and exposed ceiling beams. Trattner found the ideal ancient-looking tiles while searching on the Internet and purchased vintage lighting fixtures from the eBay.com Web site. Together, Trattner, Bottegoni, and Brettler chose historical fabrics to enhance the overall neo-Gothic feel of the room.

**You don't need to bump out a wall or enlarge the footprint of your house to expand a kitchen's utility.**

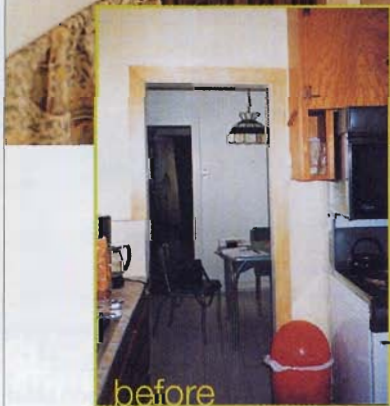
Architect Linda Brettler made the most of every inch in this 150-square-foot kitchen with the following tricks:

- **Use all available wall space.** In this kitchen, cabinets line all the walls for storage.
- **Keep the floor clear.** Understanding that an island isn't the right choice for every kitchen, the owners chose an elegant but unobtrusive worktable, instead.
- **Bring dead space to life.** Like this room, many spaces have unused nooks behind walls that can be broken down to create more storage or breathing room.

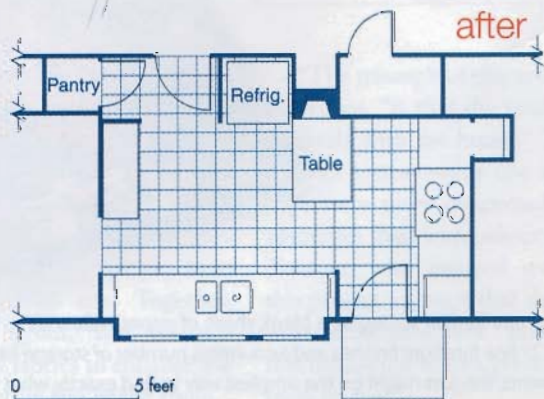
"The triumph of this project," says Bottegoni, "is that the kitchen fits in perfectly with the house." There was another victory—this one accidental: "We were more concerned with the aesthetics than with practicality," says Trattner, who enjoyed working on this project so much that she enrolled in architecture school. "But ironically, this turned out to be a great kitchen to cook in, too." ➤

Bowls and dishes: Pottery Barn.

# before & after



after



**Inset** A nondescript doorway formerly separated the equally nondescript kitchen from the breakfast room beyond. **Top** Now, an angled archway connects the two spaces. Leaded-glass cabinets show off a collection of dishes and glassware. Using the same tiles (from Historic Tile of Glendale, California) on the kitchen and breakfast-room floors, helps create a feeling of continuity between the two spaces.

**Right** Linda Brettler almost doubled the work space in the kitchen without changing the footprint of the house. By knocking down walls that concealed unused nooks, she created more storage for the new kitchen without sacrificing floor space. 