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An artistic vision gently endows the kitchen of a ship captain's house on Long Island with vintage style

Below: Owner Carolyn Beegan was drawn to the 200-year-old house by its charm, and its largely intact architectural detailing. **Below right:** Personal touches, like the baskets of paintbrushes, infuse the home with its owner's style.

CHARM. HISTORY. ROMANCE. Older houses often have it all. But while it's easy to fall in love with the architectural heritage of times gone by, it's nearly impossible to live in an antique. Deciding to renovate is almost a given; effecting changes that improve function without destroying character, on the other hand, is no simple feat. The kitchen poses a particular quandary, for it is here that the most "progress" has been made. Designed for servants, kitchens of the past were rarely inviting, seldom provided ample storage, and never featured the types of amenities the most basic modern kitchen boasts today.

Transforming such a space into an airy, welcoming, appli-

ance-filled gathering center—hewing all the while to the original architectural style of the house—is a design challenge indeed. But when artist Carolyn Beegan bought the 200-year-old former home of a ship's captain in Sag Harbor, New York, once one of the three largest whaling centers in the United States, she was undeterred by the difficulties inherent in updating a house that's regularly featured on the local historical society's architectural tour. In fact, allowing history to guide her renovations helped her to create a kitchen that mixes past and present effortlessly, for a feel as timeless as it is timely. "I wanted modern amenities in the kitchen," she explains, "but in

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK SAMU STYLING BY LUCIANNA SAMU

Architect Val Florio designed the pass-through to the living room as a glass storage rack; open-ended slots make it possible to access the glasses from either room. Though the kitchen's color palette is restrained, the rich red of the living room is an enticing design element.





A new butcher-block-topped center island makes the kitchen more efficient for cooking and entertaining.

Exposed wood ceiling beams and reproduction wood cabinetry mix easily with more modern elements such as shining stainless-steel appliances

Right: Beegan liked the color of the reproduction range (manufactured by Heartland) so much that she matched the color of the walls to it. **Below:** Antique accessories, like this scale, create an old-fashioned appeal wherever you look. **Bottom:** For additional storage, Beegan repainted a stainless-steel bathroom cabinet she found in New York City.



such an old house something that looked modern would have been ridiculous."

She took her vision to architect Val Florio, also of Sag Harbor, and together they surveyed the situation. Outfitted by the previous owners in the 1940s, the kitchen had homemade-looking wood base cabinets (five large windows on one wall left no room for upper cabinet units), beaten-up wood floors, a mint-green range, and walls painted to match (Beegan disliked the wall color so much she had the room painted white before any work even began). Counter space was limited in the cramped space, and there was nowhere to take off muddy shoes or heavy coats when entering through the back door.

Florio proposed several changes that would give Beegan the open, party-friendly kitchen she needed: First, by co-opting a large pantry beside the back door, they could eke a bit more square footage out of the compact room. Second, a pass-through cut into the wall that separated the kitchen from the living room would make entertaining easier, while at the same time visually extending the kitchen into the rooms beyond. Third, reconfiguring the wall of windows would allow more space for upper cabinet units. And finally, a large central island would provide plenty of counter space for food preparation or buffets, a spot for meals, and additional storage underneath.

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DESIGN SECRETS

As she went about creating a timeless look in her newly renovated kitchen, Carolyn Beegan cast her net far and wide for products, materials, and fittings that would achieve the effect she wanted. The porcelain farm sink, for example, fit in perfectly with the old-fashioned character of the house, as does the high arcing nickel-plated faucet. But here's the rub: The faucet, imported from England, has been a royal headache ever since installation. Beegan explains: "Since they use the metric system in England, their plumbing pieces and our plumbing pieces don't always fit quite right. The plumbers had to improvise to install it, and it's never worked properly since. At first, you could wash a car with the hose, it had so much pressure, but then the lining broke and had to be replaced." Her advice: Find the same look in fixtures manufactured stateside.

Above plans: Though architect Val Florio worked within the existing footprint of the space, he opened the original kitchen by removing a pantry and cutting a pass-through into the living room. **Above right:** Both pretty and practical, the house mixes up-to-date amenities like a home office with its antique architecture.



With these changes on the drawing board, Beegan attended to the look of the new kitchen, choosing appliances, fixtures, and materials that would maintain the old-fashioned flavor that drew her to the house. The "centerpiece" of the room, so to speak, is the range, a brand-spanking-new reproduction of a century-old model. The rest of the appliances, though more modern-looking, are finished in stainless steel to pick up on the range's old-fashioned appeal.

