

# Cinderella Story

A fireplace-style cooking area creates a fairy-tale ending

**P**ITY THIS POOR STEPCHILD OF A KITCHEN. BECAUSE the dining area hogged the room, the kitchen was shunted off to the perimeter. With clever design, however, what could have been a lonely area was transformed into a functional boomerang-galley kitchen.

The metamorphosis was no small feat. “The kitchen is located in the great room, where it basically confined to an angled wall,” says kitchen designer Melissa Smith. “That’s all the space we had to deal with as far as installing tall cabinets and appliances.”

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**DESIGNER**

Melissa Smith, CKD  
Hermitage Kitchen Design Gallery  
Franklin, Tennessee

A cluster of columns—in both full- and half-height sizes—unify the space and help smooth the transition from kitchen to dining area.



LEFT: Tall appliance installations, like the refrigerator and the range hood, had to be located on the “inside” wall of the kitchen to avoid blocking the view to the adjoining dining area.

Stuck behind the dining area, some element of the kitchen had to pop out visually or else the room would just die. Smith created a hearth-like cooking alcove to fill that role, and it turned out to be the key to the entire kitchen design.

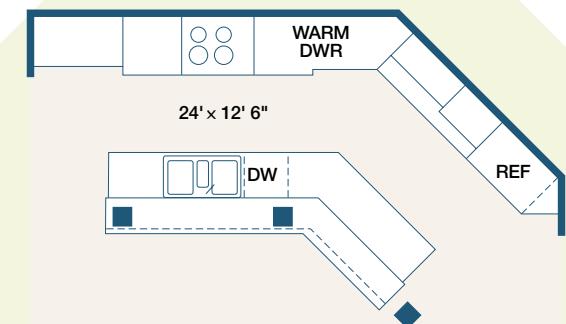
Three factors help the hearth stand out: location, material and lighting. Smith placed the hearth in the center of the back wall and specified that it be made of stacked stone (actually, a convincing synthetic) to match the fireplace on the other side of the room. The stone stands out from the cabinets, and the lighting further enhances the contrast.

The hearth also taps into Bowling Green, Kentucky, homeowner Shirley Scott’s love of antiques. Thus, the kitchen boasts touches that give it that century-old feel. The cabinets, for example, are painted cherry, heavily distressed to reveal the wood. “Shirley has a real appreciation of history,” Smith says, “and the finishes reflect that. Take a look at one of the doors; it looks like it could have come off an old pie safe.”



RIGHT: A pull-out faucet eliminates the need for a separate veggie sprayer—a constructive step away from the overcrowded sink deck.

## Floor Plan



FLOOR PLAN: STEVEN STANKIEWICZ

ABOVE: The contemporary open floor plan of this kitchen is surprisingly compatible with the room’s traditional style.

THE SPLIT-LEVEL ISLAND SERVES AS A BUFFET AND VISUAL BARRIER



LEFT: From its arched stone “firebox” opening to the carved-wood mantel detail, a traditional hearth is reinterpreted as the surround for a five-burner gas cooktop.

From that same page, Smith specified a honed finish on the granite countertops. “It’s a nice effect when you’re trying to make something that’s new look a little bit timeworn,” she says.

Scott not only likes the old-fashioned look, she finds herself endlessly enamored of the newfangled conveniences. “My other kitchen had more space, but it was not laid out as conveniently,” she says. “I have pullouts on either side of the cooktop that hold all my spices and seasonings, and they are such timesavers,” she continues. “They’re right there when I’m preparing dishes.”

Opposite the powerhouse back wall is a dogleg prep island with a split-level countertop. This area gets a workout when Scott embarks on a baking binge; the high countertop serves as a buffet when she entertains, which she does frequently.

“It seems like a lot of people have been in and out of the room ever since the kitchen was completed. I find it fun to have company when you’re cooking,” she says enthusiastically.

And in a welcome twist to the fairy-tale plot, at midnight the newly transformed kitchen does not turn into a pumpkin. ■



ABOVE: A spice garage set conveniently placed alongside the cooktop makes it easy to fine-tune seasonings while preparing meals.