

NARI MINNESOTA –
2026 ROTY AWARDS
PROJECT: A KITCHEN REFINED
CATEGORY: KITCHEN \$50,000-\$100,000

PROJECT SUMMARY

The original 1970s kitchen was outdated both aesthetically and functionally. Enclosed from the formal dining room and partially separated from the family room, the layout restricted circulation and made entertaining difficult.

To improve flow and connectivity, we removed the wall between the kitchen and formal dining room and eliminated the peninsula separating the kitchen from the family room. An existing deep built-in buffet was no longer needed, so rather than waste that valuable depth, we reversed the recess into the adjoining foyer, creating an architectural niche for displaying the homeowner's collected pieces.

Within the galley layout, careful attention was given to balance and symmetry. Stained maple upper cabinets anchor both sides of the kitchen, while countertop-level cabinetry provides concealed storage for everyday appliances and necessities. A combination of soft beige cabinetry, warm maple, quartz countertops, and gold accents creates a sophisticated yet inviting palette.

Layered lighting was equally important to the design. Recessed ceiling fixtures provide overall illumination, undercabinet lighting enhances task areas, and integrated LED lighting within the glass cabinetry adds warmth and highlights the homeowners' display pieces.

Storage was thoughtfully planned throughout, with two large pantry cabinets featuring rollouts, oversized drawer banks, dedicated utensil and spice pullouts, and appliance garages that keep countertops uncluttered.

The result is a kitchen that feels significantly larger without adding square footage—balancing beauty with thoughtful functionality while creating an open, welcoming space designed for everyday living, entertaining, and the homeowners' love of beautiful design.

CLIENT WISHES / GOALS

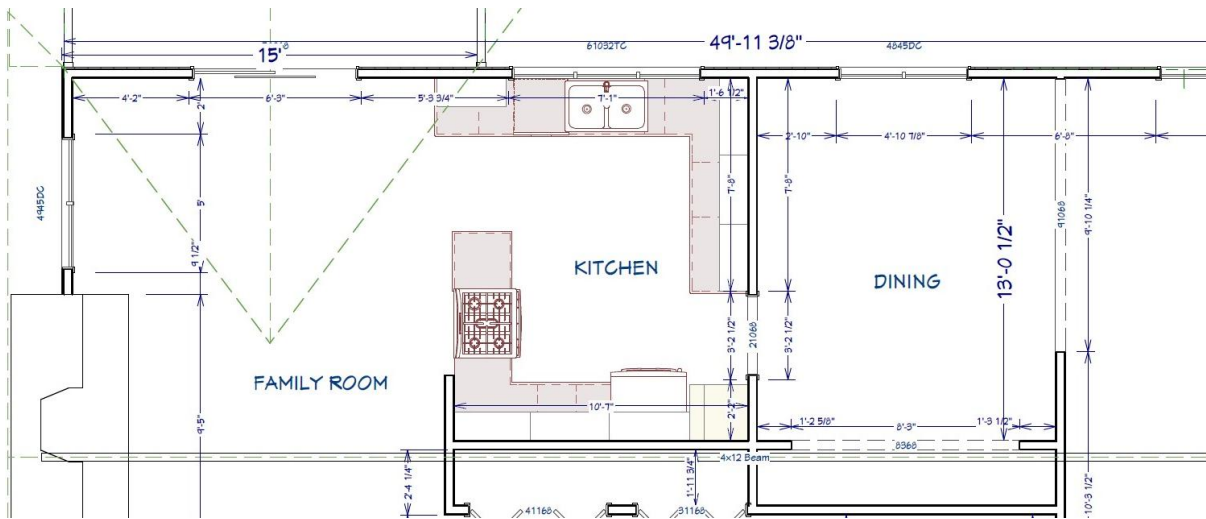
- Incorporate warm tones while still brightening the space.
- Open kitchen to the family and dining spaces
- Paneled appliances
- Glass cabinets to display pretty items
- Countertop storage to hide unsightly items

