

# Remodeled for a new point of view

Brightened spaces and light wood finishes harmonize with stainless steel in a contemporary Pacific Northwest kitchen

In almost every way, the house designed by noted local architect Ralph Anderson on Seattle's Mercer Island is a model of Pacific Northwest style, with lodgelike cathedral ceilings, tongue-and-groove cedar paneling inside and out, and picture windows gazing westward across the water.

But in 1972, when the dwelling was built, America's love affair with the kitchen as gourmet gathering place was still in its infancy. So when a couple who cook extravagantly and entertain frequently bought the house four years ago, its kitchen fell far short of their needs.

Tucked away at the back of the home, the kitchen was "small and dark, with no views at all," recalls the owner. A 6'x8' laundry room occupied one corner of the space, which was 18 feet long and only 9½ feet wide at its narrowest. Chocolate-brown paneling, skimpy windows and an 8-foot ceiling furthered the claustrophobic feeling. And a wall separated the kitchen from the dining area, blocking vistas of Lake Washington through the picture window in the adjacent living room.

Its 8-foot ceiling now raised to the rafters, this remodeled Washington State kitchen makes the most of Seattle-dreary days with skylights and large new windows. The room's original chocolate-brown cedar paneling was lightened to a "driftwood" tone with an overglaze—a semi-transparent stain made of standard paints and thinners. SieMatic steel drawer pulls echo the finish of professional appliances. Gray marble counters and backsplash have a matte surface.





The remodeled kitchen is given a whole new role as part of a contemporary "great room" that subtly maintains the woodsy vernacular style of the home's original architecture.

**Below, left: The kitchen's western wall was removed, opening the room to the dining area. Below, center: A Traulsen refrigerator and above-counter cabinets occupy the corner once given over to a laundry room. Opposite, bottom left: Open Metro shelving enhances the light, spacious look.**

**I**nterior designer Pamela Pearce and architect Luther Hintz have brought the kitchen up to more contemporary standards, filling it with professional-quality appliances and plenty of light. They added space by moving the laundry room to the basement and removing the kitchen's western wall to open it to the dining area. To enhance the new sense of space and light, Pearce confined tall storage units to the interior wall.

The ceiling was raised to the rafters. Eight skylights flanking the 18-foot-high ridgeline work in concert with new, larger windows along the south wall to pull abundant light into what is now a "great room" kitchen.

Once the space was reconfigured, there remained one challenge, says Pearce: "stripping the dark paneling down to a livable color." A warm "driftwood" hue completes a palette that harmonizes with brushed stainless steel appliances, the wooded setting, bleached oak floors and cabinets and gray marble counters.

The kitchen renovation cost just over \$50,000, a not inconsequential sum for one room. But given that the new kitchen/dining area is now the home's central gathering space, it has surely been money well spent.

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For further information, see *Buying Guide*, page 114



## CLIPBOARD

- Removing a wall shared with an adjacent dining area visually expands a small kitchen without adding square footage.
- Stainless steel and natural wood are harmonious when the wood is finished in light or grayed tones.
- To lighten dark-finished woodwork, apply a semitransparent overglaze blended from paint and thinner.
- Open, restaurant-style Metro shelving creates efficient, readily accessible storage without constricting space.