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Designer Greg Hodson gutted the kitchen in an effort to expand its space and eliminate its dated '80s décor. He extended the kitchen area by taking space from an unnecessary hallway that ran behind the room. Hodson also removed a dropped ceiling structure and raised the freshly detailed ceiling to the roof beams.



modern makeover

DESIGNER GREG HODSON PERFORMS A STYLISH ROOM
RESCUE ON A SALT LAKE CITY KITCHEN

BY BRAD MEE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOT ZIMMERMAN

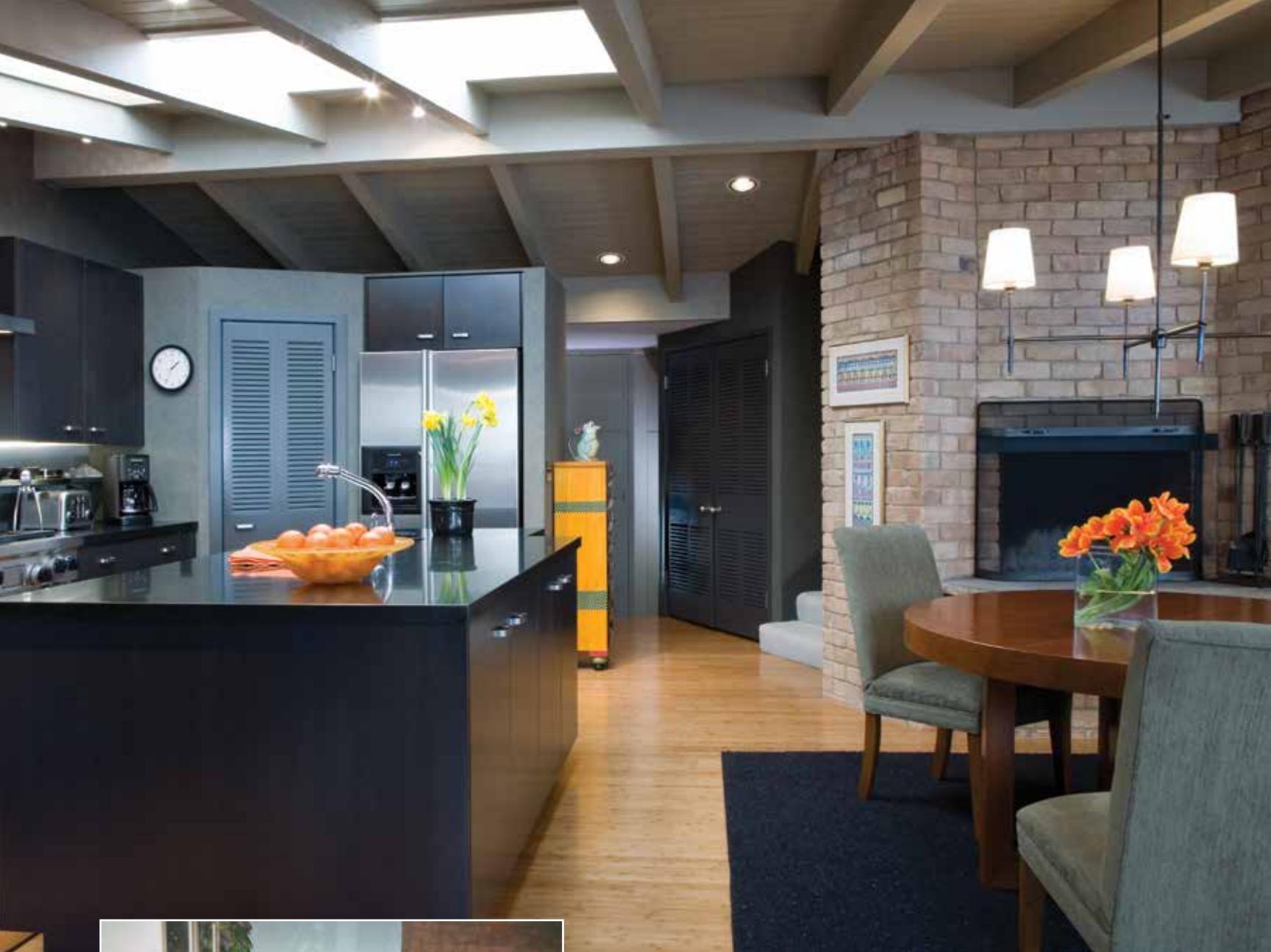
At first glance, it's difficult to believe that Gordon and Robin Roberts' kitchen used to be a poorly laid out space garbed in the trendy tones and treatments of the 1980s. As part of a great room that anchors their 1950s home located in Salt Lake's St. Mary's neighborhood, the once-outdated kitchen did little to charm the couple or their home. So in 2004, they decided a change was in order. With no idea of the scope of the project, they put the wheels in motion.

