

Killer Kitchens

Feast your eyes on three showstopping kitchens in Arlington and McLean.

Different Strokes

Caroline and Jason Hacker rented a townhouse before buying their vintage, split-foyer home in McLean's Potomac Hills neighborhood in 2009. It was a perfect starter home (they have two young kids and two dogs), but the house had a few issues.



Photo by Robert Radifera

"It was the crème de la crème for 1961, complete with a linoleum kitchen floor and no place for the fridge; it just kind of stood against the wall," says Caroline, a marketing professional serving tech start-ups on the West Coast. (Jason is founder of the IT consulting firm Tech Plumber, based in McLean.)

So when Jason's father offered to help finance a modest kitchen renovation, the couple jumped at the chance. Soon they were ironing out the details of a three-month makeover with Nadia Subaran, co-founder of Aidan Design in Silver Spring, Md., and DP Weaver Builders, based in Chevy Chase.

Subaran's first move was to fix some past wrongs. "There was an addition on the back of the house, but the [old] exterior window was still in place and it just wasn't working," says the designer, who ultimately reconfigured the window and removed a wall to create a niche for the fridge.

When it came to fixtures and finishes, the Hackers went a little offbeat. The countertops are soapstone, a soft, natural stone that has a unique look, but is prone to dings. "Soapstone is not for everybody," Caroline concedes. "It scratches easily, but you can also buff it out. It's like a pair of well-worn jeans and it looks different every day."

For the walls, they chose penny-round tile, which gives the kitchen a distinctive, almost retro aesthetic. Yellow barstools provide a pop of color against the tableau of white and gray. "The penny tile is my favorite thing about the room," Caroline says. "That and having a garbage can that hides inside a drawer—I love that."

Sometimes it's the littlest things that have the biggest impact.

Key Ingredients:

- A stand-alone unit by Brookhaven (which designer Nadia Subaran made by attaching three cabinet modules together) provides additional kitchen storage
- Penny-round tile with blue and brown edging provides a subtle, yet interesting texture.
- The cabinets are also semi-custom units by Brookhaven, a division of Wood-Mode.
- In lieu of stainless steel, the couple opted for Whirlpool appliances with white veneers. The stove comes from Bertazzoni by way of Italy.