

Kitchen Design

Kitchen of the Week

Kitchen of the Week: A Blend of Rustic and Contemporary Style

A designer uses white oak, quartzite and mixed metals to create visual appeal in this open-concept galley kitchen

Becky Harris

yesterday

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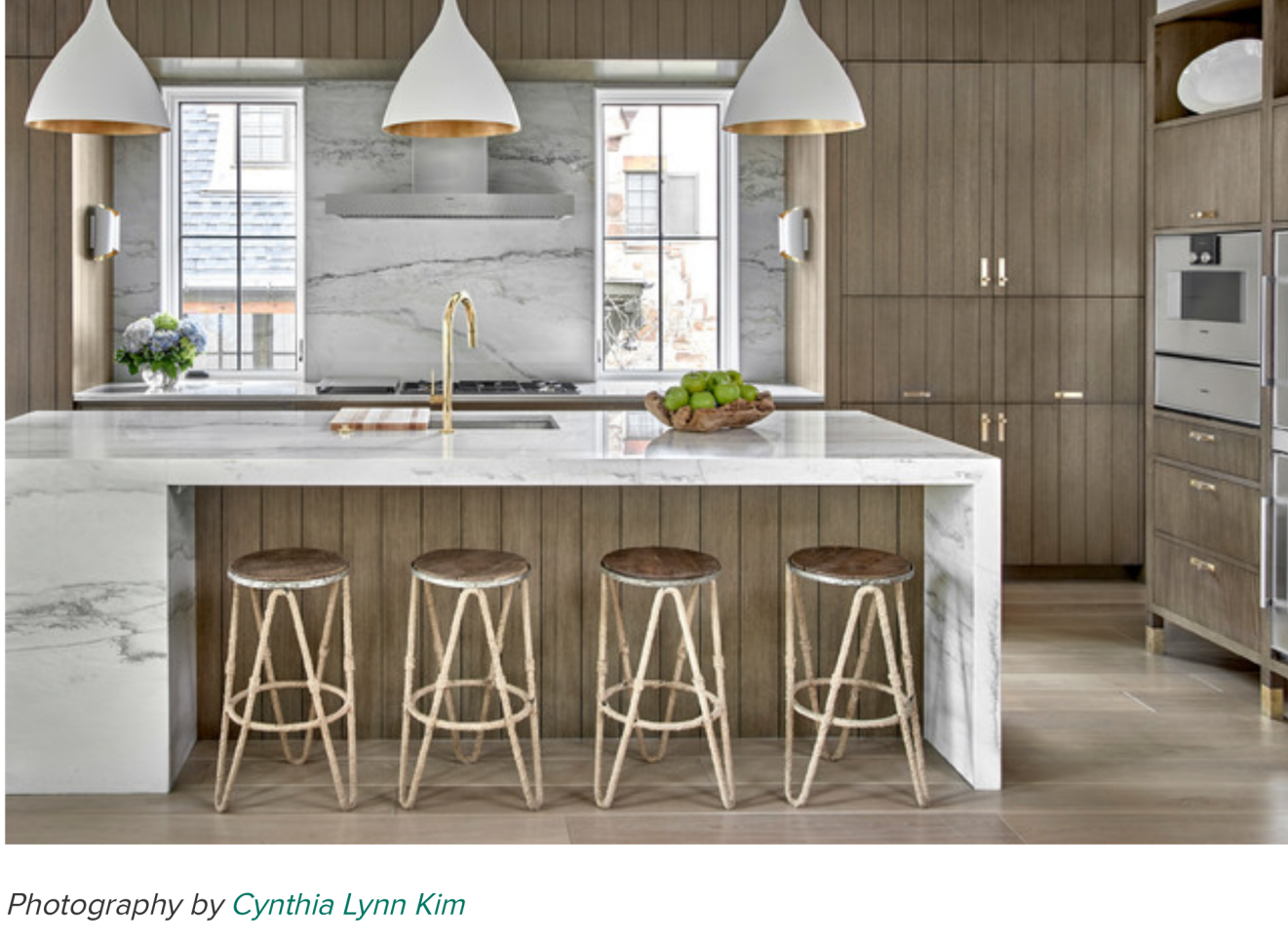
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Warm and cool, rough and sleek, contemporary and traditional — these contrasts make this suburban Chicago kitchen inviting while providing a beautiful view from the adjacent family room. Kitchen and cabinet designer Laura O'Brien used a mix of white oak, quartzite, stainless steel and brass to give the space a beautiful mix of textures. And she laid the room out in a way that promotes efficiency while providing a lovely view.



