

THE GIFT

After 14 years of making due and multiple rounds of replaced appliances, Henry Goodrow's and Neil Leonard's Beacon Hill kitchen got a much-needed revival.

Below: Henry Goodrow and Neil Leonard standing at their kitchen bar. Detail of decorative tea lights — a gift from designer Barbara Baratz. **Opposite:** the two-tiered island separating the kitchen from the living room. Designer Barbara Baratz.

by Janelle Nicole Randazza



Good things come to those who wait. In the case of Neil Leonard and Henry Goodrow the wait was 14 years for the kitchen of their dreams.

When marketing executive Neil Leonard and non-profit development officer Henry Goodrow bought their Beacon Hill condo 14 years ago they moved into a stunning 1300-square foot row house, sitting in a dream location—just steps from the Boston Public Garden.

While the couple loved the bay windows and crown moulding in their condo, as well as its proximity to Boston's best restaurants and art galleries, the outdated kitchen was the bane of their beautiful new home.

"The kitchen was so eighties we just couldn't get past it, so we kept putting it off," says Leonard. "We knew we needed to do something drastic—it was like complete inertia kept us from doing anything about the kitchen."

According to Neil's sister Dee O'Leary, the "inertia" Leonard described went on for far too long. After watching her brother and his partner use their kitchen as little more than a storage space for over a decade, she decided it was time to put on her caring kid sister hat and step into action.

Dee had a friend who recently had her kitchen remodeled by Barbara Baratz, a designer at Kitchen Views Custom in Newton, to excellent results.

"She was really impressed with Barbara, so she went to the Newton store to see if she could get

us a gift certificate," says Leonard. Kitchen Views helped her to develop a gift package and for Christmas 2007, Dee presented Neil and Henry with the gift of renovation, which came in the form of a small KV gift certificate and included a consultation with Baratz.

Despite having all they could need at their fingertips, it still took the men almost a year to get in touch with the award-winning designer.

"I don't know why... It's like we were paralyzed," said Leonard.

But Baratz says she knows exactly what took them 14 years to tackle their kitchen. The art-collecting couple were actively avoiding their kitchen.

"Neither one of us are big cooks, so I don't think we were able to visualize how we could bring our love of art and design into the kitchen," says Leonard.

Baratz describes the rest of the home as a stunning blend of classic and modern, accented by Leonard's and Goodrow's impressive fine art collection and eye for color.

"On a scale of one to ten the rest of the house was a twelve, but the kitchen was desperate! It was like a dead zone in the house and it needed resuscitation. The kitchen needed CPR," says Baratz.

A fervent art collector herself, Baratz was able to immediately visualize how to bring the colors and aesthetics from the rest of the home into the languishing hearth.

"I basically looked at their gorgeous living room and began to develop a theme that would bring that

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point of view into the kitchen,” says Baratz. “The rest of their home was so beautiful and I knew so much about them from their other choices. Putting the pieces together for the kitchen was easy.”

The first step was cutting down the massive 9-foot curved wall that separated the kitchen from the rest of the home, creating an instant countertop.

“The wall was truly stunning, but it turned the kitchen into a cave. This helped open things up,” says Baratz.

After the wall came down, Leonard says, he was finally

able to see how the kitchen and the rest of the home could complement each other, rather than do battle.

“Almost immediately, I could see how Barbara wanted to bring things together,” he says.

Baratz then sat with Leonard and Goodrow to develop a color palette that would complement without mimicking the rest of the home.

“We wanted to create that line of demarcation between the living room and the kitchen, but we also wanted to build continuity,” she said.

10.1.07

Behind this wall lived the old kitchen. For the new one to emerge, the wall had to go.



START

12.7.07

The cabinets come down and the fun begins. “Get used to eating out of a portable fridge and a microwave,” says Barbara.



2.1.08

The top half of the rounded wall came down, and its imprint remained as the foundation for the bar.



In the end, Baratz and her clients selected a color scheme that she describes as contemporary-sexy.

“They’ve both said they aren’t much for cooking... But they still wanted to create that warmth and sensuality in their kitchen and we did *that* with color,” she says.

Baratz pulled from reds and tans in the living room’s color scheme, and combined them with black and metallic tones to create contrast. Each base color was represented in a mosaic backsplash seen throughout the kitchen.

“From there, we knew what cabinets would go well with the living room. They have very good taste,” says Baratz.

After Leonard and Goodrow had their color palette selected, Baratz went on to help them choose cabinetry that would bind the now open floor plan. They selected quarter sawn oak cabinets in an espresso stain, which picked up the dark tones in the mosaic backsplash and echoed the dark wood furniture in the adjacent living room.

“The quarter sawn cabinets really brought depth to the whole project. The cut creates a unique pattern and takes the stain very nicely. Quarter sawn is actually an arts and crafts aesthetic, but there was nothing arts and crafts about it here. In Neil and Henry’s home it just radiated elegance,” says Baratz.

While the pair had little to say about appliance choices, Baratz strongly recommended a Sub-Zero 700 refrigerator, which allowed them to perfectly imitate the stunning cabinetry with identical paneling.

“It really was the right choice; it tied the whole floor together. The refrigerator looked like another piece of furniture and it worked perfectly,” said Leonard.

The final touch was finding the right countertop for the now half-wall. A space that had once been the fortification that closed off the kitchen from the rest of

the home would help to define it as a showpiece.

“It was like the Berlin wall came down. We needed it to be beautiful. It was symbolic somehow,” said Barbara.

Baratz helped them to select a clean, glossy black granite countertop, that pulled together the metallics in the backsplash and the dark, textured wood of the cabinets.

“When you take a black granite like that on a curved wall you make the wall do the magic,” she says.

And magic it was. For over a decade the home was mostly quiet. But in the short time since Henry and Leonard finished the kitchen, the pair has enjoyed a newfound love for entertaining.

“One of our friends called it the best bar on Beacon Hill,” claims Leonard. “And you know something else? I even look forward to cooking now.”



Barbara Baratz has worked as a designer for some twenty years. Her resume is evidence of an unusual breadth of expertise, revealing a history in architectural, residential and office space planning and more recently within the building industry with Kitchen Views. Barbara is also responsible for several of the exquisite designs in this issue of KV magazine.

Opposite top: Newly renovated kitchen with cabinetry by DeWils, and quartersawn oak with espresso stain; countertop, polished absolute black granite.

2.15.08

The new kitchen begins to come into view as the DeWils cabinetry is installed.



3.1.08

With the wall down, the counters installed and the basics in place, it's only a matter of time and detail before the job is complete.



3.15.08

Voila!



FINISH