

Barbara Ballinger • Margaret Crane

# Kitchen Conversations

SHARING SECRETS TO KITCHEN DESIGN SUCCESS



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## Budget Remodels & Facelifts

After purchasing a new home with a kitchen that needs work, you may panic. Your funds to remodel are limited. But cosmetic tweaks can make the room look and work better for you without unraveling your cash flow.

Perfect kitchens tend to live in our dreams. Most need work or may not appeal to our taste. Walking into some might take you back in time and remind you of your grandmother's house or your parents' house—and not in the best of ways. Yet, it could be in good condition and still be sufficient for cooking, bringing in takeout food, and entertaining. A simple, inexpensive redo might be your best strategy.

To do this, we might all take a cue from Julia Child. Child's Cambridge, Massachusetts 20-by-14-foot kitchen, designed by her husband Paul in 1961, is on display at the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. It exudes dated charm and features original green cabinets, a big gas range, wooden countertops, and a serious cook's lineup of pots and pans on walls. Even with its old wooden table at the center of the room—no fancy built-in island—many adore it because it oozed charm and patina and belonged to Julia, who needs no last name. This is the place where she cooked and shared her love of food with friends, family, and (eventually) millions of readers and TV viewers. Magic happened there. She often referred to her kitchen as the center and heart of her house.

It's interesting to note that when Julia became a TV cooking star for the last three of her 1990s shows, her producers didn't overhaul the room completely. Instead, they made tweaks by removing a table, chairs, and back wall of cabinets, adding curtains, and installing a central cooking island, according to the National Museum. The room still wasn't likely in the running for any best-looking or well-organized design awards. Yet, it won our hearts because it reflected her personal imprint.

The point is this: rather than an expensive overhaul, spend money on the parts of the room that give you greatest joy. Replace what doesn't work functionally or aesthetically within reason and set a budget to change out parts that make you cringe each time you step into the room. This is about a kitchen touch-up; a way to achieve more of your personal vision reasonably and inexpensively, especially before putting your home on the market.

**Opposite** Hand-forged by skilled artisans, Ashley Norton's hammered hardware in satin brass features hammer marks for a rustic, relaxed feel. The texture offers designers and homeowners more of a custom look and adds a touch of luxury in any kitchen. The new hammered style is available for an array of Ashley Norton hardware and available in all the company's available finishes.