DESIGN ELEMENTS

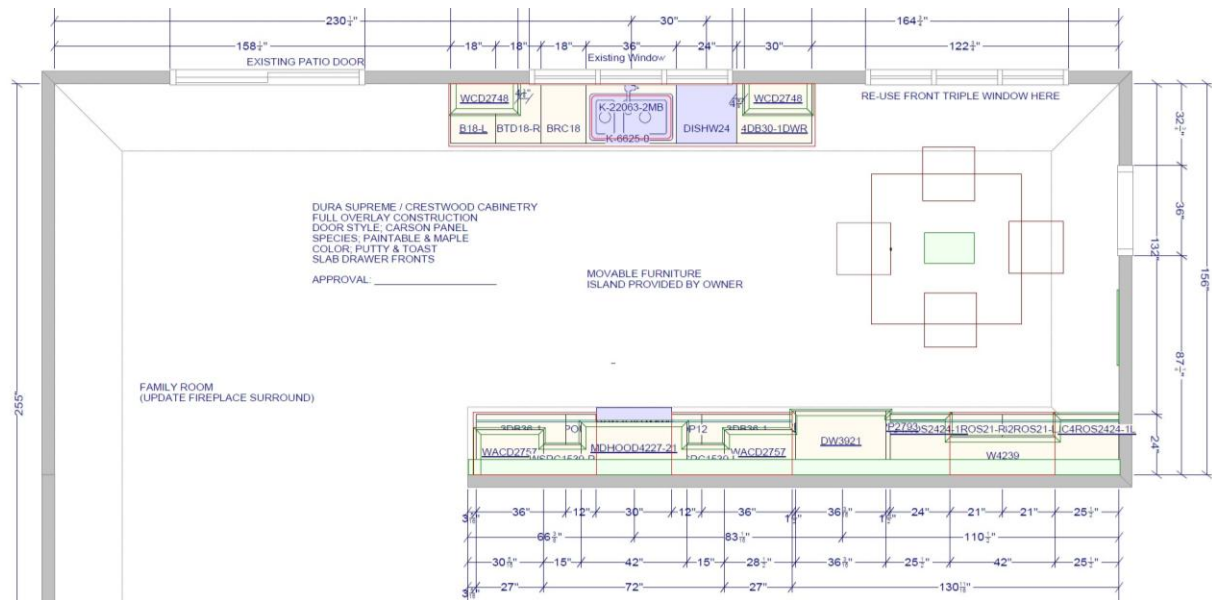
- Soft beige cabinetry with warm stained maple for a layered, inviting look.
- Quartz countertops with a full height backsplash at the stove mixed with white subway tiles at the sink and buffet.
- Modern appliances including a paneled refrigerator and dishwasher
- Gold plumbing fixtures and cabinet hardware
- A movable island provides both beauty and flexibility. We installed an outlet in the floor underneath for access to electricity when needed.
- Countertop-level upper cabinets conceal everyday necessities, while oversized drawers and pullouts maximize accessible storage.
- Glass-front upper cabinetry helps break up the solid cabinetry and gives the homeowner additional space to display some of her favorite pieces.



BEFORE FLOOR PLAN



AFTER FLOOR PLAN



CHALLENGES

While this kitchen did not present major structural obstacles, careful planning was essential to successfully integrate new features within the existing home. The new exhaust hood was strategically vented through an unused wall cavity and out through the roof, while the pot filler was conveniently supplied from plumbing near the mechanical room below.

Designing spaces for clients is always a challenge in itself. Trying to give homeowners everything they want and need within a confined space—while maintaining good flow, maximizing storage, and creating a beautiful, cohesive design—is what makes every remodel unique. Finding thoughtful solutions to those challenges and seeing everything come together is incredibly satisfying, especially when the finished space not only meets but exceeds the homeowners' expectations.

ELEVATIONS



RENDERINGS



BEFORE



Removing a portion of the wall and the existing peninsula opened the kitchen to the family room, creating a more spacious feel and improving the flow between the two spaces. Relocating the range to the wall allowed it to become a focal point of the new kitchen, highlighted by a custom hood crafted from fluted oak panels salvaged from the original kitchen. The range is flanked by two pullouts, one is to hold utensils and the other for spices, etc. Balance was very important to the homeowner.

AFTER



BEFORE



In this view, you can see the original fluted oak paneling that was carefully saved and repurposed on the new custom range hood. The reimagined kitchen layout provides better workflow, while the movable center island adds flexibility and function. A floor outlet beneath the island provides convenient access to power when needed. From the kitchen, a beautiful sightline extends through the new primary bedroom and into the walk-in closet, where the homeowner's treasured family heirloom armoire becomes a focal point.

AFTER



BEFORE



The original kitchen window was preserved and refreshed with a new coat of paint, then framed by warm, stained maple cabinetry with integrated LED lighting. Setting the cabinets directly on the countertop gave them a taller, more substantial presence while allowing them to remain below the existing ceiling beams. A paneled dishwasher seamlessly blends into the surrounding cabinetry, maintaining the kitchen's clean, cohesive look.

AFTER



BEFORE



The new eat-in dining area incorporates pantry storage and a built-in buffet as a seamless extension of the kitchen. Carrying the cabinetry into this space visually expands the kitchen while providing additional storage and a beautiful, functional connection between the two areas.

AFTER



BEFORE



This view shows the new wall separating the primary suite from the dining area. We were also able to remove the step and make the two spaces one level.

AFTER



AFTER

