

BY REMOVING A never-used dining table from one end of the space and installing floor-to-ceiling Poggenpohl cabinetry, interior designer Jill Najnigier blew open the kitchen's narrow galley configuration. For family dining, she nestled a custom table behind the peninsula counter.



## Un-Galleyed

More space, more storage, more light — without adding a single inch to the footprint

WRITTEN BY LARRY LINDNER • PHOTOGRAPHED BY GREG PREMRO

Christine and Eric Savage, a healthcare lawyer and a commercial airline pilot, respectively, wanted their galley kitchen not to feel like one. *And* they wanted it to remind them of the beach, even though it was on the 10th floor of their Boston condo building. *And* they wanted it to have more storage, despite their desire for a more open look. Where were they going to find an interior designer who could work all that magic?

Two flights up, of course.

They had seen the handiwork of their 12th-floor neighbor, Jill Najnigier of Boston-based JN Interior Spaces, in her contemporary makeover of the lobby of their shared North End mid-rise, which in a

former life had housed the Sunshine Biscuit Company. They had also been to Najnigier's unit ("Point of View," *Design New England*, September/October 2015), where, says Eric, "we were blown away. Jill had taken a fixed space and optimized it, opening it up to create greater access, better closets. She even created another bathroom and extra storage. It was very European, like German engineering." The couple wanted that for their kitchen/dining area.

A major move in the Savages' makeover was getting rid of the clunky, dark dining table and the three pendant lights above it at one end of the kitchen. This made it possible for Najnigier to turn what had been a little used space ("The dining room table was a junk table," says Christine. "We didn't sit at it, we didn't eat at it.") into a usable expan-

we make it simple.



## Kitchen



sion of the kitchen. She installed floor-to-ceiling cabinetry from Poggenpohl Boston and a wine refrigerator along the wall, making that part of the unit feel like an integral part of the kitchen, with storage for pantry items and, up top, platters and other infrequently used items. There is a small countertop for preparing drinks, with three open shelves above. The vertical effect of both the cabinetry and shelving extending to the 9-foot-high ceiling serves to visually stretch the room.

For dining, Najnigier placed a custom 72-by-34-inch rectangular table against the window side of the counter. One corner nestles into a bump-out cabinet that runs perpendicular to the counter. It is a vast improvement over the old setup, which had a two-tiered bar top with three stools that faced into the kitchen and away from a series of floor-to-ceiling windows that offer glorious views of downtown Boston and the harbor, extending all the way to Hull, Massachusetts.

The tabletop was made by Poggenpohl from the same material as the cabinetry. The horizontal *strié* matte finish is a contemporary take on weathered wood. Lightweight with an aluminum apron and legs that pick up on the cabinet hardware, the table can easily be moved to the newly open space when more seating is required than the couple and their 3-year-old son, William, need.

Opposite the table and counter, the wall was extended about a foot to accom-

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**THE ONLY THING** left from the original kitchen is the faucet (FACING PAGE). To its right is an integrated 3-foot-wide refrigerator; to its left, an integrated 2-foot-wide freezer. On the opposite side of the kitchen (ABOVE), an induction cooktop and built-in oven were placed against an exterior wall, allowing the installation of a hood that vents smoke and odors outdoors. The quartz backsplash, milled to a ½-inch thickness, is by United Marble Fabricators of Watertown, Massachusetts.

modate the integrated Sub-Zero refrigerator and separate freezer that flank the sink. On the back side of the wall, off the apartment's front hallway, Najnigier replaced built-in shelving with wider, deeper cabinets with opaque glass doors for still more storage. Custom builder Gerry Mariano of GM Carpentry & Painting Inc. in Everett, Massachusetts, who often works with Najnigier, did the construction.

Other deft moves included placing a sleek Wolf induction cooktop and built-in oven against an exterior wall, allowing the installation of a Miele ventilation hood above them. Countertops are Caesarstone quartz that looks like marble. At just ¾-inch thick, they contribute to the "sleek look" of the room, Najnigier says.

Najnigier credits Rosemary Porto, senior designer and sales manager at Poggenpohl Boston, for a vibrant, itera-



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## Kitchen

tive process that allowed her to achieve the desired space-enhancing outcome. “Rosemary is a true collaborator,” she says, “a creative thinker who genuinely enjoys the back-and-forth inherent in all successful projects.”

As for the beachy feel, Christine was inspired by her love for Cape Cod and the calm of sand and surf. But she did “not want something that looked like sea glass,” she says, which she describes as “too soft, too pastel-y.” Najnigier calls the shade they came up with “Christine blue,” a saturated hue reminiscent of the sea on its best days.

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“That was going to be our pop color for sure,” Najnigier says. It’s the color of the glass subway tiles above the sink and prep area, the chairs, and the dinnerware on the pale gray lacquer open shelving.

Christine says she and her husband love that they now “actually spend time in the space,” adding, “It’s become a centerpiece of the home, a place we really enjoy being in.”

THE CUSTOM TABLE can be moved away from the counter to accommodate more guests.



### DESIGN DECISION

#### *Sand-In*

The Savages wanted wood flooring that was reminiscent of sand. Chris Rivard of Eco-Options Hardwood in Medford, Massachusetts, created 12-inch-square mock-ups and dropped them off at the condo to be appraised. “Some were too blue, some too pink, and some too dark,” homeowner Eric Savage says.

Finding the right tone was not just a matter of using the precise stain. Other processes, such as oiling, contribute to the color and patina.

It took a month of experimenting, but Rivard “got it perfect,” says interior designer Jill Najnigier. The engineered white oak is a pale gray with a sand-like quality that works well with the lighter tones of the cabinetry.

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