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# Remodel

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White cabinetry and stainless-steel appliances brighten Beth and Graham Napier's kitchen. Expanding the room from roughly where the refrigerator is to the current back wall separated the work zone from traffic flow.

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PRODUCED BY ERIN MCGRAM

# Worth the Wait

YEARS OF OBSERVATION HELP A CALIFORNIA FAMILY  
GET EVERYTHING THEY WANT OUT OF THEIR NEW  
VINTAGE-STYLE KITCHEN.





There's seldom an empty spot at the banquette in Beth and Graham Napier's kitchen, and it's no wonder. For six long years the growing family made do with a makeshift eating area set up in a hallway—their awkward and inefficient kitchen was big enough for just one cook. So when the Napiers finally expanded and overhauled the room, there was a beeline to the new banquette—for meals, homework, crafts, and games. "The kitchen has become like our second family room," Beth says.

Indeed, this is a real kitchen now—one that gets lots of use, puts function first, and is still modestly sized so it fits the 1940s character of the Burlingame, California, home. For interior designer Tineke Triggs, a member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), the challenge was to think through the family of five's every move—and Beth's every pan. "When you design a small kitchen, you have to make sure you've accounted for everything," Triggs says. Potential dead spaces became storage opportunities. A slim cabinet for baking sheets tucks beside the wine refrigerator; behind the banquette, a set of drawers keeps board games out of sight but close at hand.

Practicality also plays out in several of the kitchen's showier features. Beth originally wanted clear glass on cabinet doors, but Graham's advice—"You don't want this kitchen to force you to work harder"—steered her to textured glass that masks contents. And the light-color granite countertops were a great find, considering that marble would have been a natural fit for the classic white kitchen. "They have the low maintenance of granite but the look of marble," Triggs says.

In hindsight, Beth says the six-year wait was time well spent. "It would have been a mistake to come in and change things immediately," she says. "Life is very different with infants than it is with school-age children—and school age lasts a lot longer." The banquette will be a homework

**OPPOSITE:** "It makes the kitchen feel grander than it is," designer Tineke Triggs says of the focal-point range hood. The arched front visually softens the boxy cabinetry. The harlequin glass-tile backsplash was a splurge that Triggs says gives the room some playfulness. It also breaks up the expanse of gray-green subway tiles.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Textured glass with a subtle pattern recalls the wavy glass common in vintage kitchens. The solid-door cabinets are short to allow extra space for unloading groceries on the countertop by the refrigerator.

**RIGHT:** The alcove-inspired beverage center with wine refrigerator is a day-planning desk for Beth and adult-height microwave station for Graham.



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*Project Pointer*

**SMALL-SPACE SOLUTION**

For symmetry, the table was centered below a window, but doing so left dead space between the banquette bench and the door to the garage. Extending the bench with the 12-inch-deep granite-topped cabinet fills the void and gracefully camouflages the hardworking banquette. The cabinet does more than merely fill space. It's a handy buffet and storage spot.



station for the next decade or so, and the six-burner range that Beth probably would have bypassed earlier is where Graham helps the kids prepare special family dinners. "When you remodel, you tend to focus on areas that are important at the time," Beth says. "By waiting, we chose things that will last."

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**OPPOSITE:** Although Beth didn't get an island due to the kitchen's size, the banquette with a walnut-top table is a kid-friendly hub. A drawer at the end of each bench provides easy-access storage. Chocolate-brown walls make the room seem richer. "Even though the kitchen is traditional, it's somewhat transitional because the brown walls and gray-green tile are a little whimsical," Triggs says.

**BELOW:** With closed and open storage and a granite countertop, the cabinet built onto the back of the banquette makes a practical and pretty buffet. Arch legs give the cabinets a furniture feel. "They make the cabinetry truer to the way kitchens looked in the past," Beth says. "They also give the illusion of a little more space." Dark-stained hardwood replaced peeling linoleum and matches flooring in other parts of the home.



#### THE CHANGE:

A dated and inefficient kitchen stretches into an eat-in space loaded with function and vintage details.

#### WHAT IT TOOK:

- \* Bumping out an exterior wall 6 feet to accommodate an efficient work zone at one end and turning wasted space at the opposite end into a breakfast nook with a banquette custom-built to fit the small space.
- \* Adding a bay window along the sink wall to draw natural light into the narrow room.
- \* Installing subway tiles and white cabinetry, some with pane-glass doors and cup-style pulls, to reflect the 1940s style of the home.
- \* Putting small wall spaces to use with furniture-inspired cabinets, including a beverage center with open shelving and room for the microwave oven.

