

THE MAGAZINE OF SPLENDID HOMES AND GARDENS • MARCH/APRIL 2008

# DESIGN

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## LET THERE BE LIGHT

A RENOVATION TAKES A KITCHEN  
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 In this special section of *Design New England*, our contributors zero in on the latest in luxury and function for dreamy kitchens and baths.

## TWO MANY COOKS

An inspired renovation adds height and light

Written by ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK Photography by ERIC ROTH

THE VERTICAL LINE of the stainless steel exhaust hood is offset by a steel beam that supported the original ceiling. A recycled granite barn post, at left, and bluestone hearth are part of the fireplace in the adjoining living room. Twinkle, the family cat, relaxes on the Russian settee that is paired with an antique French table.

Architects Marcus and Judy Gleysteen's collaboration on their dream kitchen started with two separate lists of priorities: She wanted comfort, efficiency, and familiarity; he wanted a room that would have a sculptural quality. However, as coprincipals of Gleysteen Design LLC in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the couple did share a design philosophy. "We're dedicated to distinctive kitchens," says Marcus. "My feeling is, you can't design a great house unless you can design a good kitchen."



A VIEW OF THE KITCHEN from the studio stairs (LEFT) shows a sweep of open space all the way to a cozy area furnished with a pair of Italian red Ultrasuede arm chairs. Sophie, the Gleysteens' golden retriever, basks in light that pours in on three sides from new clerestory windows. Marcus and Judy Gleysteen (ABOVE) often cook together in their new kitchen.

And, he adds, "Any kitchen that's part of a house's living space — a more and more common situation these days — must be beautiful as well as functional."

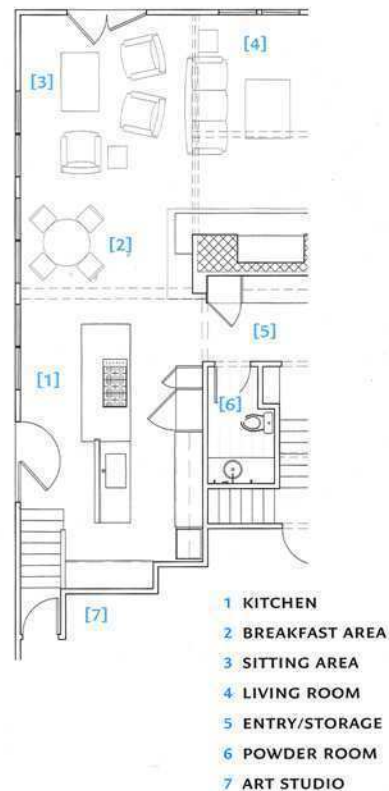
In 2005, the Gleysteens were living in Lincoln, Massachusetts, with their two teenage daughters when a nearby house, well sited on an exceptionally lovely parcel of land, came on the market. The landscape, with its stirring views and irreplaceable stonework, was irresistible, but the 1968 house was, as Marcus puts it, "an unholy marriage of a contemporary ranch and a split-level Colonial."

The architects were confident they could improve it, but before renovations began, they lived in the house for a year "to psych it out," as Marcus puts it. It wasn't long before they zeroed in on what would be the first stage of the redesign. Both Gleysteens like to cook (Marcus has been cooking since the age of 10, inspired by his diplomat father, who was a master of French and

Chinese cuisines), and it was clear that the dark and miserly galley kitchen was both woefully inadequate and cut off from the view.

Despite their separate goals, the Gleysteens had a joint desire for a timeless design. "A custom kitchen can be an enormous undertaking," says Marcus. "You want it to feel fresh for at least a lifetime."

During construction, which started in September 2006 and finished last July, they moved into rental housing and visited the site daily. The existing kitchen was a single story, and by ripping off the roof, the Gleysteens were able to extend the ceiling to a height of 13 feet. That allows for a tall window wall that takes full advantage of the view of the wooded rolling hills and provides access via French doors to a large stone patio and a gas grill that's used year-round. The 15-foot-long island that faces the expanse of glass is big enough for the two cooks and family or guests. Countertops and backsplashes are gray-veined



## kitchen

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white Carrara marble chosen for its look and, as Judy says, “because it’s robust but soft at the same time.”

The room’s new spaciousness is warmed by matched-grain Douglas fir used on the ceiling and for all the custom-built cabinetry. Flooring is reclaimed antique hard pine that continues, at one end of the kitchen, up a flight of stairs that leads to the couple’s art studio. White bronze hardware and stainless steel accents, such as the exhaust hood, wall ovens, and gooseneck professional-style faucet contrast with the warmth of the wood. Except for the Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer drawers, all appliances are by Miele, a German manufacturer, which the Gleysteens like for both their “terrific industrial design” as well as top quality.

“Our kitchen is designed to be totally functional for the way we want to use it and equally beautiful,” says Marcus. “It’s meant to have a long shelf life worthy of its setting. We consider ourselves stewards of the environment in which we live, so our approach is to keep its appeal intact, not only for ourselves, but for generations to come.” ::

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**CLERESTORY WINDOWS CAPTURE late afternoon sun. The custom matched-grain Douglas fir cabinetry highlights the Carrara marble countertops.**