Photography by Cynthia Lynn Kim

Kitchen at a Glance
Who lives here: A family
Location: Hinsdale, Illinois
Size: 275 square feet (26 square meters); 12½ by 22 feet
Designers: Laura O'Brien of [O'Brien Harris](#) (Kitchen design) and Moment Design (architecture)
Builder: Julie Laux of [J Jordan Homes](#)

This home was a new build, and O'Brien collaborated with builder Julie Laux on the design. The goal was to create a kitchen that cooks would love and that would work well for gatherings. "The lot sizes here are small, so we had to work out a relatively compact floor plan," O'Brien says. "This meant that the kitchen would be fully open to the family room." About 275 square feet was allocated for the kitchen, and O'Brien made the most of it.

This is the view from the family room. "The approach was to integrate the kitchen into the architecture, because it is completely within view of the family room. The design of this wall was driven by this openness," O'Brien says. A hint of farmhouse nostalgia inspired the white oak cabinetry, while the clean lines and contemporary lighting provide a sleek look.

The designer wanted the window wall to look like a paneled wall, so for the cabinetry she used kerfed wood, which has grooves that make it look like paneling. She hid the fridge behind the kerfed wood on the left; a pantry cabinet is on the right. The middle of the pantry cabinet contains two appliance garages — those doors flip up.

"I also needed to deemphasize the vent hood and I felt that using wood on it would make it too bulky," O'Brien says. "Using the sleek stainless steel makes it fade into the background, putting the focus on the windows."

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Another attention grabber is the beautiful veining in the Calacatta quartzite on the countertop and backsplash. "The island came out of a sketch," O'Brien says. "The big block of stone on the left makes it asymmetrical, sculptural and is just a cool, edgy factor. We had to give up a seat and a little bit of storage to do this, but it was worth it. It really elevated the aesthetic."

Lighting: *Agnes pendants* and *Selfoss sconces*, Visual Comfort; **sink:** *Kohler*; **faucet:** *California Faucets*

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Hardware: *Buster + Punch* in satin brass

The island measures 10 by 3½ feet. It contains the dishwasher, a recycling pullout, storage and the kitchen sink.

This photo also provides the best look at the graining in the cabinetry wood. It is rift and quartered white oak with a warm umber stain. Quartered means the log is first cut into quarters before boards are cut. Rift refers to cutting these pieces at an angle that's perpendicular to the log's growth rings. The result is the cleanest-looking grain pattern possible. And in this kitchen, the verticality of that pattern lends a more contemporary look. So do the inset cabinetry's slab doors and drawers.

