

A FAMILY PLACE

BY Laura Jean Whitcomb

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Ed Thomas/White Point Imaging

There's no doubt about it — a family lives in this house. There are sneakers on a welcome mat near the door, and a small kitten mewing to be let outside. A bouquet of red roses in a vase is on the kitchen counter, and a few breakfast plates are ready to be loaded into the dishwasher. A recent renovation has turned a dark, inefficient kitchen into a comfortable and practical gathering spot for an active family of seven.

License to design

Patti Mullin, owner of Timeless Kitchens in New London, supplied the cabinets to the 1760 Colonial home when architects designed the kitchen 22 years ago. “I never liked the kitchen set up, so I was thrilled to be given the

opportunity to have it done the way I thought it should be done,” she says.

Gavin Campbell Construction, also based in New London, gutted the kitchen down to the bare bones, something that had never been done in the house's history. Four generations of plumbing — from lead to copper — had to be refigured, and copper knob and tube wiring, commonly used between 1880 and 1930, had to be brought up to current electrical standards. A new heating system was installed as well.

“It took them almost as long to take it apart as it did to put back together,” laughs Mullin.

Campbell laughs, too, but adds, “We got rid of problems and leaks. It

was raining from above and gassing from below. The mechanical platform is set if the Brooms want to continue renovating the house.”

With the bare bones of the house exposed, it was the perfect time to update the basement as well. Timeless Kitchens and Gavin Campbell Construction planned the design for the unfinished 2,400 square foot area. It went from a damp, dark area that was infrequently used to a family space that includes a pool area with cedar siding to handle the moisture; a wet bar with seating; a game room that includes arcade machines and a pool table; an exercise room with its own steam shower; and in-home theater

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BEFORE: The original kitchen with dark cabinets

AFTER: The renovation included the talents of plumber C.A. Miller of Elkins and Pride Electric of Sunapee. “The work they do makes our work shine,” says Gavin Campbell. “No one ever sees a well framed wall.”

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with a flat screen television and individual leather chairs.

“Chris and Jodi Broom allowed us to do it right, to go back to zero and bring it forward,” says Campbell. “You can’t do a renovation unless you have the real whole house overview — how they built back in the 1700s and what kinds of systems are necessary today. There’s such a depth of experience in my crew that there are no surprises.”

Pies by Christmas

Once the foundation was in place, so to speak, Mullin completely redesigned the 15-by-30 kitchen. Windows were moved; a three-window view over the sink now looks out over the pool and landscaped backyard. She selected high-end cabinets that she knew would complement the home’s style and provide the practicality that the family needed. She designed several spots for the family to congregate, such as a big center counter with two stools as an “eating bar” and a breakfast nook with a cushioned bench and four chairs surrounding a table. Mullin also added a second work space — a butler’s pantry located between the kitchen and formal dining room. It holds an extra oven, sink and dishwasher, as well as provides storage for items like toasters and coffee pots.

It’s no surprise Mullin has won 13 awards for her kitchen designs; she’s a



The butler’s pantry provides extra storage space.



Natalie Holtom Interiors selected the window treatments, the bar stools, and the cushions and pillows on the bench in the breakfast area.

unique combination of creativity, attention to detail, and excellent taste. Jodi’s request for a feminine kitchen resulted in a rose theme carried through on cupboard knobs, drawer handles, corner reliefs and molding. The result is elegant usefulness.

“The Brooms are family-oriented people; their children are their life,” says Mullin. “The kitchen is for the kids. They enjoy having the room for everyone to be together.”

Throughout the kitchen renovation, Chris didn’t say much — until Mullin found three amber crystal chandeliers with a burnished bronze leaf pattern. She hung a 42-inch oval over the island and two smaller, matching circular chandeliers over the sink and breakfast area. “I kept asking, ‘What does Chris think? Jodi said that he doesn’t notice; he just comes home. But the day came when we were hanging up the chandeliers. Jodi said to me, ‘It finally happened. He stood at the door and said, ‘Wow,’” Mullin recalls.

Although it was one of the more difficult kitchens Mullins had designed, the Brooms were making pies by Christmas. “It’s not often in a designer’s life that they get a project of this magnitude with designer’s license,” says Mullin. “It showed me that I can do something that elaborate and have it completely work out. It is a beautiful room, but also a

great kitchen to work in. The Brooms did not have one complaint — all they say is we love our kitchen.” **K**

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