

Have It All,
Keep It Small!
SPECIAL SECTION





COZY WITH COLOR

A designer buys a 1920s home built by her grandparents and fills the compact kitchen with happy hues.

WRITER AND FIELD EDITOR MINDY PANTIEL
PHOTOGRAPHER EMILY MINTON-REDFIELD

"My grandmother called it her dollhouse," says interior designer Kristi Dinner of the small Denver home that her grandparents built in 1928 and Kristi purchased for herself in 2001. "My mother was thrilled that I bought it," Kristi says, "and I was delighted to have this rare chance to do whatever I wanted without having to bow to a client."

Budget constraints precluded any immediate large-scale remodeling, but the kitchen's nondescript white cabinets and laminate counters with oak edging—the results of a previous remodel—gnawed at Kristi's design sensibilities, and when the time was right, she ripped everything out and started over.

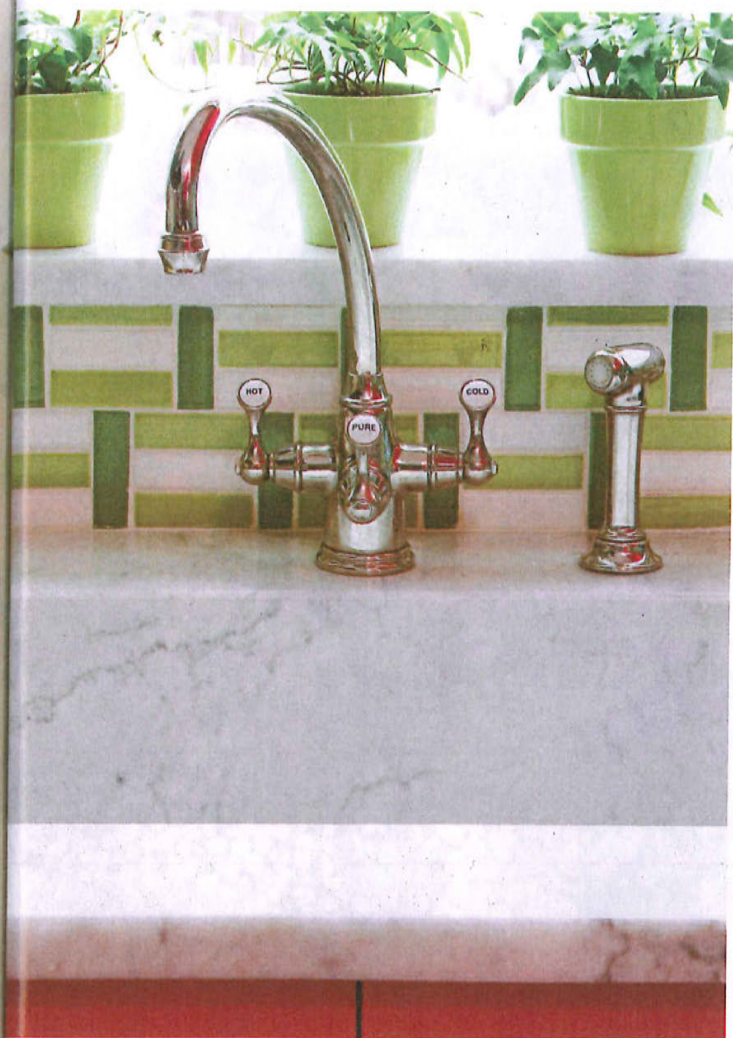
"As far as floor plan, there wasn't much we could do—the space was what it was," Kristi says. Architect Dean Lindsey helped her pinpoint an existing blank wall as the location for a floor-to-ceiling display cabinet to hold china, pottery, and glassware. "We replaced the shallow cabinets on the opposite wall with a curved breakfast bar that took up less space than what was there before," Lindsey says. "As a result, we could add the wall unit and still have room for a passageway."

Kristi bought new stainless-steel appliances, including a built-in steam oven and a glass-door refrigerator. She "floated" glass shelves near the new sink, which is an integral marble basin. "I like the continuous sweep of the veins," she says.

The materials palette includes carrara marble countertops and apple-green and white backsplash tiles in basket-weave

Bright colors and stainless steel power the new look of interior designer Kristi Dinner's Denver kitchen. To save space, a shallow eating counter wraps around the walls of a stairwell.





and river-stone patterns. "It was a lot of pattern," Kristi says, "but I figured if I couldn't take some risks in my own kitchen, where could I take them?"

Everything fell neatly into place except for the cabinetry. "I really struggled to find the perfect wood, but nothing seemed right," Kristi says. "Then I remembered a picture of a kitchen with red lacquer cabinets I'd cut out of a magazine years before, and I knew that was what I wanted."

The challenge was keeping the red and green from looking like Christmas. "It was the tone of green that ultimately made it all come together," says Kristi, who designed window treatments in the same hue. She also incorporated a Greek key element into the cabinetry design. "It's layered on the red doors, but on the wall unit I did more of a cutout because of the glass," she adds. "I like the way the key ties the kitchen together." **KBI**

RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 126.

TOP LEFT: The integral sink, like the countertops, is carrara marble, a stone that conveys the vintage elegance of the home's 1920s roots. The basket-weave backsplash pattern supplies contemporary energy. **TOP RIGHT:** Kristi paired red lacquer cabinets with green-and-white tiles and fabrics to create a look that is cheerful but not Christmasy. **RIGHT:** A Greek key design on one of the cabinet doors blends a classic pattern with modern color. Porcelain knobs resemble white tiles.

