



**This Photo:** Tile set in a harlequin pattern adds youthful flair to the cooking area. Venetian plaster covers walls and part of the range hood.  
**Opposite:** The Palladian window and chandelier are scaled to build drama in this chic, platinum-hued kitchen.

# Fashion Finish

A California designer relies on her sense of glamour to make her kitchen perfect for entertaining.

Writer: Heather Shoning Photographer: James Carrier Field editor: Heather Lobdell



Panels conceal the refrigerator, while stainless-steel appliances in the island “pop for a jewelry-type feel,” kitchen designer Kristi Wolfe says.

Fancy parties are as important as everyday practicality for Suzanne and Rob Redfield, who host hundreds of guests each year inside the modest footprint of their 1920s Colonial Revival home in Northern California. “We entertain fairly formally,” Suzanne says, acknowledging the couple’s part in hosting fund-raising events, not to mention gatherings for the sheer fun of it. “I really love throwing parties,” she says.

With this passion for food and friends, naturally the Redfields wouldn’t purchase a home without a sufficient kitchen. Suzanne, an interior designer, originally found the room’s mix of black granite countertops and white cabinets at least palatable and its layout workable. For that reason the couple’s initial remodeling plans didn’t include the kitchen. But after poring over plans for a new family room and breakfast area, it became evident that a kitchen wall had to come down. Further remodeling was necessary to stylistically match the kitchen with new gathering spaces.

“The days of entertaining when no one entered the kitchen were gone, so we knew this room had to be fabulous,” Suzanne says.

Collaborating with kitchen designer Kristi Wolfe, Suzanne was determined to inject the remodel with her personal style and the respect she holds for fashion and glamour. “I’ve had the great luck of growing up surrounded by style,” she says. “My family was formal. My grandmother loved to entertain and everything she did, she did so beautifully.”

The two designers started with a large island, useful for serving crowds, which they bedecked with lavish corbels at each corner and topped with a stately expanse of cool marble. To balance the island’s substantial size, Suzanne ordered a large chandelier as well as a second, slightly smaller version for the breakfast area. Dripping in crystals, both fixtures were a bold statement that, she says, ran the risk of appearing overdone. “I knew if I got the kitchen right, these would be divine,” she says. Thanks to a series of savvy choices, they proved a perfect match for both rooms.

One such choice was the unusual finish on the kitchen cabinetry. “I wanted something different to match the glamour of the chandeliers,” Suzanne says. What resulted is a custom platinum-color glaze, somewhere between a pretty



**Above:** The harlequin-set stone backsplash combines the colors of the cabinetry and Venetian plaster walls into a playful, rhythmic pattern.

**Right:** Elegant scrolls on neoclassic-style corbels soften the corners of the island.



soft blue and a mellow, lustrous silver patina. She describes it as “classic, timeless, and a step above the ordinary.”

Looking fabulous was no guarantee of a fabulous dinner party, however. This kitchen had to work hard for company, so its once conventional layout was reconfigured. “I like to design workstations, not the traditional triangle that groups the sink, stove, and refrigerator,” Wolfe says. “This works well for how Suzanne uses her kitchen and makes it easier for more people to join her while she’s at work hosting”

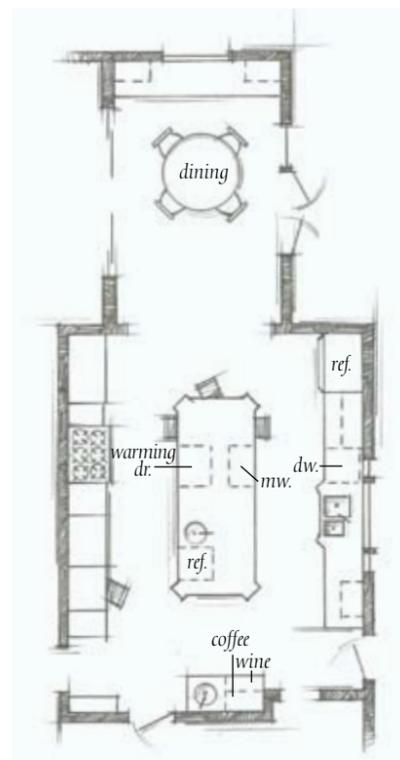
As a matter of efficiency and esthetics, many hardworking appliances are built into the center island. The perimeter is reserved for glass-front upper cabinets displaying stemware and serving pieces. This glass surround creates a light, airy feel often enhanced by pools of afternoon sun streaming from a Palladian window over the sink and bouncing off the island’s white marble top.

In one corner, the paneled refrigerators merge into cabinetry. Then there are those “social” appliances—the ones so

useful when entertaining—that Suzanne and Wolfe chose to leave exposed. These include the warming drawer in the island as well as a built-in espresso machine and wine cooler. The latter two are part of a cabinet unit that serves as a wet bar, complete with a bar sink and faucet and more glass-front cabinets holding glassware for entertaining. So much a part of the Redfields’ lifestyle, these shiny metal appliances and fixtures accessorize the room like jewels against platinum-glaze cabinets.

Glamour grows more personal in Suzanne’s choice of a jaunty harlequin-pattern stone backsplash. Its colors echo the platinum cabinets and pale limestone floors and, more importantly, reflect the family’s youth and flair. After all, beyond company, this space had to pass muster with the Redfields’ daughter, 9-year-old Isabelle.

“I love it when guests walk in and this room takes their breath away,” Suzanne says. “What I’m still surprised at is how, every day, it has the same effect on us.”



**This Photo:** The breakfast nook functions as an extension of the kitchen, linked by coordinating cabinet styles and a matching wrought-iron-and-crystal chandelier.

**Opposite:** The wet bar, situated near the formal dining room, invites guests to make themselves at home, even when the kitchen is bustling. Amenities include a built-in espresso machine, wine cooler, and stemware storage.

#### DESIGNER PICKS

**Cabinets:** Downsview Kitchens; 905/677-9354; [downsviewkitchens.com](http://downsviewkitchens.com)

**Kitchen flooring:** Paris Ceramics; 888/845-3487; [parisceramics.com](http://parisceramics.com)

**Cooktop:** Thermador; 800/656-9226; [thermador.com](http://thermador.com)

**Built-in coffeemaker:** Miele, Inc.; 800/463-0260; [miele.com](http://miele.com)

**Dishwasher drawers in island:** Fisher & Paykel Appliances, Inc.; 888/936-7872; [usa.fisherpaykel.com](http://usa.fisherpaykel.com)

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