

**Kitchens**

ALL ABOUT THE HOUSE  
**location**  
 ORINDA, CA  
**built**  
 1978

**house style**  
 TWO-LEVEL RANCH  
 3,400 SQ. FT.  
 5 BEDROOMS  
 3 BATHS

# heart of the home

This remodeled California kitchen is now the center of attention.

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**D**rab cabinets and an awkward layout once defined the 418-square-foot kitchen where physicians Karen Carothers and Robert Eppley prepared meals for their kids, Sarah, 20, Emma, 16, and Robert, 14. Tired of the space, the couple called on designer Julie Williams, CKD, CBD, of Novato, CA, who created a better layout, which would take advantage of the views of the lush backyard. The plan called for separate areas, each with its own purpose: a food-prep station, a desk, a breakfast nook, and a beverage bar surrounding a center island that acts as command central. Once completed, the new kitchen usurped the family room as the main gathering spot of the house. Homework spread out on the island is the typical backdrop to the flow of family conversation. It's just what these doctors ordered.



**BEFORE**



**SHED SOME LIGHT** Dark and outdated, the former kitchen felt closed in.

**LET IT FLOW** For continuity, the dark stain on the polished wood floor echoes the finish on the island.

**WHITE AND LIGHT** Natural Calacatta Oro honed marble from IRG ([marblecompany.com](http://marblecompany.com)) tops the center island.



**HOT ZONE** A six-burner Dacor gas cooktop ([dacor.com](http://dacor.com)) is large enough to make big family meals.

**SINK WITH A VIEW** The undermount Oliveri sink ([oliverisinks.com](http://oliverisinks.com)) and KWC faucet ([kwc-america.com](http://kwc-america.com)) shine.

**MIX IT UP** The island's wenge-veneered base sets off custom white-painted maple cabinets.

**BE SEATED** Sleek LEM piston stools from Design Within Reach ([dwr.com](http://dwr.com)) let the family take in the view.

A darker paint color is the perfect choice for this space, as the large expanse of windows lets in abundant sunlight, brightening up the room.

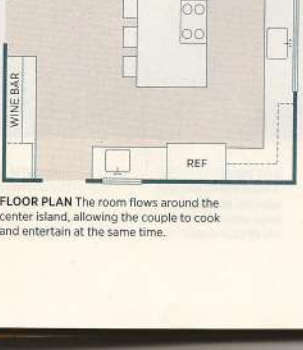
**BEFORE**



**DON'T MESS WITH SUCCESS** The designer liked the placement of the sink and the fridge, above, so new models were simply swapped in.



**LIGHT MEALS SERVED** The cozy breakfast nook is bordered by walls of glass that flood the space with natural light. The gray paint color, Gray Shower ([benjaminmoore.com](http://benjaminmoore.com)), grounds the room.



**FLOOR PLAN** The room flows around the center island, allowing the couple to cook and entertain at the same time.

FLOOR PLAN: STEVE STANGELWICZ



**MAIN ATTRACTION** Perimeter cabinets were painted in a matte white finish, helping the dark wood island stand out as a focal point. The Liebherr fridge ([liebherr.us](http://liebherr.us)) has panels in the same white.



**WORKING TOGETHER** The clean lines of the Shaker-style cabinets are a fine backdrop for the textured cast-bronze knobs and pulls from Du Verre ([duverre.com](http://duverre.com)).

**RETAIN DETAILS** The pass-through to the dining room is original to the house and allows light and conversation to flow from room to room.

**WET ZONE** Mocha-colored Caesar-Stone countertops ([caesarstone.com](http://caesarstone.com)) grace the perimeter cabinets, including the surround for the Oliveri prep sink.

**COMBINE COLORS** The backsplash: Gigi's Groovy Stix glass mosaic in Peace Man Place from Alys Edwards Tile & Stone (714-917-6720); a chocolate liner by ANN SACKS ([annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com)) and a Lavagna matte tile by LEA Mood ([ceramictiledesign.net](http://ceramictiledesign.net)).



The in-kitchen desk by Columbia Cabinets ([columbiacabinets.com](http://columbiacabinets.com)) has pocket doors that close shelves to conceal clutter. The desk top is Sonora (2.dupont.com).

"The new kitchen has brought our family closer together. Nobody goes to the family room anymore, which is nice because we talk to each other more," says Karen Carothers.



**OFFER SELF-SERVICE** A beverage center complete with built-in Nielo coffee maker ([nielocoffee.com](http://nielocoffee.com)) and U-Line wine fridge ([u-line.com](http://u-line.com)), puts refreshments within reach of guests.