"The old appliances were what really motivated the remodel," says Robin, who points to old photographs of an aged refrigerator and dishwasher set in a room drowning in white-washed cabinetry and rose-colored tile. "We initially planned on just replacing the appliances and incorporating them into the existing space," she adds, explaining that Gordon agreed to only a limited makeover. But secretly Robin aspired to larger changes. After admiring

a friend's dynamic home renovation completed by designer Greg Hodson of Johnson & Hodson Design, she began to dream of a more extensive kitchen re-do.

The couple presented photographs of their out-of-date kitchen to Hodson and asked him to visit their house in person. A dramatic example of mid-century modern architecture, the 1957 home boasts a play of intersecting planes—slanted ceilings, expansive windows,



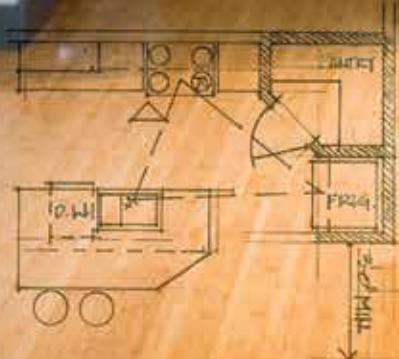


A low ceiling, suspended cabinets, and an island that encroached on the adjoining dining area made the kitchen space cramped and claustrophobic. Raising the ceiling, removing the dropped cabinets, and inching the new island closer to the cooking area opened the area and made the room feel brighter and more welcoming.

angled walls—that define its progressive design. The kitchen, as Hodson soon discovered, was an entirely different story.

"The minute I saw the kitchen I thought, 'How did this get here?'" says Hodson, reacting to the dwelling's cooking space, remodeled in the 1980s. "It had no relation to the amazing architecture and appeared almost forced on the home." He recognized a need for more than just appliance replacement and offered to draw up plans for a new kitchen layout. After the many meetings that followed, and with Hodson's gentle urging, Robin's longing, and Gordon's growing appreciation, the project evolved into a complete kitchen remodel that even included adjacent spaces. "The problem with renovating only part of a home in which rooms open to each other is determining at what point to stop," says Hodson. As a result, he and his clients created a multi-phase remodeling plan for the entire home with phase one, of course, focusing on the kitchen.

The Roberts' kitchen remodel addressed two basic items: the room's functionality and its aesthetics. From the get-go, the room's confined space combined with a poor working layout meant the kitchen would need to be



The old refrigerator sat isolated far from the working area of the original, poorly laid-out kitchen. Designer Greg Hodson created an efficient work triangle by placing a new state-of-the-art fridge closer to the new sink and commercial-grade stove.



reconfigured and enlarged. To create more square footage, Hodson looked to adjacent areas from which he could steal space. He found what he was looking for in an unnecessary hallway running behind the kitchen. He eliminated the passageway and used it's space to elongate the kitchen and create a large pantry. Hodson also set his sights on a low overhang that defined the end of the kitchen. He convinced the homeowners that by removing this needless feature and raising the ceiling to the roof beams, the kitchen would feel larger. The change would also expand the home's strong architectural roofline, already visible at the other end of the room. "The open ceiling is by far my favorite part of the kitchen remodel," says Gordon.

The third part of Hodson's space-creating design targeted a bank of low-hanging cabinets and the boxy island above which they were suspended. "Even though the kitchen was open to the dining and living areas, these cabinets made me feel isolated in the kitchen," says Robin. Hodson removed the cabinets and replaced the underlying island with a sleeker version that he positioned farther into the kitchen. "It helped create a better, more defined work area in the kitchen, while enlarging the neighboring dining space," he says.

