



function
over form

a media, pa, couple rearrange their kitchen to improve traffic flow and functionality



Top: The new design left enough room for a center island, increasing preparation and seating space in the kitchen.

Above: Lukas, Alison and Megan Guenthardt

By Kerri Penno • Photos by RVO III Photography

When Delaware County homeowners Megan and Lukas Guenthardt decided to renovate their 1972 French colonial in 2002, they found contractor Dennis Gavin through an Internet search. They chose him over others because they agreed with his “function over form” philosophy. The project, a new master bedroom suite, was a great success. When, in 2006, the couple decided to tackle their kitchen, they returned to Gavin Design-Build. “It’s rare to find a contractor who is professional, approach-

able, creative and enthusiastic, but that’s Dennis Gavin,” Megan says.

The Media, PA, homeowners liked Gavin’s approach. “Before he began the design process, he asked how we used the space, what we liked/didn’t like and what we hoped to achieve with the renovation,” Megan says. “By taking the time to get a sense of our needs and priorities, Dennis came up with a design that really worked for us.”



TRAFFIC CONTROL

The Guenthardts' kitchen cramped their style. Lukas is a talented cook who enjoys making gourmet meals. Although their kitchen was large, it had little counter space. "Even the

began by talking to the homeowners about how they used the kitchen, how frequently they cooked, how elaborate their meals were, how often they entertained, and so on. He also asked what they hoped to gain in a

"With Dennis's attention to design and construction and our selection of products, we created a kitchen that solved our problems. It looks spectacular, too."

-Megan Guenthardt, homeowner

most basic meal preparation was a challenge," Megan says. "We thought for years about how to improve the space. We tossed around many ideas but never arrived at a final solution."

That's where Gavin came in. He

redesign. From the discussion, he determined that the biggest problem in the kitchen was all the traffic crossing the room. The original layout provided access to a back door and a laundry room, as well as entrances to

Above: Opening up the floor plan with a wide pass through allowed light and traffic to flow from the kitchen into the rest of the house.

Right: The homeowners selected complementary glass tiles for the backsplash and granite for the countertops which tied the room together.





The contractor added a custom cabinet with recessed shelves that hid ductwork while providing storage space and an attractive visual element.

both the family and dining rooms.

The homeowners and Gavin decided to completely rearrange the access points and some of the major elements of the kitchen. “The kitchen was shifted so that the traffic corridor wouldn’t interfere with the preparation and cooking areas,” Gavin says. “The goal was to redesign the space for better traffic control and to increase the working space.” The Guenthardts realized that Gavin’s assessment of their kitchen was absolutely right. “By closing off the back door, relocating the laundry room, moving the entrance to the kitchen and changing the dining room door, Dennis designed a U-shaped kitchen free of traffic,” Megan says.

For added counter space, Gavin installed a beam in the opening to the family room to allow for a 6-foot-wide pass through. The new pass through opened up both rooms considerably and brought a lot of light into the kitchen. The contractor also installed French doors to provide an airy connection to the dining room

and the morning sunlight that shines through its large windows. Gavin designed a tall custom cabinet to con-

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-Dennis Gavin, contractor, Gavin Design-Build

ceal exposed ductwork in the new kitchen. The project took about 4 months to complete.

EUROPEAN DESIGN

The Guenthardts had a lot of influences when it came to selecting materials and colors for the new design, including the advice of their contractor and the subcontractors. Lukas was

born and raised in Switzerland, and both he and Megan found European design concepts appealing. “We like clean lines, simple styles and we definitely wanted a unique look for our new kitchen,” Megan says. The homeowners also wanted to try to bring the outside in, as the kitchen overlooks their outdoor patio, where they spend a lot of time.

When the project began, they had already made three easy decisions: they knew they wanted stainless steel appliances (they ended up selecting two ovens, a five-burner cooktop and a counter-depth refrigerator), a large main sink and a prep sink. “Everything else was up in the air,” Megan says.

One selection that began with perusing samples was the cabinets. “We really liked the look of simple maple doors with a hazelnut finish,” Megan says. They selected Medallion-Designer Gold-Glenwood Maple, Hazelnut finish cabinets from A&C Kitchens and Baths. For the cabinets above the pass through, they opted for ribbed glass doors on both sides, which contribute to the open feeling in both rooms.

Initially, the couple considered slate for the flooring but after learning that natural slate can flake, they began searching for ceramic tile that looked like slate. They chose Shaw Tuscan Slate, supplied and installed

red all in an irregular pattern,” Megan says. “It reminded us of the designs left in sand when waves recede to the ocean.” Gavin found the unusual Tropical Green granite at Tropical Stone.

Finding the right tiles for the backsplash proved to be the biggest challenge. “It took a lot of consideration because we all wanted something that would not compete with the countertop and floor,” Gavin says. After looking at a myriad of samples, the homeowners almost settled on a type of marble before they came across the Viliglas glass tiles from Continental Ceramic Tile. “We all agreed that the glass tiles provided a clean and simple look but with a high-end feel,” Gavin says. “The slight reflective quality of the glass along with its complementing background color really works well with the rest of the kitchen.”

“The grayish green was absolutely stunning,” Megan says. “It brought together all the colors and tones in the kitchen while adding the ‘sleek’ element we had envisioned.

LIKE MAGIC

The project took just 4 months to complete and won a DelCY award for kitchens more than \$100,000 from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). “What I liked most was transforming a poorly-designed area into a functional and appealing new space,” Gavin says. “It truly changes the way the homeowners live and how they feel about their home.”

Adds Megan, “Dennis made design suggestions that we would never have thought of and they all work well.”

Each family member has their own favorite part of the new kitchen. Alison, age 5, likes the “magic drawers.” The homeowners chose the buffer option, so the drawers self close. Their daughter also likes to assist in the kitchen, so she enjoys the folding step stool that was designed to roll under a base cabinet for storage.

Megan most enjoys the open floor plan that ties the kitchen to both the family room and the dining room with lots of natural light. She is also partial to the instant hot water dispenser, which she uses frequently. Lukas likes everything about the

by Nationwide Floor and Window Co. The blend of subtle greens, rusts and browns was a beautiful complement to the cabinets.

When it came to the countertops, the Guenthardts looked at a number of engineered stone products but preferred the depth and elegance of granite. “While we liked many samples, the stone we chose has a range of greens and grays with veins of rusty

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kitchen, including the functionality and aesthetics. He also appreciates the radiant floor heat, especially on chilly winter mornings.

“With Dennis’s attention to design and construction and our selection of products, we created a kitchen that solved our problems. It looks spectacular, too,” Megan says. “What more could one ask for?”



Dennis Gavin
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