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New oak hardwood floors were matched and stained to the original. The built-in china cabinet combines the sophistication and beauty the Diers love.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The island serves as an intimate working and conversing space where cooks and guests mingle. "I like the fact that it's open, that people can sit at the island and watch Zach and me while we cook," says Jennifer Hagan-Dier, a lawyer who is a self-taught cook and loves to entertain friends.

The island contains double refrigerator drawers and a gas range top. "All the burners are flat so that I can slide pots around and don't have to pick them up," Jennifer explains.

Note the kitchen drawers. Storage space is below the countertops in drawers. Countertops are three inches higher than standard because Jennifer is a tall woman who likes to cook in high heels.

Appliances are a Dacor double electric convection oven, a 36-inch DCS gas range, a LG refrigerator and a wine cooler on the island. The kitchen's most expensive item is the Vent-a-Hood. Jennifer needs this in case she has three gas burners on at once. "It draws everything up and out. It goes straight to the roof," she says.





A Kitchen for Company

BY ROBIN GALLAHER BRANCH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SARA ESSEX

Jennifer Hagan-Dier and her husband, Zach Dier, love to cook and to entertain. "We have 12 to 20 people over almost every weekend at the house. For my birthday, we had 40 people, and I did the food," smiles Jennifer, a tall blonde who favors classic suits and heels.

This 30-something couple moved from Chicago to the Edgefield Historic District of Nashville two years ago and bought a Greek Revival-style bungalow built in 1920.

In a sense, the move meant coming home for Jennifer and Zach because both were born in Tennessee. They met while students at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and lived Downtown in the Windy City for nine years. Jennifer, a lawyer, now works for a federal judge in Nashville, and Zach serves as a senior account manager for an online marketing agency in Nashville. "We have three dogs and a cat, and children are planned for a bit later," Jennifer laughs.

Their two-level, 2,900-square-foot house with its four bedrooms and three full baths is perfect for this young, successful couple. The

home had already undergone extensive remodeling on both levels when they bought it.

"The previous owners had remodeled it—everything except the kitchen—and that's the very room we wanted to do ourselves," Jennifer says.

Well, somebody else's remodeling is one thing, but the real question is did the Diers like what had been done? "We loved all of it from the lighting fixtures to the marble to the paint colors!" Jennifer exclaims.

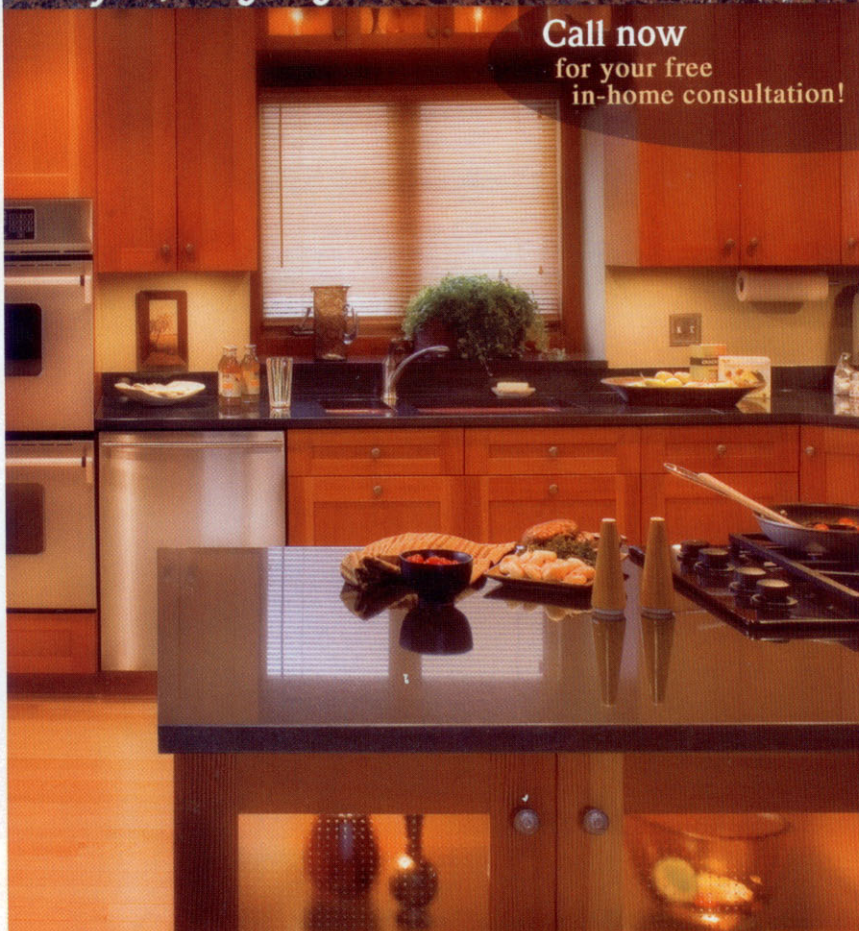
The previous owners' decision not to touch the kitchen (a cramped 1980s hole with no view from the kitchen sink) also perfectly suited the Diers. They had begun their Nashville house-hunting with one thing pretty high on their priority list: Jennifer intended to re-do a kitchen to her standards. "We needed a kitchen custom-designed for our needs," she says.