To improve the kitchen's functional flow, Hodson replaced and repositioned the appliances, creating a streamlined work triangle in which the new refrigerator, stove, oven, and sink are now located, just a few steps from each other. He also moved the sink from the back countertop, incorporating it in the new island. This enables Robin

Dark tile, excessive cabinetry, and a sink positioned on the back wall created a less-than-inviting kitchen in which to work. By crowning the stove with a high-style hood and relocating the sink into the custom-built island, Hodson provided the homeowners with a more spacious area in which to cook and the ability to look into the great room—rather than at a wall—while standing at the sink.







Function and form combine to create the appeal of this high-style kitchen (clockwise from upper left): An adjacent hallway provides the perfect location for a nook that houses a new wine cooler and serving area. Stainless steel on the countertops, backsplash, and under counter shelves serves as an easy-care, dynamic looking surface for the room. Custom cabinetry provides plentiful, easily accessible storage throughout the room. A cutting-edge, modern range hood forms a striking focal point above the commercial-grade stove.

and Gordon to look into the great room, rather than at a wall, while working at the sink. It also provides a vantage point from which to admire all the decorative details Hodson lavished upon the room.

Hodson infused the kitchen with materials and colors that purposefully enhance rather than compete with the home's strong architecture and organic nature. He replaced the existing purple industrial carpet with golden bamboo floors that run throughout the kitchen and great room. He custom-designed alder cabinets and finished them in a semi-transparent black finish Robin calls "crude oil." He chose black Absolute granite for the counter tops—honed to eliminate the glitzy finish—and enlisted various shades of green, from sage to dark moss, to supplant the out-of-place blues and grays that served as the base in the previous décor.

When asked for advice to pass onto others considering a kitchen remodel, the happy homeowners don't hesitate. "Don't create unreasonable deadlines for the project to be completed," says Robin, whose patience was well rewarded. She also advises others to see previous projects created by the designer they consider hiring. "It instills a sense of confidence when you know the person in charge is up to the task." Gordon's advice is more succinct, "Hire Greg," he says. It's a good thing he feels this way. With the first phase of the remodel just recently completed, he and Robin can look forward to much more work with Hodson in phase two. ■

Interior Design: Greg Hodson, Johnson & Hodson Design, SLC
Contractor: Jerry Davis, Davis & Davis Construction, Taylorsville

GREG HODSON



A.DAM FINKE

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Designer Greg Hodson serves up a number of ideas that helped him execute this dynamic kitchen remodel:

PAST PERFECT

If an outdated kitchen is cramping your home's style, update it, but respect the authentic character of your home—architecture, vintage features, and natural settings—when making design decisions. Staying true to the home's spirit, rather than following the fads and fashion of the moment, will create results that will withstand the test of time.

LET IT FLOW

In homes in which the kitchen is visually or spatially connected to other areas of the home—as in a great room—incorporate elements common to both spaces to create a sense of continuity and seamless design. Flooring, wall color, lighting fixtures, and wood tones are just a few of the many elements that can decoratively link connected spaces.

FAVOR FUNCTION

Always keep the practical aspect of the room in mind. Place appliances in an efficient working layout, select sensible, easy-to-maintain work surfaces (like granite and stainless steel), provide abundant task and ambient lighting, and supply ample and functional storage by incorporating customized cabinets and pantry space.

THINK BIG

When remodeling small kitchens, look outside of the room for additional space. Whether it's an adjoining hallway, a coat closet, an oversized pantry, or a part of an adjacent room, there is almost always someplace nearby with space you can appropriate for a kitchen enlargement.

OPEN UP

Remove or alter visual space-blockers that make a kitchen feel cramped. Common offenders include low ceilings, bulky window coverings, oversized fixtures, and needless barriers often cloaked as suspended cabinets, hulking islands, or gratuitous dividing walls.

GO AU NATUREL

If you lean toward an organic look, let your surfaces help establish this design direction. Use transparent stains rather than opaque paints on wood-grained surfaces, choose honed rather than polished granite to provide a non-flashy finish, incorporate wood or stone flooring, and select soothing, natural colors—sage, gold, and charcoal—to wrap the room with a natural ambience.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Design for yourself and include features special to you. This kitchen's high-style range hood, warming drawer, and wine refrigerator were just a few of the extras that helped make the Roberts' kitchen perfect—and personalized—for them.