

A rustic kitchen interior featuring a stone fireplace wall on the left, wooden cabinetry, and a granite countertop. The ceiling has exposed wooden beams. A large bowl sits on the counter in the foreground. The title 'Country Elegance' is overlaid in a large, stylized font.

Country Elegance

IT'S AN ALL-TOO-COMMON story: excited house-shoppers who think their search is over discover one deal-breaker room that makes them think twice about an otherwise amazing home. Often enough that room is the kitchen, as it was in this house - but one family knew that a kitchen can be transformed, and decided not to let it ruin the unique home they had found.

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Within a year of moving in, and with the help of designer Lorie Martin Pessot of KitchENvision, a drastic redesign was underway and their almost-perfect home was becoming the perfect one.

An elegant country kitchen is a beautiful thing, but this kitchen was anything but elegant when they found it. Decked with pine from floor-to-ceiling, awkwardly laid out and hidden away in the back of the house, the space was cramped and



oppressive — both physically and aesthetically. Although it had a few nice features, they were lost in the visual clutter, and the new owners wanted to bring a more contemporary sensibility to the room and bring it in line with their taste for modern comfort and style.

Among the most important parts of the project was the task of eliminating the overpowering wood motif that dominated the kitchen. The pine was replaced with drywall painted in neutral tones, immediately making the room feel larger and more



inviting. Two major elements of the original design were permanent, but luckily they were also the most appealing: antique wooden support beams in the ceiling, and a farmhouse-style stone wall. The texture and character of the beams were previously lost amidst the pine ceilings, but now they stand out as classic kitchen features.

Because of the beams, the usable ceiling height in the kitchen is fairly low, but this obstacle was surmounted with some clever design choices. By moving the nearby washer and dryer into the basement and converting the space into a walk-in pantry, the kitchen could be built with very little upper cabinetry to avoid crowding the overhead space. The ceilings also presented a lighting challenge, since there wasn't enough clearance to install pot lights without lowering the drywall, and track lighting would have to hang awkwardly from the beams. Either option was sure to make the kitchen seem smaller. An innovative solution came by way of Union Lighting: hard-to-find cable lighting, suspended from the beams, that becomes an interesting décor element without dominating the ceiling the way track lights might.

The new kitchen features a large central island that provides ample workspace and houses the microwave on one side, while comfortably seating four people on the other — a perfect setup for serving and entertaining. The main counter contains an extra-deep stainless steel sink, which many see as an odd choice over the more popular double-sink, but which is in fact a subtly perfect blend of modern and traditional designs that typifies the country elegance style of this kitchen. A similar combination can be seen in the adjacent dining area, where a home-made wooden table with birch-log legs is attended by sleek black leather chairs.

Of course, if the kitchen was going to become one of the finest rooms in the home, there was no reason to keep it tucked in a corner. Several walls were removed as part of the renovation, opening a clear path from the front door right through to the back walk-out, with the new kitchen on display in the middle. Many of the key visual elements were chosen by the owner, clarified with the designer and implemented by expert craftspeople in an ongoing team effort, including the custom maple cabinetry by Tony LaRocca.



In the end, a room that nearly stopped this house from being bought has become one of its most memorable spaces. Updating the best of the original country-home features with carefully chosen modern elements brought this kitchen up to date, while leaving its roots deep in tradition. There's no conflict between the two sides, only complement and contrast, resulting in a unique and personal kitchen that makes this home complete. **IS**

Resource materials & photos provided by:
KitchENvision, Orangeville
(for more information see Page 105)