

Wire-brushed cabinets have a midnight stain and distinct leather-wrapped brass pulls. The slightly raised counter is covered in natural stone; durable quartz tops the rest of the island and perimeter countertops. "Discreet integrated black channel pulls enable an unbroken stretch of slab drawer fronts on perimeter cabinetry," kitchen designer Lori Kurnitsky says.

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KITCHEN DESIGN BY LORI KURNITSKY, NCIDQ, & OLGA CARLSON OF BLUEBELL KITCHENS
INTERIOR DESIGN BY MICHELE PLACHTER DESIGN | STYLING BY KRISTI HUNTER

Double Vision

CHALLENGES BECOME OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE
A CHIC, HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL KITCHEN
WITH DUAL COOKING AND ACTIVITY ZONES



Two islands (opposite, top) in dramatic juxtaposition are tied together by cushioned bar stools and fashionable floating chandeliers. Incorporating a bronzed mirror backsplash behind the cooktop “creates some reflection” and breaks up an expanse of black cabinetry, interior designer Michele Plachter says. Glass and metal doors lead to the mudroom and garage; coordinating tall slab doors on each side contain pantry storage.

The inset 36-inch Wolf gas cooktop (opposite, bottom left) “is virtually invisible unless you’re standing right in front of it,” kitchen designer Lori Kurnitsky says. The pizza oven wall is reflected in the mirrored backsplash above it.

Black-stained oak veneer doors adjacent to the ovens fold back (opposite, bottom right) to reveal a hidden pantry tucked into the space behind the cooking units.

“The owners loved the idea of a personal pizzeria (right) where a group can congregate out of the way from the main kitchen, Kurnitsky says. The pizza oven is set flush into a vertical façade of natural Belvedere quartzite. This secondary island — covered in quartz — houses a sink, icemaker and refrigerator drawers.



The existing kitchen in Gina and Glenn Bennett’s home in Moorestown proved that big isn’t always better. The sprawling but inefficient layout created an impractical distance between workstations and storage. Adding to the conundrum were angled, rather than square, “corners” that limited the options for appliance and fixture placement.

“The homeowner, who enjoys cooking for friends and family, found she was running all over to pull a meal together,” says kitchen designer Lori Kurnitsky of Bluebell Kitchens (BBK) in Wayne, Pennsylvania. Moreover, it was dated and not at all in line with her tastes.

Kurnitsky and BBK associate designer Olga Carlson joined forces with the team from Philadelphia-based Michele Plachter Design to achieve

the homeowner’s vision of a more modern, edgy aesthetic in the kitchen.

Space challenges were addressed by making the most of the abundant square footage and working all the angles to the room’s advantage. To accommodate both large and small entertaining and casual family meals, “We practically made two kitchens” Kurnitsky says. The areas are seamless in style but can function independently with improved access to appliances and storage features.

Textured, wire-brushed alder cabinets finished in a midnight stain “exude the moody vibe the clients wanted,” designer Michele Plachter says, and yet are very inviting. Two islands designate the different activity zones: the main kitchen as well as a personal pizzeria zone where a group can congregate away from the primary cooking area. “The wowza moment

is the pizza oven wall,” featuring a beautiful slab of Belvedere leathered quartzite, Plachter explains. “It’s a stunner.”

The L-shaped island and its intricate waterfall edges may be one of Kurnitsky’s favorite details because it took a lot of careful planning and crafting to get it right. “The material of the raised section is a natural stone—the same amazing quartzite as the pizza oven wall,” she says. “It’s spectacular alongside the quartz that tops the rest of the island” and perimeter countertops.

Similar care went into creating the contemporary range hood, with its eye-catching brass “cuff” that echoes the finishes in the cabinetry and lighting, Kurnitsky says. The hood’s horizontal slat detail also ties in with the horizontal integrated black channel pulls on the perimeter base cabinetry.

Flush-mount appliances, a paneled Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer and a walk-in pantry contribute to the kitchen’s desired clean-lined aesthetic. Other accents—such as handmade leather cabinet pulls—“lend an organic softness to the space,” Plachter says. “It’s the details that elevate the design,” she adds, from the floating chandeliers that ground both islands to the use of wall covering and art. “Lighting is so critical in our projects to ensure the space ‘shines’ the way it was intended.” **DNI**

SOURCES kitchen design, Lori Kurnitsky and Olga Carlson of Bluebell Kitchens in Wayne, Pennsylvania; interior design, Michele Plachter Design in Philadelphia; general contractor, John Shaffer Custom Homes in Medford; custom cabinetry and range hood, Bluebell Kitchens; countertops, Caesarstone Quartz Vanilla Noir and Belvedere leathered quartzite; sinks, 48-inch and 36-inch Galley Workstations; sink faucets, Brizo Litze SmartTouch; refrigerator/freezer, Sub-Zero; 36-inch gas cooktop, steam oven and microwave, Wolf; dishwasher, Asko; pizza oven, Monogram; metal and glass doors, Cantera Doors; chandeliers, Daikon Studio; sconces, Boyd; counter stools, Roberta Schilling Collection; wallpaper, Élitis.

Editor’s Note: The successful collaboration between Bluebell Kitchens and Michele Plachter Design earned this Moorestown kitchen a 2022 Bronze Kitchen & Bath Design Award from Kitchen & Bath Design News magazine. To view more photos of the kitchen and an adjacent powder room, visit the online version of this story at [DesignNewJersey.com](https://www.DesignNewJersey.com).