

# a kitchen for all seasons

For a family of seven in a hurry, the heart of a new-construction home had to be warm, bright, enduring, multifunctional—and kosher.

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Timeless and transitional—this new-construction kitchen in Springfield has it covered on both counts with its weathered-look gray cabinets, quartz countertops and powerful marble accent wall, not to mention caged light fixtures. But designer Victoria Bell knew the home's hub could not get by on good looks alone. It needed to meet the needs of a family of seven, whether it's homework time or party time. (Yes, this tribe loves to entertain.)



**Big families** often have little time. But a clan of seven moving to a spacious new center-hall colonial in Springfield wanted a timeless design. A style destined to cry “Do-over!” after 15 years was not for this active brood. That proved especially true of the kitchen, the heart of the home built by Five Star Contracting. And permanence in a hurry was just one of the requirements.

“I was looking for modern and beautiful, but it had to be functional,” says Ariana, whose lifestyle as a teacher and mother of five children ages 1½ to 11 left no room for sacrifice. “The kids do their homework in the kitchen,” she explains. “I cook a lot. We entertain a lot.” On top of that, the family needed a kosher kitchen, with two sinks, stoves and other appliances in a design that didn’t scream redundancy.

The pressure was on as Victoria Bell, owner of an eponymous Springfield-based design firm, endeavored to infuse style and beauty into a room that would have to meet the demands of both everyday life and special occasions. It turned out to be a perfect partnership: Ariana liked that Bell listened to her needs, and Bell went out of her way to make the design decisions easy.

“The clients specifically wanted a transitional style with modern undertones,” recalls Bell of the project completed in July 2020. “They wanted something warm yet modern, which is why we went with gray cabinets with chrome as the metal finishes for the hood, the sink faucets and the cabinet hardware.”

Chosen by the homeowner, the Fabuwood cabinets feature a weathered look with movement in their grain for a textured departure from flat gray. “I didn’t want a dark kitchen,” says Ariana. “My old house had a dark kitchen.”

The simplicity of the white subway tile backsplash and easy-care quartz countertops set the stage for the room’s major punch: a marble accent wall above the Frigidaire stove in an elegant geometric pattern by Floor & Décor. Bell saw the unobtrusive hood as an opportunity to stretch this focal point all the way from stove to ceiling. “The kitchen is grays and whites and very clean, but that wall brings a wow factor,” says Ariana.

A second design highlight is the metal-and-glass caged lighting hung from polished nickel chains above the island by Joss & Main. More than just an invitation to gather, the West Elm island stools provide contrast to the grays



This page, right: This desk is a fine place for getting homework done, and it fits right in stylistically. Nearby is a midcentury-modern dinette with blue velvet chairs from West Elm. Opposite page: Opportunity to go big (stove to ceiling) with the room's focal point? An elegant geometric pattern in marble. And it proved to be just the wow factor this white-and-gray kitchen needed. "It matches the color scheme but it's decorative and it's interesting," says homeowner Ariana. Keeping it simple with a white subway tile backsplash allowed the star of the show to shine without competition.



and whites, with their carved-wood bucket seats and black steel base. Further softening the look is the not-too-dark stained oak flooring that runs throughout this space.

Bonus: Bell created that kosher kitchen by minimalizing the appliances—for instance, tucking away ultra-convenient Sharp microwave drawers into the island. The stainless-steel appliances also marry tastefully with the gray cabinets, she says.

Because family members not only eat in the kitchen but also do homework there, a computer desk was an essential element. “Especially now with COVID, it has been a blessing,” says Bell.

For family meals, there’s a mid-century-modern dinette nearby, also from West Elm, with blue velvet chairs over gold-tone metal legs. And what’s more convenient than a butler’s pantry next to the dining room with glass cabinets to show off beautiful serving pieces? A mirrored arabesque tile backsplash gives the bar area what Bell calls a “little pop of glam.”

Bell designed the mudroom off the garage with her mind on both function and flair. Helping to organize five kids are hooks with the first initials of each of their names from Anthropologie, as well as metal baskets to keep handy all those gloves, hats and scarves. “It’s part of their routine,” says Ariana. The cabinetry in Benjamin Moore’s high-gloss Gunmetal makes it all easy-peasy with a built-in bench.

Did this kitchen design hit its mark? Ariana’s verdict is strongly affirmative, and this is perhaps the home’s highest-stakes space. “It’s definitely the central location,” she says.

This page: This butler’s pantry, conveniently located near the dining room, features glass doors to display serving ware. The bar’s mirrored arabesque pattern is what Bell calls a “little pop of glam.” Opposite page: With so many ways to organize, this family of five mostly school-aged children is less likely to miss a beat. Wire baskets and hooks bearing the first initial of each child give the mudroom both function and style; this organizational built-in is painted in Benjamin Moore’s high-gloss Gunmetal.

