



# *Greener* Pastures

Eco-friendly elements meld effortlessly into the design of this upscale, down-home kitchen.

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**This photo:** Large windows looking out on a screen porch and the family's vegetable garden are dressed in custom upholstered cornices. "We love how their cutout design frames the curvy shape of the hand-blocked botanicals print," interior designer Melissa Haynes says. **Opposite:** The glass honeycomb-shape wall tiles were the starting point for the kitchen's garden-fresh palette.



At one time, eco-friendly design was viewed as a smart practice, though not always a stylish one. But today a brief search on the Internet yields myriad options for natural and nontoxic materials that are both sophisticated and sustainable.

Interior designer Melissa Haynes displayed her knack for eco-chic design when she helped bring a dated suburban kitchen into the future using Earth- and child-friendly materials. Her clients, a young family with three children under 5, sought an elegant space that could survive the wear and tear of little ones while supporting their commitment to protecting the planet and pursuing a healthy lifestyle.

To start, Haynes and contractor Preston Bacon gutted the 350-square-foot kitchen, except for the original red oak floors, which were retained to reduce waste. The floors were stripped and stained with a rich walnut, water-base, low-VOC stain. A soft white low-VOC paint was applied to the walls, millwork, and cabinetry, as well as the custom range hood, counter stools, and bench in the breakfast nook. Finally, the cabinets were topped with quartz-surfacing—a nonporous material that resists mold and bacteria.

Even with the science-driven design decisions, artistry and aesthetics never took a backseat. Upholstered window cornices featuring fanciful cutouts infuse the space with color and whimsy. Light-color linen upholstery—of the sort usually deemed off-limits to anyone under 18—is vinylized for protection and trimmed in blue linen and bronze nailheads for panache. Polished-nickel faucets and hardware and mercury glass pendants

“Our goal for this kitchen was to create a nontoxic environment for the family,” Haynes says. “With so many resources out there today, the big question wasn’t ‘Where do we look?’ It was ‘How do we choose?’”













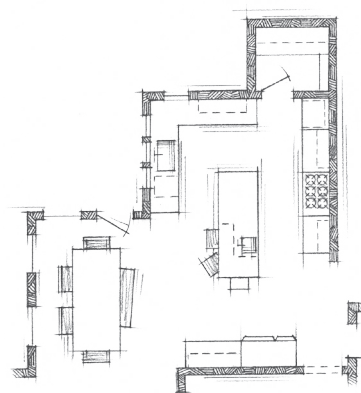


cast a spotlight on the glistening, green honeycomb tile backsplash, which adds pleasing texture, depth, and color.

“This kitchen is proof that you don’t have to sacrifice form for function,” Haynes says. “We used the furnishings, fabrics, and finishes we loved without making a ton of concessions. Sometimes that meant tweaking things or doing a little extra research into products, but it was worth it to give this young family a safe, gorgeous, grown-up-looking kitchen.”

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**Opposite:** A palette of creamy white, apple green, and robin’s-egg blue sets a soothing tone in the kitchen of a high-energy family of five. **Above left:** The island prep sink is framed with stain- and scratch-resistant quartz-surfacing. **Above:** Glass-front latch-lock cabinets display the homeowners’ collection of cookbooks and ceramic serving pieces while protecting them from little hands. **Left:** To the right of the refrigerator, Haynes incorporated two large refrigerator drawers for the overflow of fresh produce.









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interior designer



**Opposite:** The hand-distressed finish on the base of the made-to-measure breakfast table camouflages scrapes. Its antique styling is juxtaposed with the modern scale of the slate blue iron lanterns. **Top left:** A pro-style range was a must-have for the homeowners, who are both avid cooks. Haynes designed the custom hood to embrace the range’s industrial aesthetic but softened it with a gentle curve and a painted finish. **Top right:** A mercury-tipped bulb gives an industrial-style pendant decorative appeal. **Above:** The cleanup zone enjoys verdant views. To the left of the sink, a dishwasher hides behind custom cabinetry panels. **Above right:** “We chose zinc [for the breakfast table] because it’s naturally durable and can withstand everyday dining, homework, and arts and crafts. The more it’s used, the richer its patina becomes,” Haynes says. **Right:** The family opted for a third oven in lieu of a microwave.



#### DESIGNER INSIGHTS

### Kid-Friendly Design

Kid-proofing a kitchen goes beyond covering electrical outlets. Interior designer Melissa Haynes offers tips for protecting little hands from everyday kitchen hazards—and for protecting your kitchen from little hands.

- **Change positions.** You don’t have to give up open shelving. Get the look without the worry by placing open display shelves up high. If you must go low with display space, opt for a glass-front cabinet with a decorative latch lock or interior lock.
- **Lock it up.** Crack down on clutter and household accidents with a lockable appliance garage or pantry. It’s the perfect solution for storing blenders, mixers, toasters, and other small appliances with sharp blades or electrical cords.
- **Think low maintenance.** Uphold the beauty of your upholstery with low-maintenance vinyl or faux-leather fabrics that are easy to wipe clean.
- **Conceal wear and tear.** Distressed finishes on tables and chairs can hide years of use and abuse. Vintage and antique pieces also do the trick, as do “upcycled” furnishings that are also eco-friendly.