

ASID KITCHEN TOUR

REINVENTED

Slices of orange heat up a tired old kitchen

BY EVA DITLER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY GAIL OWENS

Previous owners knew that if they wanted to sell their University City home, they had to do something about their painfully out-of-date kitchen. The quick fix? Granite countertops. However, for the new homeowners, designer Kristy Kropat and husband Martin, the shift of countertop material wasn't nearly enough to freshen this salute-to-the-'60s cook's space.

Kristy knew they could create their ideal kitchen if they knocked down

walls, raised the ceiling, lost the fluorescent lighting, dumped the dated cabinets, switched out the linoleum floor and pumped up the color — in other words, if they just started over.

"The existing kitchen was dark, almost cave-like," says Kristy. "The sliding glass door in the adjoining family room was south facing, which should have let in a lot of light, but the floor plan of the kitchen blocked that light."

By removing a half-wall and a wall with double ovens and barely reach-

able upper cabinets, the Kropats opened the kitchen to the family room. The space now is suffused with light from the family room and from newly installed recessed lighting.

"Usually can lights are circular but





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Opposite: By opening the kitchen to the family room in their University City home, Kristy and Martin Kropat's fireplace became the focal point for the entire space. So as not to break up the custom gradient glass tile, the Kropats purposely did not include a mantel on the fireplace. Slim wires hanging from the ceiling by the fireplace hold candles (and stockings at Christmas).

Left and below: The new layout allowed for a double pantry, which helped provide more storage than the old kitchen. Existing dark cabinetry was replaced with Kraftmade Venetia European-style cabinetry, a minimal cabinet style with no extra moldings. Upper cabinets hinge on the top so that the whole cabinet opens at once.

Next page: The backsplash is a mixture of matte and gloss glass tile. "We tried to carry that texture mix of matte and gloss," says Kristy. "Cabinets are matte, while appliances are shiny glass. We didn't want stainless-steel appliances because we wanted the orange color to be the focal point."



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we wanted to carry out the square and rectangular mosaic random pattern of the tiles in the lighting," says Kristy.

The challenge was the rectangular skylight. "Because of the pitch of the roof we couldn't make the skylight that shape, so we used a solar tube that we covered with a translucent piece of acrylic. The light shines through that very subtly, but it gave me the shape of skylight I wanted to create."

In the new layout ample storage is provided by a double pantry and Kraftmaid Venetia European-style cabinetry.

"These cabinets have no-extra moldings and gave us the clean European style we wanted," says Kristy. "The upper cabinets hinge on the top so that the whole cabinet opens at once. We chose glass cabinets to keep things light and airy. As you go up the wall, materials get lighter visually."

The Kropats brightened the space with vibrant accents of orange on din-

ing room chairs, family room cushions and a chandelier.

"There's a big splash of orange in the kitchen with the CaesarStone countertops," says Kristy. "They are the focal point. We kept everything else very white so the countertops would stand out. The waterfall edge brings the color to a vertical surface that's visible from the adjoining room."

To emphasize the waterfall edge and to convey the illusion of floating cabinetry the toe kick is extra deep — eight inches.

Not wanting to end up with a kitchen that was cold and modern, the Kropats warmed up the space with ash flooring that continues into the family room. Here the gleaming mosaic glass tiles on the new fireplace liven up the room and the Togo furniture is comfortable and kid-friendly for the Kropat

children — two boys ages 1½ and 3.

When asked what she liked best about the new space, Kristy replied, "The orange countertops. But, in general, I love the openness and how cheerful and bright it looks now." ∞

Where to find it, page 142

You can visit the Kropat all-in-one kitchen/family room during the ASID Fall Kitchen Tour. See details in the box below.

ON TOUR

- What: 2009 Fall ASID Kitchen Tour
- When: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 10, 2009
- Tickets: \$25/general, \$20 each/groups from 4 to 9, \$15 each/groups of 10 or more
- Hotline: 858/646-9896 for ticket details and locations
- Web site: www.asidsandiego.org

