

Despite two centuries of change, character remains intact in this 1812 house, where a peculiar room with a hearth in the middle became a stunning family kitchen.



A cook's country KITCHEN

by Brian D. Coleman | photographs by Edward Addeo

THIS HOUSE is in Dunstable, Massachusetts, a hamlet with a still-rural air. Built as a traditional brick-end Federal very early in the 19th century, it grew with a gabled ell extension to the east and several screened porches added early in the 20th century. By the time Mary and David Dacquino found the house, a side door and windows had been added to the street side, throwing off its classic symmetry. Interior partitions and extra doors divided the stately old house into





a warren of spaces. But its Colonial simplicity, fireplaces and early moldings beckoned.

Mary especially liked the kitchen—a long, somewhat curious room extending half the length of the first floor. In the center sits a handsome brick hearth, a reminder, perhaps, of this space having been two rooms during the house's time as a travelers' inn. The large kitchen boasted three sinks and 36 feet of countertop, promising

ABOVE: The south end of the kitchen is centered on a sawbuck dining table milled from lumber salvaged from an old shed on the property. Built-in bookcases, a ten-foot-long window seat, and the centered hearth make the long room cozy and comfortable. **OPPOSITE:** Even with extensions, the Federal-era house retains a classical dignity.

plenty of homemade pasta primavera for the couple's army of nieces and nephews. A separate mudroom entrance at one end protects the house from any incursion by the harsh New

England winter.

The promising room needed significant restoration. Ignoring colonial precedent in search of Tuscany, previous owners had faux-finished the walls with a yellow glaze and applied trompe-l'oeil paintings of roosters, pigs, and horses on cupboards and doors. The navy-blue, ceramic tile floor was out of character and out of plumb, with tiles cracking. Mary and David began work with the floor;



made from mangle cloths create the look and feel of an early New England kitchen.

The mudroom at the north end likewise needed a total makeover. Housed in a two-story ell added by previous homeowners, the addition had a hipped roof that didn't belong. Mary and David reconfigured it into a larger, more functional addition, making room for a pantry and powder room as well as a 16x8-foot mudroom downstairs, and a bedroom and bath upstairs. The back porch now has a flat roof and decorative balustrades milled to match those on the front porch, which ties the addition into the main house. *

after removing additional layers of asbestos tile, linoleum, and vinyl, they found the underlying wood floorboards unsalvageable. A new floor of wide pine planks was properly laid. Particleboard cabinets were replaced with simple, Shaker-influenced units made in ash by a local cabinetmaker and painted in historic colors.

Countertops now are a practical combination of soapstone and reclaimed, 200-year-old chestnut. They kept the old sinks of stainless steel and copper. Mary, an accomplished cook, insisted on a commercial Viking stove. To keep the ventilation from looking too modern, a new soffit with an antique pediment camouflages the vent above. Behind the range, a veneer of antique-style brick integrates with 19th-century English mosaic tiles, which continue above the counters.



Architectural salvage and antiques furnish the room. An eight-foot-long sawbuck table was custom-made from old barn boards on the property. A mid-19th-century pine worktable with apple green legs became a perfect workstation by the stove. Ironstone and yellow ware, vintage copper pots, pans, and chocolate molds, a rusty bread sign from an old bakery, and café curtains



LEFT: (top) The long, narrow kitchen is divided by an old chimney. The stove and food-prep area are on the north end (foreground here), while counters, cabinets, and additional sinks on the other side make serving simple. **LEFT:** Early-20th century English mosaic tiles border bricks inset into the floor near the stove; pretty and practical. **ABOVE:** A crusty, apple-green pine table is used as an extra work station near the stove. Copper pots and pans hang from an overhead iron pot rack by Enclume.

sources

WOODWORKING

- Finish carpentry by **Silver Maple Carpentry**, Merrimack, NH: (603) 791-4956 • Chestnut (reclaimed) for countertops from **Poor Farm Woodworking**, Harvard, MA: (978) 456-3441 • Cabinet doors and drawers fabricated by **WalzCraft Industries** [to the trade]: walzcraft.com

MATERIALS

- Flooring from **Craftsman Lumber**, Groton, MA: craftsmanlumber.com
- Antique brick veneer is 'Thinbrick' from **Robinson Brick Co.:** robinsonbrick.com
- Antique tiles from **Antique Articles**, Dunstable, MA: (978) 649-4983, antiquearticles.com
- Cabinet pulls and knobs from **Restoration Hardware:** restorationhardware.com
- Paint [walls, 'Peanut Shell', cabinets 'Putnam Ivory'] from **Benjamin Moore:** benjaminmoore.com

EQUIPMENT

- Soapstone sink and countertop from **MacKenzie Stone Inc.:** hudson, NH: (603) 889-6700
- Faucet from **Grohe America Inc.:** grohe.com
- Refrigerator from **LG:** lge.com/us/
- Pendant lights by **Hudson Valley Lighting:** hudsonvalleylighting.com
- Range and hood from **Viking:** vikingrange.com



ABOVE: Mary Dacquino kept the most arresting of the trompe-l'oeil paintings of barnyard animals that the previous owners added. The horse is painted on the swinging door to the formal dining room. Table runners and cushions were made from European grain sacks. **LEFT:** Organic vegetables from the Dacquino garden are washed in the soapstone farm sink.