Describing herself as a self-taught, home cook, Jennifer says cooking is her only creative outlet. "It's a way for me to make people

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happy. I enjoy making them comfortable in my home," she says. Her hobby has brought her such renown that she's asked to do event planning and catering on the side.

The couple came to the design process knowing what they wanted: openness, space for appliances, countertop height changes, an attractive island, top-of-the-line appliances and extras chosen to meet the specifics of their lifestyle. "We had lived in a loft in Chicago and loved it," Jennifer explains. "We liked the open space."

Aesthetically, what happened was the four rooms on the first level became two, thus achieving the beloved loft look and feel the couple enjoyed so much. "We opened up the space and made it one big room and built in a cabinet-buffer," Jennifer adds.

Structurally, what happened was serious planning for the safety and soundness of the bungalow because of the decrease in load-bearing walls. "A structural engineer came in and verified and specified the structural needs and determined what was needed to carry the load," says Beth Haley of Beth Haley Design, the Nashville firm that designed the remodeling.

"Jennifer and Zach wanted a sophisticated yet comfortable look. They wanted drawers, plenty of pantry space and a wine cooler. They needed storage space for Jennifer's small appliances," Haley recalls.

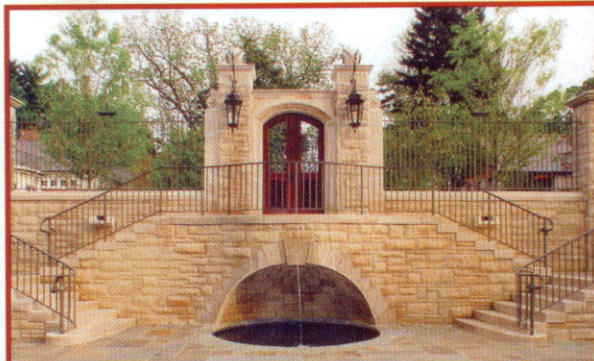
The design called for switching the kitchen from the east side of the house to the west. That meant new plumbing, wiring and flooring. The new kitchen is where the old breakfast room/dining room used to be. The couple's new kitchen has virtually no above-counter cabinets because the wall space is windows. Zach, who does the cleanup, enjoys a view of the garden and its roses from the main sink; the island contains a separate vegetable sink. "He picked out the sink and faucet because dishes are his thing," grins Jennifer.

The couple chose to eliminate the formal dining room because it didn't meet their needs. Instead, they centered the cooking and kitchen activities around a single great room concept on the first floor because cooking and the kitchen are the focus of their hospitable lives, home and worldview.

Jennifer, who is 5 feet, 10 1/2 inches tall and likes to cook in heels, specified higher countertops. She had them raised three inches. "Now I don't have a backache from bending over when I finish cooking," she says.

She finds things easily in their kitchen because of choosing pull-out drawers instead of cabinets. "We even have garbage drawers and drawers for recycling and compost. We compost almost everything," she says.

As a cook, she knows her produce and plans her meals accordingly. She prefers cooking with

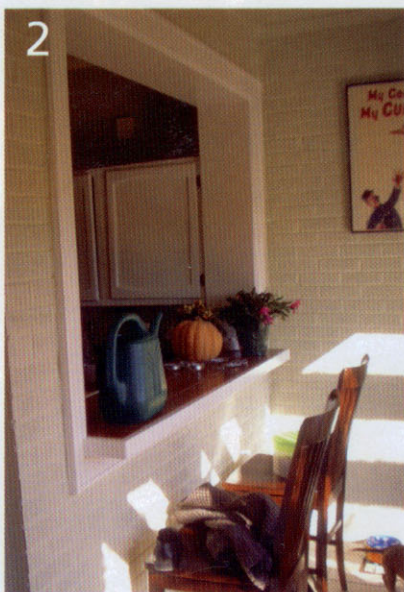


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Hardwood floors and arches designate the first floor space in this 1920s bungalow in the Edgefield Historic District of Nashville. The renovation, designed by Beth Haley of Beth Haley Design, essentially made two rooms out of four and switched the kitchen from the east side of the house to the west.

The previous owners had renovated the entire four-bedroom, three-bath house with the exception of the kitchen. That suited Jennifer Hagan-Dier and Zach Dier just fine, because this couple loves to cook and entertain—but not in this small, cramped 1980s-style kitchen!

"Before 1" shows the old kitchen, which was converted into the new eating area. "Before 2" shows the old sun porch, also converted into the new eating area. "Before 3" shows the other side of the old kitchen, which was converted in the new pantry, eating area and new kitchen area. "Before 4" shows the old dining room, which was converted into the new island area.

seasonal fruits and vegetables. She serves as president of the Friends of the Nashville Farmers Market, a nonprofit organization. "We don't eat meat unless we know where it came from," she adds.

The couple added a continuous sound system to the first floor, carrying over what the earlier owners/renovators had done on the second floor. A large sliding door opens off the kitchen onto the deck. "We do a lot of grilling too," Jennifer says.

With four bedrooms, the certainty of great food, and an attitude of hospitality, this home attracts crowds on the weekends. "People spend the night here a lot," Jennifer smiles, "and the wine cooler stays pretty empty." ●