

Better Homes & Gardens feeling spooky?

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DAY OF
THE DEAD



thanks, *bro*

Pitching in on his brother's new kitchen gave interior designer and author **Nate Berkus** the chance to test the appliances that bear his mark.

Black sconces and floating shelves break up the countertop-to-ceiling expanse of ceramic tile.



The difference between designing for a client and for a relative? Late-night texts. "Family shorthand" is what Nate Berkus calls the Q&A he shared with his sister-in-law, Yassi Berkus, while working on the kitchen of the Orange County, CA, home she shares with Nate's brother, Steven, and their kids, Caden, 8, and Chloe, 5.

Nate focused on high-impact elements, starting with the LG Studio appliance line he helped design. "I knew it would integrate beautifully with their style," Nate says.

The family loves the new kitchen's conveniences: a range with five burners (they're all firing on weekends when Steven makes breakfast), a pullout trash can by the sink (no more dog disasters), and quartz countertops Yassi thinks are indestructible. "Nate made it our space," Steven says.



HE SAID

Build a wooden range hood, encase it in shiplap, and paint it black. "I thought it would be dramatic and give a lot of impact for not a lot of money," Nate says.

THEY SAID

Black? Really? But now, Yassi says, "The hood is my favorite feature. I love that it's so unique."

“EVERY HORIZONTAL SURFACE IN YOUR HOME IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT EXPRESSES YOUR PERSONAL STYLE.”

NATE BERKUS

Glass-front cabinets are today's take on the china hutch. The counter below functions as a buffet during get-togethers.



EXPERT TIPS

Nate, who launched his own design firm when he was only 24 and has worked on several TV shows, has designed more than 100 kitchens.

His advice:

START WITH HIGH-PERFORMING APPLIANCES

"If people are coming over for dinner and the oven isn't working, what your kitchen looks like isn't going to matter."

TEST AN ISLAND

Not ready to commit to a built-in island?

Nate suggests starting with a freestanding piece. You can always upgrade later.

CHOOSE CLASSIC OVER TRENDY

"Make decisions that stand the test of time," Nate says. Subway tile is one example. He likes its low-maintenance aspect and favors the original 3x6-inch size.

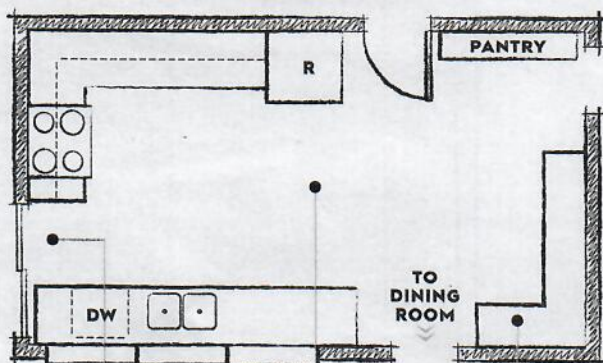
REMEMBER THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Lamps, family photos, and plants are "opportunities to really personalize a space," Nate says.

THE RIGHT MOVES

Steven and Yassi had lived in a house with a similar kitchen layout, so they knew what they wanted (as much storage as possible) and what they didn't (an eating area). A few minor changes make a huge difference.

BEFORE



ODD EXIT

A sliding door brought in light but stole wall space. (The dining room opens to the same patio.)

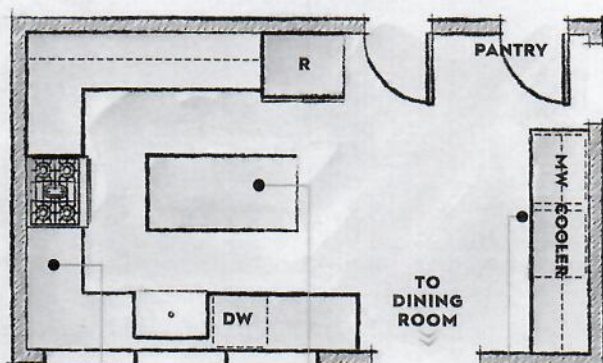
WASTED SPACE

The 11x20-foot kitchen seemed spacious, but the open center could be put to better use.

UNUSED BENCH

Built-in seating was designed for a breakfast table, but an eating spot wasn't on the wish list.

AFTER



MORE STORAGE

Removing the slider made space for cabinets and countertop, creating an efficient U layout.

USEFUL ISLAND

An island gives the kitchen a comfortable gathering spot, directs traffic, and adds a work zone.

GUEST-READY

A built-in buffet close to the dining room lets guests serve themselves while staying out of the cook's way.



BEFORE



HE SAID

Keep it light with white oak flooring.

THEY SAID

Yassi loved the idea, but "I was skeptical," Steven says. "I had always liked a darker, richer wood floor. But Nate and Yassi were dead-on. It looks amazing."

HE SAID

Cover the walls with gray subway tile. "From a practicality standpoint, it'll serve you well," Nate says.

THEY SAID

"I can wipe it clean with a sponge," Yassi says. "And it gives a little edge." Steven agrees: "That was 100 percent Yassi and Nate, and I 100 percent love it. It makes the kitchen feel so warm."

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHRIS GLOWACKI

[GET THE LOOK]

THE BIG FINISH

For this kitchen, Nate suggested accents in a black finish. It's a little more sophisticated and a little less serious than satin nickel or brass, he says.

**PULLDOWN FAUCET**

This matte finish doesn't show water spots or fingerprints. Trinsic in Matte Black, \$487; deltafaucet.com

CABINET HARDWARE

Most dark finishes mix well with true black. Mandara handles in Cocoa Bronze, \$5 and \$6 each; homedepot.com

ISLAND

A marble top and black-metal base hint at bistro style. Castille, \$343; wayfair.com

Want to remodel?

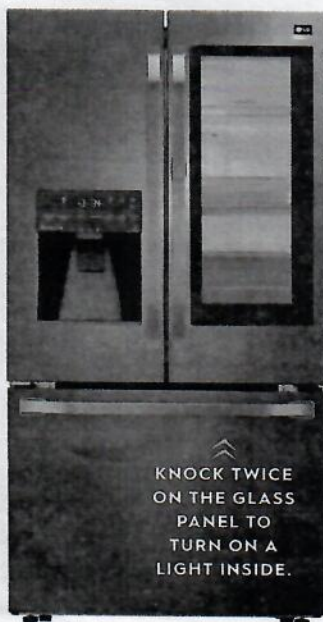
Get our free kitchen remodeling and planning guide at BH&G.com/RemodelGuide.

SUBWAY TILE

Light-color ceramic tile makes black accents stand out. Allen + Roth in Pearl, \$0.49 each; lowes.com

REFRIGERATOR

New in appliances: black stainless steel—a finish Nate says would look as nice in this kitchen as the classic stainless does. InstaView, \$4,300; lgstudio.com



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