



Ready, Set, Decorate!

If you missed the 2016 Wellesley Kitchen and Home Tour, or even if you didn't, and want fresh ideas for a new and inspired look in your home, we've asked the experts and homeowners for their best tips. Happy decorating!

Putting the New in the Old

While historical homes add character and charm to Wellesley's streets, historical kitchens are often a less admired design feature. Such was the case for homeowners Tracy and Greg Simko, who were happy with their Dutch Colonial home built in 1906, but not the tiny kitchen that came with it. So they decided to embark on a massive kitchen renovation, gutting the first floor of the house and adding an addition that more than doubled the size of the original kitchen. "One very important thing we learned right at the beginning is that a renovation of an old home requires a contractor with experience," says Tracy Simko. "Because it's an entirely different renovation process than a new house. It requires a different depth of knowledge."

Once the new space was framed, with walls removed, entrances enlarged, and windows expanded, the homeowners were able to start thinking about design details. They envisioned a neutral look, with tonal details and lots of texture. For assistance, they turned to Pierre Matta, designer and principal at Newton Kitchens and Design. Matta has experience incorporating modern kitchens into traditional homes and he advises homeowners: "Sometimes people go overboard. They put in lots of high-gloss, flat-paneled painted cabinetry thinking that will make it a contemporary kitchen. But that doesn't necessarily go well with a traditional home." Instead, Matta advises introducing raw, natural finishes that help to marry old and new. In the Simko's home, this can be seen in the reclaimed walnut base and the marble-topped island, two materials that help smooth the transition between classic and modern.

Matta also advises homeowners to pay attention to the details. The Simko's upper cabinets feature circle inlays (as opposed to more standard square dividers) which serve to soften the look of the cabinetry, while just below, a glass backsplash feels sleek and modern. The gas



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fireplace separating the kitchen from the breakfast nook has sharp lines, but it is surrounded by inlaid stone. And while the cabinets are painted white, it's a soft white so as not to contrast too heavily with the home's wooden tones.

"We live in New England. "It's a traditional place," says Matta. "But mixing modern elements in is totally fine."

Think Outside the Box

If anyone knows how to build a kitchen, it's Peter Holland, owner of Riverstone Custom Builders, who has built 29 homes—both spec and custom builds. Holland and his wife, Laura, approached the building of a home for their own family with a lot of experience and high standards. They wanted to break away from the standard new construction kitchen and create a unique space with a homey feel. To achieve this, Holland honed in on unique materials that would provide warmth and visual interest. "I like materials with a story and a history," says Holland. "It makes it a lot of fun."

After sourcing materials from his network of suppliers, Holland started mixing them together to create a visually stunning scheme. Running the length of his kitchen and family room are beautifully tex-



PHOTOS BY ERIC BARRY / COURTESY OF RIVERSTONE CUSTOM BUILDERS, LLC

ured wooden beams that have been reclaimed three different times, starting in an old mill in Rhode Island before being put into service transporting old Victorian homes. The kitchen island surface is Zimbabwe black granite that was scoured with a machine to achieve a wood finish. Holland spotted it one day at a supplier and has never seen it anywhere since. The cabinetry enclosing the sink is made of worm wood, which, true to its name, achieves its texture when eaten by worms. The hood over the range is constructed of reclaimed wood. Oversized pulls grace the cabinets, thick glass light fixtures hang from