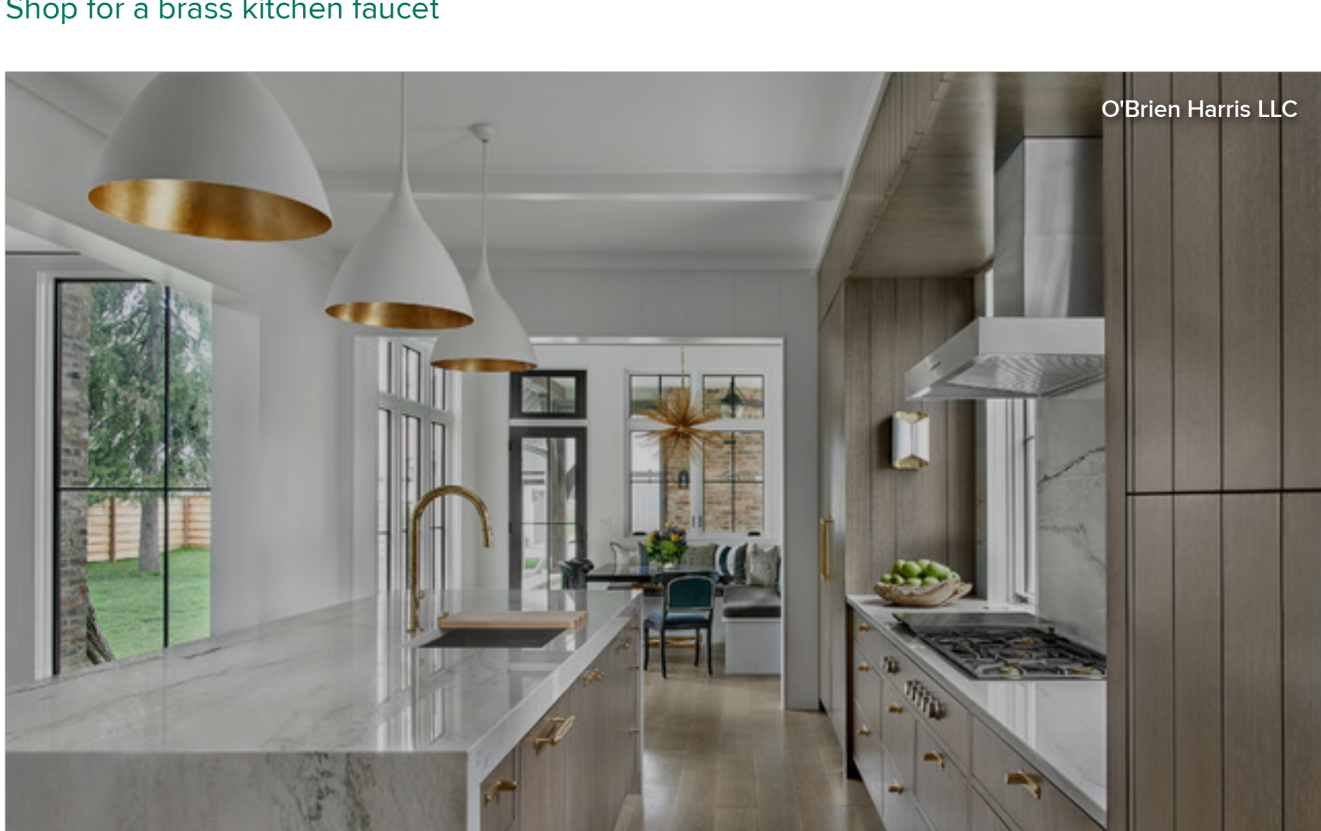


The kitchen layout is a wide galley. "A galley is really the most efficient kitchen layout," O'Brien says. While she was able to hide the fridge, freezer and dishwasher with cabinetry panels, there was no hiding the ovens. So O'Brien crafted a large furniture piece to house the suite of Gaggenau appliances. She tucked it to the side to keep it out of view from the family room. "Gaggenau tends to show up in super contemporary, minimalist kitchens, so it was fun to use it in a more farmhouse-inspired space," O'Brien says. "I decided to put heavy appliances in a piece that looked light — this was another one of the juxtapositions in this room."

The appliance casework piece includes two wall ovens, a built-in coffee maker, a steam oven and two warming drawers. To make it look light, O'Brien added brass-wrapped legs, placed open cubbies along the top and stopped the piece well short of the ceiling. "While this looks lighter, we had to put extra support in the bottom to make it structurally sound for all these heavy appliances," she says.

The opening to the left of the appliances leads to the formal dining room.

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With the contemporary appliances and vent hood providing a cool and sleek look in stainless steel, O'Brien chose warm brass decorative elements for contrast. The pendant lights and sconces add contemporary silhouettes to the mix, while the cabinet hardware is traditional.

The flooring is wide-plank, prefinished white oak. "It's important to make sure that tones coordinate but don't match," O'Brien says. "Here we stained the cabinets darker than the flooring."

There's also a banquette off the kitchen that can serve as eat-in space. The glass door leads to a patio with a dining table.

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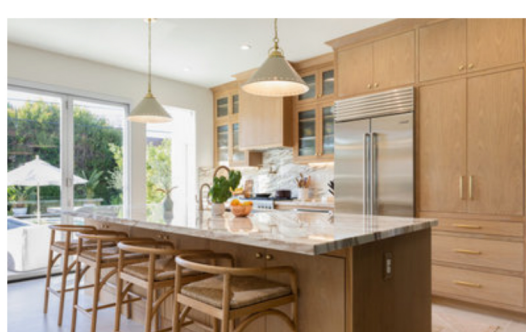
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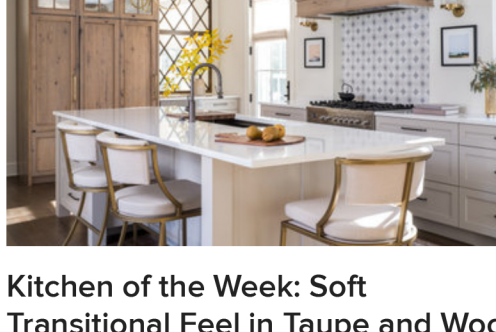
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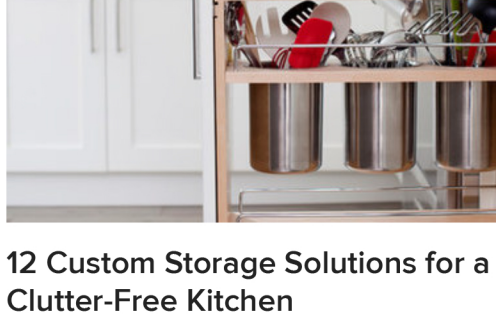
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