

# Cooking Light®

OCTOBER 2012

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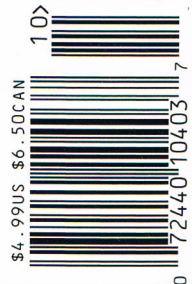
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**COUNTERTOPS POP**

"In color theory, orange is described as open, friendly, and welcoming," Kristy says. "Those were just the qualities I wanted here." Durable composite Caesarstone countertops in a shade called Tequila Sunrise filled the bill, as did white-and-orange Calligaris dining chairs and an acrylic Kartell chandelier.

**DINING TAKES CENTER STAGE**

The Kropat's kitchen opens onto an adjacent living room, so their kitchen table plays many roles, from after-school crafts platform to food-prep station. To banish the dining-in-the-kitchen feel, Kristy zoned the lighting: At night, with only two spots on the table, appliances and cupboards disappear.

## IN A COOK'S KITCHEN

### SKIP STAINLESS AND SAVE

Instead of top-of-the-line stainless, Kristy and Martin chose midrange white appliances: a Jenn-Air refrigerator and dishwasher and Kenmore Elite range with back-painted glass fronts. Kristy echoed the look in backsplash tile from Oceanside Glasstile, made possible by the savings on the appliances.

### FORGIVING FLOORS

The Kropats decided against tile for this heavy-traffic space. Instead, they chose ash wood flooring from Kahrs, which varies in tone from light to dark and hides a multitude of scrapes. Boards with generous lengths and widths bumped the price up but kept the resulting floor from appearing overbusy since its pattern is spread over a broader area.

# Bright Ideas

A California family moves from plans to pancakes in four months flat with this colorful kitchen. **BY SUSAN HEEGER**

**F**IVE YEARS AGO, WHEN INTERIOR DESIGNER Kristy Kropat and her husband, Martin, landed in a midcentury house in San Diego, they had big ideas for its small kitchen. Much less big was their budget, already stretched by the price of the beach-close rancher in a top school district. Time was tight, too: Kristy was pregnant and their first son about to turn one.

Almost before the ink dried on the deal, Kristy had measured the old kitchen, drawn up plans, and shopped fixtures. She and Martin agreed on details for the room they saw as “the heart of the house”: plenty of light, ample storage, and enough elbow room to cook together with their children close by.

To save money, the couple preserved the existing kitchen’s 8 x 9-foot layout, specifically the location of stove, sink, dishwasher, and fridge. What bit the dust—besides popcorn ceilings and vinyl floors—were a wall dividing the kitchen from the sunny living room and a dining alcove that ate up square footage. Only four months after starting demolition, they had a large 10 x 16-foot space for cooking, dining, and living. *Continued on next page*



Cookware and tools are easier to find inside deep drawers than in the dark corners of base cabinet shelves.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE LAURIDSEN



**SUPERDEEP SINK**

Kristy splurged on the 31 x 18-inch Blanco sink because it fits her style of doing dishes. ("I wash in one side, cold-rinse in the other.") At 13 inches deep, it can hide stacks of dirty dishes during dinner parties. And the single-lever Grohe faucet is a boon to the busy cook, who can backhand it on and off.

Overhead cabinet doors lift up and away without intruding on countertop workspaces.



**FUNCTION-FIRST CABINETS**

Kristy wanted simple wall-hung cabinets without molding or trim for a clean, modern look. Martin wanted deep drawers instead of shelving. Kraftmaid's Venicia line covered all their storage needs. Wrapping the edges in Caesarstone countertop material protects against nicks and scratches.

**WHAT MAKES THIS A COOK'S KITCHEN?**

It's flooded with light from windows, skylights, and recessed halogen ceiling squares that can be tipped in several directions. Under-cabinet fluorescents focus on work areas.

Counter space abounds, not only near the sink and stove but also across the room so prep cooks can stay clear of the busy chef. Every item has its place, from a 3-inch-wide, counter-deep cabinet for cutting boards to capacious, slide-out drawers for sauté pans. Shelving additions like a corner cupboard's lazy Susan keep stored tools in easy reach, while glass-fronted upper cabinets are top-hinged for quick access to dinnerware.

Side-by-side pantries hold canned goods, pasta, and spices, with extra overhead room for baking sheets and small appliances.

Find a full list of resources for fixtures and appliances at [CookingLight.com/Features](http://CookingLight.com/Features).



**SMALL RANGE, BIG BURNER**

A gas stove was crucial to Martin, who often cooks dishes long-simmered on low. "Precise temperature control is key," he says. Even heat is important, too. The Kenmore Elite range he and Kristy chose has a bridge burner and removable griddle—perfect for pancakes, a family favorite.

