

*The goals of this kitchen redesign were to make the space feel more expansive and to choose fixtures that allowed enough clearance for the client.*

## A Tall Order

Overcoming challenges in an old building allowed for uber innovation in a small space

It's hard to believe this space used to look like what designer Scott Dresner of Dresner Design in Chicago called "a medieval dungeon – dark and small."

"My client is a tall guy – 6' 11" to be exact," he said, "so much of the project was about making the space feel more expansive and choosing fixtures that allowed enough clearance."

Dresner's plan of attack included raising the ceiling height and

lightening and brightening the finishes to give the kitchen the illusion of more space and openness. He chose elements he thought would best complement the existing architecture, including a one-ton Calacatta Gold marble kitchen island.

"I designed everything the way I would want it if I lived there," he added. "I designed the kitchen island big enough to allow for seating, cooking and prep but small enough to accommodate a small sitting room."



*Designer Scott Dresner chose bright, light finishes to create the illusion of more space and openness. Cabinetry was provided by Greenfield Cabinetry and includes smart storage options.*





### Wrenches Averted from Plan

Before the renovation, the ceiling had been accessed several times to add new ductwork for central air conditioning, and as a result, it had been lowered to 8 feet. Dresner demolished the existing ceiling and removed the existing 6-in. cans to allow him to raise it back to 9 feet, making the room feel larger.

"This is a very old building, and there were a lot of skeletons in the closet," he said. "Every single thing had to be redone."

This included the electrical plan and no existing laundry room or venting system for a dryer. Dresner and his team redid the electrical and created cabinetry to house a ventless washer and dryer. The building wasn't able to accommodate the massive island, so it was craned through the living room window with an inch and a half to spare.

### Innovative Additions

According to Dresner, innovative techniques came into play with space planning, including:

- Wine storage in a 9-in.-deep cabinet where bottles lay on their sides and take up less floor space in the small city kitchen
- A state-of-the-art AV system controlled from an iPad
- Decorative light fixtures that accommodate the owner's height
- A beam ceiling system that houses small, modern, halogen lighting
- A Calacatta slab backsplash with floating stainless shelves as opposed to upper cabinetry

*A one-ton Calacatta Gold marble kitchen island makes a major statement in the space.*

"Even though the client has 2,500 square feet of living space, he spends all his time in the kitchen because he loves it so much," said Dresner.

This year's judges feel the same way about this Kitchen of the Year, giving praise to the thickness of the island top, the architectural detail in the ceiling, the smart use of storage and the unexpected use and look of the open shelving in lieu of the expected upper cabinets, which Christopher Grubb said "created an interesting counter-to-ceiling backsplash."

"I love the attention to detail – they did a lot with a little space, and it offered little details that created a theme throughout the room," said David Stimmel. "It's what is hot right now – but it's done really, really well. ■



*Dresner redid the electrical and created cabinetry to house a washer and dryer.*



### Sources

**Designer:** Scott Dresner, Dresner Design;  
**Photographers:** Overall Shots by Tony Soluri, Details by Jim Tschetter  
**Cabinetry:** Greenfield Cabinetry; **Dishwasher:** Bosch; **Faucet:** Hansgrohe; **Pendants:** Restoration Hardware; **Refrigerator:** Viking; **Stove/Hood:** Wolf