

## 2 different kitchen makeovers offer the same satisfaction

Remodels of two very different kitchens produce the spaces of their dreams for one family looking to create the "nerve center" of their home, and another family hoping to see their small space live large.

By [Rebecca Teagarden](#)

### Kitchens by design

Check out more work by interior designer Amely Wurmbrand and architect Colin Brandt at their Web sites: [www.amelydesigns.com](http://www.amelydesigns.com); [www.brandtdesigninc.com](http://www.brandtdesigninc.com).

HERE'S SOME food for thought: Imagine the kitchen of your dreams.

Today we offer two such spaces. Their differences are many: one traditional, the other modern; one from an interior designer, the other an architect; one big, the other small; one plotted and planned, the other an impulse buy.

Their similarities, however, are singular and universal: both kitchens were once outdated, chopped-up places in otherwise good and useful homes.

"There was a wall here," says Margaret Bolger, waving her arm at the big open space near the dining table. "And one here," she says, waving in the vicinity of the front door.

This is the modern house whose new kitchen was remade with much planning and forethought, growing from 146 to 267 square feet.

"I really think this is how the house is supposed to be," says Bolger, wearing a big it-was-all-worth-it smile.

The Bolgers, Margaret and Tom and their two children, 6 and 4, live in a gabled Midcentury Magnolia home designed by Ira E. Cummings. After four years there, they well knew what they did not like about it.

Also, their architect, Colin Brandt, gave them pre-demolition homework, assigning them the task of listing everything their hearts desired. The list was long: "Kitchen/entry should look like it's always been there; comfortable, space to sit, lean, gather, hang out; more counter space; easy access to yard/deck; want to create the nerve center of the house, this is not a show kitchen — we will live here." And more.

The result is all of the above. And more.

"Our main entertainment is having other families over," Bolger says. "We're very informal. Either we're cooking in here or barbecuing."

Now maple cabinetry, beginning at the new glass door, defines the space's circular pattern; entrance, kitchen, dining, living, entrance. The sink faces a big window into the backyard, good for the view and keeping an eye on the kids. A corner nook is a hangout magnet. Built-in bureaus in the new opened entrance hall offer seating and easy storage. The outdoor pavers take a few steps inside, crossing the line between indoor and out. A new blackened-steel mantle wraps the original living-room fireplace, a remodel ribbon that carries the eye back to the entrance hall.

No less delighted with their new space are Elizabeth Bird and Gary Thompson. Their Edmonds kitchen, just 120 square feet, got a complete overhaul under the care of interior designer Amely Wurmbbrand after Bird won her services at a Poncho auction three years ago.

"I just thought what a great idea. I wanted my kitchen done, and this supports the arts," Bird says. "The two glasses of wine probably helped, too."

Well then, cheers to this bidder's better kitchen.

Wurmbbrand had planned to take down walls, but a strict \$70,000 budget held the project to its original footprint. So the designer stayed small and got grand. Serving as anchors are royal navy maple cabinets, honed marble countertops and custom-blended blue crackle 1-inch tiles over the oven. Rich and golden are Ann Sacks creamy subway tiles with heavily beveled edges and Benjamin Moore HC-6 Windham Cream paint.

Quality fixtures and appliances contribute to the small room's big statement.

"We could have saved money on the appliances, but I absolutely love that dishwasher," a Miele Optima, Thompson says. "All my life I had dishwashers where you had to wash the dishes first. I'm so surprised every time they're clean now."

For Bird it's the range: "The six-burner American gas range with the commercial oven is like the one in Crow, our favorite restaurant. I want to make that roasted chicken like they do. That's the goal.

"We'll make that chicken and we'll never have to leave the house again."

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Quality fixtures and appliances contribute to the small kitchen's big statement in the Edmonds home of Elizabeth Bird and Gary Thompson. The ultimate compliment for a kitchen that works? "We use it a lot more. I've started baking," Thompson says. "We've both gained 15 pounds," Bird says. Jeff Thomson of Thomson Construction was project contractor.



The Bolgers' island counter, with a bar sink, is lyptus, a sustainably grown hybrid of two species of eucalyptus. The ovens are embedded into a wall of cabinetry, providing plenty of storage.



"I told Amely I don't like dark cabinets. I wanted white," says Elizabeth Bird. "Amely said, 'Oh no. You can't have white. You just like the lines you can see in white cabinets.'" Wurmbrand installed Decora maple cabinets, in Denim below and Chantille finish with Coffee Glaze above. Custom-blended blue-crackle tiles over the oven are from United Tile.



One of the Bolgers' desires in the kitchen of their dreams was a space to sit, lean, gather and hang out. And the cozy corner nook is there to serve a young family. The table and countertop is PaperStone used over a recycled restaurant table base.



MIKE SIEGEL / THE SEATTLE TIMES

The Bolgers, who live in a Midcentury Magnolia home designed by Ira E. Cummings, wanted a kitchen that would serve as the nerve center of the house. The cabinets are maple and the black counters PaperStone. The floor is red oak. One of two sinks faces a big window into the backyard. Gerry Tonner of Caledonia Construction served as the contractor on the project.