



Dynamic Duo

A designer helps a friend find the perfect recipe for a new kitchen.

BY LENORE CULLEN BARNES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN ARMOR

Great friends, like strong collaborations, bring out the best in one another. Apex Kitchens & Baths designer Kim Silvia and Susan Bistline took their longtime friendship to the next level while working together to design Bistline's dream kitchen. Drawing on Silvia's design savvy and the homeowner's artistic and culinary talents, the pair reached new heights of creativity and function.

Bistline and her husband, Mark, recently completed a major renovation of their home set amid picturesque farmland in Middletown, Rhode Island. The result is a contemporary farmhouse that suits its pastoral setting perfectly, capitalizing on the beautiful views. Expanding this panorama from the kitchen was a top priority. "We knew we wanted to get as much window as possible," says Bistline. "We wanted to see and appreciate the view every day."

Silvia upgraded the existing single opening to an expansive horizontal span of four windows, with black painted trim and mullions. "Susan is an amazing cook and artist," Silvia says. "She's so talented and incredible to work with. Throughout the project, she would come to me and say 'You're not going to like this' before proposing her latest idea. When she wanted two sinks, I wasn't sure. I'd never done that before, but she and Mark cook simultaneously, so she wanted one for prepping and the other for washing pans."

Silvia successfully incorporated two 24-inch, single-bowl, 14-gauge stainless steel sinks into the design, allowing for prep space between. They sit below the windows, affording both cooks natural light and exposure to the bucolic inspiration outside.

Bistline's choice of stainless steel countertops also initially gave the designer pause. "In my experience, people consider it, but rarely go through with it," says Sylvia. "But Susan was confident."

The contemporary farmhouse kitchen incorporates stainless steel countertops and double sinks requested by the owner, a professional chef who also opted for a range, wall oven and steam oven, all from Wolf.

"I wanted this kitchen to be as functional as possible," Bistline says. "Having worked in kitchens, I love stainless steel. It's super sanitary, easy to maintain and you can set a hot pan on it. It's beautiful to me." Beautiful to everyone is the honed pearl white marble tile backsplash that continues above the windows to the ceiling, making a dramatic and cohesive statement.

Although the kitchen was expanded at one end, Silvia was working within the parameters of the long and narrow original kitchen. The White Zeus Extreme Silestone-topped island, which is just over 13 feet long but only 36 inches wide, fits into the available space while still giving plenty of clearance. Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer drawers serve the breakfast prep area and, at the far end, away from the sinks and Wolf range, a 25-inch overhang with no visible support provides comfortable seating space and the perfect spot to play cards when Mark's oldest daughter, Bennett, visits.



Lindsey Adelman chandeliers.



A horizontal span of four windows with black painted trim and mullions frames the picturesque view of farmland.



A custom-designed cabinet accommodates cutting boards and baking sheets.

"There's a drama to the one continuous line of the island," Bistline observes. "I really didn't want a sink on the island. I wanted uninterrupted workspace. It's also perfect for entertaining. When we do buffets, I didn't want food placed around a sink."

Bistline again challenged Silvia with her requests for two open cabinets—one to store her heavy Le Creuset pots and the other for cutting boards and baking sheets. The lack of doors provides easy access. "Kim wanted everything to be symmetrical," says Bistline. "I wanted it to look nice, but if it's going to be a choice between cool or function, I have to go with function." The homeowner also suggested they paint the backs of the open cabinets black, to tie in with the windows. "It's nice to be guided by an artist," Silvia says. "It was a leap of faith to paint them black, but I love it. It completely works."

And while Bistline loves her open cabinets and twin sinks, her favorite part of the kitchen renovation, hands-down, was working with Silvia. "She helped me execute what I didn't know was possible," she says. **SouthernNEHome**



Wood Mode
FINE CUSTOM CABINETRY
BROOKHAVEN
CABINETRY
BY WOOD MODE

Apex Kitchens & Baths
FINE CUSTOM CABINETRY