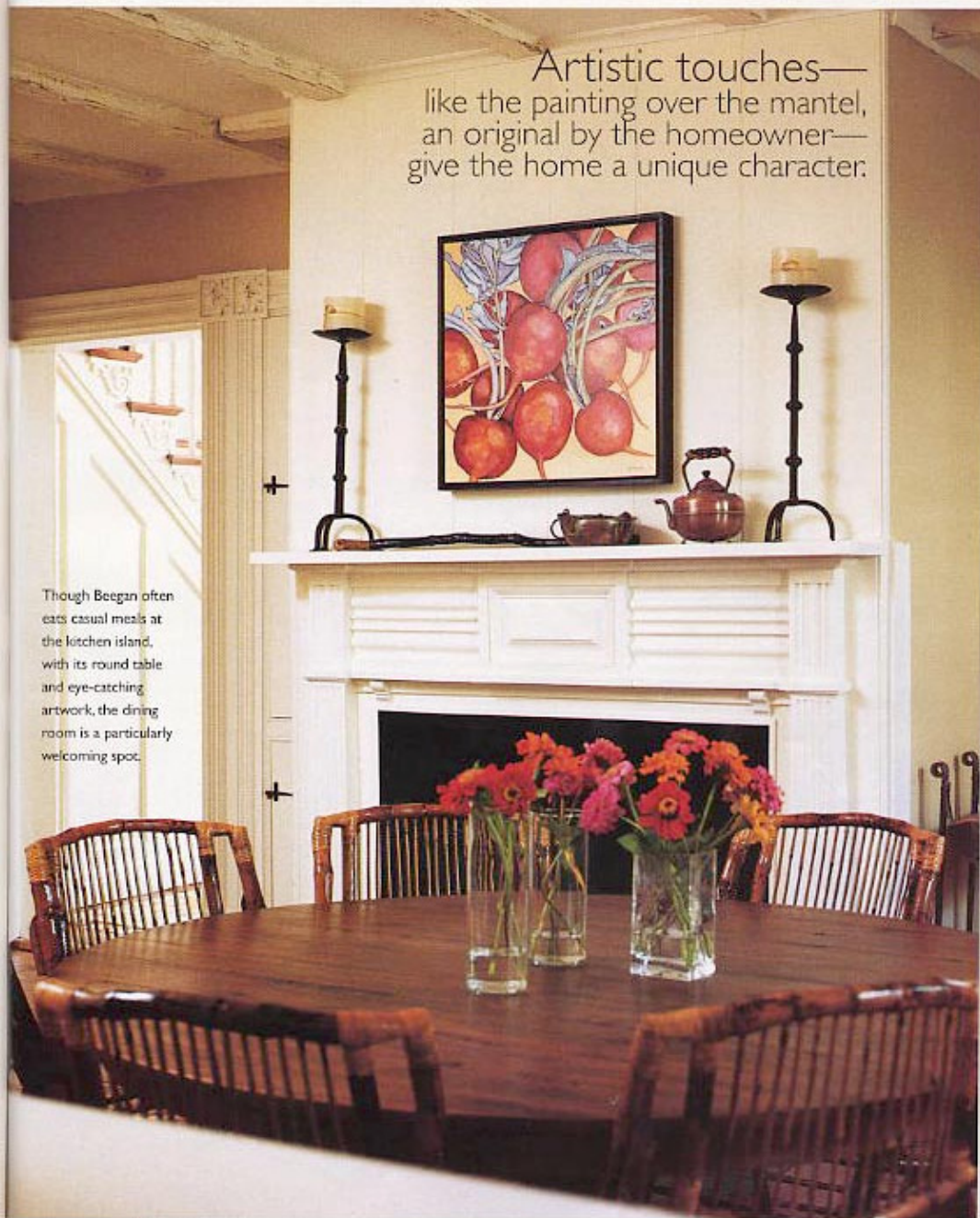
Beegan and Florio opted for simple ash cabinetry stained white to allow the wood grain to show through, with open shelving and glass-fronted units above to keep the look bright and open. Butcher-block countertops, which Beegan chops on directly—"I like the beat-up effect," she says—tie in with the new wood floors, which

they chose to match the pine planks throughout the rest of the house as closely as possible. Accessories like a metal bathroom medicine cabinet and an antique scale complete the old-fashioned look.

Now that all the elements are in place, Beegan uses the space in a thoroughly modern way. The island and pass-through make casual entertaining a breeze. The reconfigured back entrance—with a new storage bench designed to hide shoes, gardening equipment, and the like—keeps clutter under control. The up-to-date appliances take the functionality of the kitchen into the future. And best of all, the entire project reflects the personal style of its owner and the architecture that surrounds it, with a forward-looking attitude but one foot firmly planted in the past. ■

DRAWINGS BY JESSE BLOTT

Artistic touches—like the painting over the mantel, an original by the homeowner—give the home a unique character.



Though Beegan often eats casual meals at the kitchen island, with its round table and eye-catching artwork, the dining room is a particularly welcoming spot.

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