

HOME & GARDEN

HIGH STYLE

Galley kitchen makeover uses creative layout, color to enhance feeling of space

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to The Washington Examiner

When interior designer Susan Agger purchased her Washington condo, she saw the outdated white galley kitchen as a blank canvas where she could unleash her creativity.

She hired Jennifer Gilmer Kitchen & Bath to help transform the space from bland to fabulously bold, and the project won the 2011 National Kitchen and Bath Association Baltimore-Washington Chapter design competition.

"It gave me an opportunity to do something creative in my own home," Agger said.

Before renovating, the kitchen was long and narrow. It felt confined and lacked style.

"This building was built in 1963, and the kitchen had never been touched," Agger said. "One of the reasons I bought the apartment was so that I could make it my own and not feel guilty about tearing out something that was perfectly OK."

She envisioned a gourmet kitchen that would be a feast for the eyes. She loves to cook, so she needed a kitchen that provided function and high design. But she also wanted it to feel open and interesting.

She and Jennifer Gilmer came up with a design that met her aesthetic and utilitarian needs.

Restricted by where they could move appliances, they used blocks of color to create the illusion of more space. The pantry, oven wall and refrigerator were all covered in a white gloss laminate and posi-



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Before

When interior designer Susan Agger bought a condo in Washington, she knew she had to be creative with her remodel of the outdated white kitchen.

tioned at the narrowest part of the kitchen, which was the entrance.

"By lumping them together in this location and making them white, it visually opened up that narrow entry, even though these units are all 24 inches deep," Gilmer said. "The elimination of the 24-inch large and deep units in the wider part of the kitchen made

the area feel even more spacious."

Glossy white base cabinets provided contrast with dark wood wall cabinetry. The darker cabinets have a horizontal grain, "which helps to move the viewer's eye around the room," Gilmer said. "We decided to add the darker cabinets to add warmth — but to also create drama with the stark



After

With the help of Jennifer Gilmer Kitchen & Bath, the galley kitchen was turned into a utilitarian space with aesthetic charm. Glossy white cabinets, above, provide contrast with dark wood wall cabinetry, right. The darker cabinets have a horizontal grain to move viewer's eyes through the room. A jewellike glass mosaic backsplash was used to pull all the surfaces together



contrast."

To reinforce the sleek, smooth lines of the kitchen, Agger selected square recessed cabinet pulls.

"They don't stick out into the room," she said.

They used three different countertop surfaces: honed granite, dark oak and quartz. "It breaks up the space and makes it more interesting," said Agger, who chose honed over polished because she did not want another polished surface and because it is more interesting to mix and match.

A dazzling jewellike glass mosaic backsplash in greens and browns pulls the different surfaces and materials together. "When I saw that, I said, 'That's me,'" Agger said.

Black grout was used on the backsplash, instead of white, to provide pop. It is that touch of the unexpected that Agger believes people should embrace when thinking about kitchen design.

"Some people just say, 'I want a white kitchen.' But I think people never think they can have a white kitchen with several other colors, with different finishes on the counter and the backsplash," Agger said. "Each area is an opportunity to do something of interest."

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