

THE KITCHEN ISSUE 2025

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JUDITH LARSON





For architects and designers who spend their careers creating dream kitchens for others, designing their own space presents a unique opportunity to practice what they preach. Judith Larson's renovation of the kitchen in her own 7,000-square-foot home in New Canaan, CT, proves that sometimes the best laboratory for innovation is your own backyard.

"We kept bumping into each other when we were cooking," says Judith, principal designer of Judith Larson Associates, LLC, describing how the existing kitchen felt surprisingly cramped for such a grand home. The current size was a driver for this kitchen renovation, which included a thoughtful addition for a light-filled breakfast room, flanked by windows on three sides, and crowned with skylights. This expansion created space for what would become the heart of the renovation: a substantial 10.5-foot island that seamlessly connects the cooking and dining areas.

The aesthetic and design shine through in the details. Just as Judith recommends her clients choose colors that feel natural to them instead of trendy hues, she selected a soft green—a color she considers "almost neutral" because it serves as nature's backdrop. "It works with everything," she notes, "including Christmas decorations and fall pumpkins and gourds."

Beyond aesthetics, the kitchen's functionality reflects years of professional insight. Deep drawers beneath the cooktop store pots with their lids, eliminating the common frustration of matching containers to covers. A unique dual-cooking setup features both induction and gas, acknowledging that while induction represents the future, sometimes tradition—along with backup power options—matters, too.

Natural light became a crucial element within the design. A former door was transformed into a large multipaned awning window above a secondary sink, while a clever pass-





through to the mudroom creates a welcoming connection to the entry. “When people come in, you can immediately greet them without having to go out and around,” Judith explains.

The space isn’t just about the new; it seamlessly harmonizes with existing elements, including beautiful, antique, reclaimed beams and a double-sided fireplace. Cabinet hardware in white bronze offers a refined touch while complementing the rustic beams, an interesting pairing that creates perfect balance. Upper cabinets stop short of the ceiling, reading more like furniture than built-ins—a subtle detail that adds to the room’s welcoming feel.

Perhaps most tellingly, this kitchen has become more than just a place to cook. “I have an office, but I prefer sitting at the island with my laptop,” the designer admits. It’s a testament to successful kitchen design—when the person who created it chooses to spend her day there, you know something special has been achieved. ♦

Resource: Builder: Judith Larson Associates; Judith Larson, Principal Designer; New Canaan, CT; 203.972.1409; gardinerlarsonhomes.com.