

# Double Take

Symmetry Takes the Cake in  
This Brookville, New York Kitchen

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY RIC MARDER IMAGERY

**Marie Pindus did not like her old kitchen. “It wasn’t pretty,”** she says. “The room lacked elegance and luster [and] it was time for a refresh.” When Pindus decided that her family’s uninspired kitchen needed to go, she brought in a team of design pros to revitalize the space: Carolyn Miller of Carolyn Miller Interiors, John Starck of Showcase Kitchens, and Alan Cooper of Alan Cooper Architects. “I don’t think I could have gotten through this process without all three,” says the homeowner.

The team faced some functional challenges with the space, that needed to be re-imagined. The original island was too long and hindered workflow; the soaring ceiling gave the room a cavernous feel, and a large stove was installed in an awkward location. “The stove is the heart of my kitchen and I won’t get rid of it,” Pindus says, of the industrial-size Garland range. So although the stove was required to stay put, the team would rethink its placement for the new design.

In addition to keeping the stove, the homeowner had a clear vision for the entire design. “I knew what I wanted,” says Pindus. “I looked through magazines and found pictures of kitchens that had the feeling I was looking for.” With those images in hand, the next step was to speak with a kitchen designer, in this case Starck, who could turn those ideas into reality. “Marie is an avid cook and had important functional needs to address,” says Starck. “Early on, we establish what the client’s thoughts, desires, and needs are. We have a wish-list session.”



Before the redo, no one wanted to gather around the old kitchen island, which was too long and often unusable. Now the double islands are such a draw that the homeowner added more counter stools to accommodate guests.





**THIS PAGE:** The islands and chandeliers aren't the only twins in this kitchen. There are also double sinks and double dishwashers to help with food prep and cleanup. **OPPOSITE:** The far end of this room was once a rarely used, walled-off den. Removing the separating wall and opening it up to the kitchen transformed the space into yet another cozy gathering spot.

With a room as functional as the kitchen, the wish list must merge with practicality and good design principles. “Good form follows function,” says Starck. “You’ve got to figure out all the functional preferences first and then address how the aesthetics will balance to that.” He continues, “In the old space . . . the range was off-centered, which looked odd. I recommended that they center the range and relocate the refrigerator from the range wall over to the left wall.”

Alan Cooper, the project’s architect who has worked with the Pindus family on this home on and off for more than twenty

years, developed a plan to address the too-grand cathedral ceiling. He lowered the ceiling and added beams to give the impression of an underlying structure. “I made the beams intentionally large,” says Cooper. “I wanted it to seem as if they were holding the roof up.” He continues, “I felt I needed to make the room more intimate. The old ceiling no longer went with the space. It needed to make a bolder statement.”

With the range centered and the beams highlighting the room’s newfound symmetry, other complementary design choices followed, such as two islands instead of one. “We told



Marie, ‘One will be your work island and one will be your entertaining island,’—she loved the concept,” says interior designer Carolyn Miller. The length of the pre-existing island made it feel like a speed bump, serving only to slow things down. Now, the new islands aid workflow. The arrangement keeps the space in front of the stove open and separates guests from food prep areas while still creating a feeling of togetherness.

After jumping the primary design hurdles, it was time to add the sparkle and beauty that Pindus wanted for the update. Miller installed a pair of modern crystal chandeliers that shimmer over each white-marble island. “It’s a clean look but also a little formal,” says Miller of the chandeliers. “They give that touch of elegance.” White-marble countertops, installed by Pindus’s request, also adds elegance. Marble covers both islands and the counters, and mini subway tiles adorn the entire wall behind the stove.

Again emphasizing the room’s geometry, evenly placed rows of nail heads add a level of interest and texture to the neutral

wall covering. More nailheads line the chenille seats of the counter stools placed at the island meant for entertaining.

“We’re always in the kitchen. That’s the main room. We congregate [there],” says Pindus. Because of this, ample seating is necessary for the family so the team installed the nearby banquette fronted by a fifty-four-inch round table and additional chairs.

The participants in this project each harbor a favorite feature. Cooper marvels at the symmetry, while Starck appreciates how they were able to blend the existing range with the modern design. Miller and Pindus both favor the double islands, yet Pindus can’t truly narrow her choice to only one feature. “I think the two islands are my favorite thing—and the ability to walk through them to the stove,” says the homeowner. “I love the flow. And I love when you walk in that it has a pretty feeling. It’s peaceful. It’s just nice.” It’s easy to understand why she has difficulty narrowing it down: how can you pick only one feature in a room that offers double of everything? ■