



Circular Sensation

A one-of-a-kind design combines aesthetics and functionality for harmonious living

WRITTEN BY ALLISON NEKOLA • PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL J. LEE

Architect John Kelsey stands facing the open-plan kitchen that he and his wife and business partner, interior designer Sally Wilson, designed for a couple in the Boston suburbs, searching for words to describe it. “I haven’t been able to quite find the right descriptor other than *this is this couple*,” he says. “I couldn’t pick this up and put it in somebody else’s house.”

As natural light pours through the window above the sink, illuminating the room, the homeowner, a Colorado native, says: “This makes our day, every day. Wake up in the morning, it’s very serene, it’s very

grounding, calming. It’s a rare gift that keeps on giving every day.”

The homeowners were in dire need of more storage space, and while the original kitchen was always pleasant, it lacked a certain finesse. So Wilson and Kelsey, whose firm, Wilson Kelsey Design, has offices in Boston and Salem, Massachusetts, transformed the ordinary kitchen into a special area that “draws them spiritually and

THE OAK FLOOR is original but the designers had it sanded and bleached then stained in a grid pattern. There is nothing “traditional, Colonial, or New England about it,” says architect John Kelsey, who created the new kitchen with his wife and business partner, Sally Wilson.



THE HOMEOWNERS LIKE TO entertain and often host dinners and religious gatherings. With that in mind, they had two Miele dishwashers installed in the new kitchen. One is built into the island, the other is in the counter under the window to the left of the sink.

emotionally,” says Kelsey. The design team, which included McDonagh Construction of Norwood, Massachusetts, and Detail Woodworking of Billerica, Massachusetts, gutted the room and a barely used office next door. The new 300-square-foot space, with its much-needed pantry, “makes working in the kitchen a whole

lot more pleasant,” the homeowner says. Rift white oak cabinets around the perimeter extend to the ceiling, and a Miele hood over a Miele cooktop is set against a backsplash of Jerusalem Gold and Honey Onyx tile.

The focal point, however, is the one-of-a-kind circular glass table set into the end of



THE CUSTOM ISLAND/dining table (ABOVE LEFT) was designed by John Kelsey. The table’s painted wood pedestal is finished with a mosaic of Jerusalem stone and topped with glass. Sometimes a large hood can overpower a kitchen, but this Miele hood (ABOVE RIGHT) is the perfect contrast to the earthy tones of the room. The backsplash from Discover Tile is Jerusalem stone, a design choice that reminds the homeowners of their travels to Israel.

the dark walnut-and-granite island. On top of a custom-made cylindrical painted wood pedestal, Wilson and Kelsey cleverly set ¾-inch-thick glass. The challenge, says Kelsey, was fitting the glass without breaking it. “With tempered glass, if it is scratched or there’s a pressure point, the risk is that it will shatter,” he says. In addition, the homeowners and designers wanted the glass top to be flush with the granite countertop. Kelsey designed a joint with a mere ¼-inch gap between the table and island top, and King



KITCHEN

TO MAXIMIZE SPACE previously occupied by a small office with little room for organized storage, the team created a pantry, complete with enough space to store fine china that otherwise would be hidden in the basement. It was important for Wilson and Kelsey to use this space efficiently especially because the original kitchen lacked the storage space the homeowners craved.

& Co. of Marlborough, New Hampshire, manufactured it. Installation was flawless, says Kelsey, and the design allows a film of silicon to cushion the stone against the tabletop.

Chairs can be pulled up to the circular table, making it a perfect gathering place for the couple to hang out with guests. It is a “very personal expression of community around the table,” says Kelsey, noting that the round shape encourages conversation. A Jerusalem stone mosaic was inserted into the pedestal’s hollow core, “so there is something pretty to look at through the glass,” says Wilson.

“Sally is the style. John is the architect,” says the homeowner, his gaze fixed on the red Edelman Leather chairs around the island that pop against the earth tones of the room.

The new kitchen offers plenty of storage, with cabinets that reach to the ceiling and the walk-in pantry. Other custom elements include a personalized coffee station at one end of the long kitchen coun-

BEFORE

- 1 ENTRY FROM GARAGE
- 2 HALL
- 3 OFFICE
- 4 KITCHEN
- 5 DINING
- 6 FAMILY ROOM
- 7 POWDER ROOM



AFTER

- 1 ENTRY FROM GARAGE
- 2 MUD ROOM
- 3 OFFICE
- 4 PANTRY
- 5 KITCHEN
- 6 DINING
- 7 FAMILY ROOM
- 8 POWDER ROOM

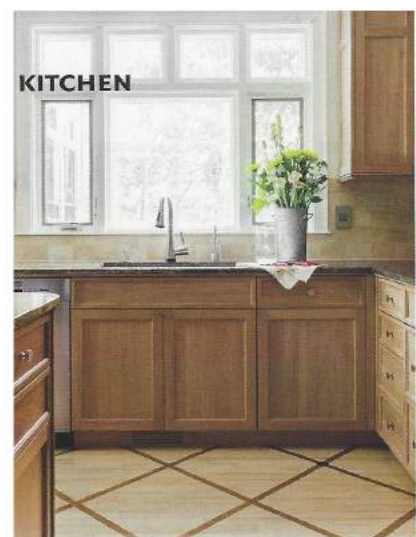


BUILDER
McDonagh Construction

ter. Above it, cabinets with glass doors are filled with cups and saucers. At the other end of the expanse, a wine bar area sits below cabinets filled with fine glassware. Entertaining a crowd never looked so easy.

Only the oak floor remains, but it looks completely different. Sanded, bleached, then lightly stained to complement the dark grid pattern painted and sealed on top, there is nothing “traditional, Colonial, or New England about it,” says Kelsey.

The floor design carries into the living room and dining room, both adjacent to the



KITCHEN



NEW WINDOWS ALLOW more natural light in the kitchen (TOP) while providing a pleasant view of the backyard. The couple continued their renovation by redesigning parts of the living and dining rooms. As a final element, they added a handsome highboy (ABOVE) to one corner. The piece converts to a desk at the drop of a leaf.

kitchen. As they did in the kitchen, Kelsey and Wilson called for new windows that wrap around the space, allowing even more natural light inside as well as a view of the yard. While the three rooms were always connected, the new floor plan improves sightlines and traffic flow.

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES

“Every project is different,” says Kelsey. “We say we don’t want to leave our footprints behind, because we don’t live there, it’s not our place . . . There’s a balance you have to walk, there’s a little dance you gotta dance in order to make all of that happen.” ■