

Feat of Function

A kitchen renovation balances a timeless aesthetic with modern touches in a stunning yet practical space that performs for both an at-home baking business and a family of four.

When Molly and Jeremy Bolton discovered they were expecting their second child, they set out to find a more spacious home with the potential to put their mark on it. A quaint cottage in the Cahaba Heights area of Birmingham, Alabama, fit the bill. “The house was charming, full of character, and there was great opportunity to make it our own,” says Molly, the baker, recipe developer, and photographer behind *The Nostalgic Crumb*. She had particular plans in mind for their kitchen, and, teaming up with River Brook Design & Construction, transformed the standard space into a utilitarian dream with utmost visual appeal.

“As cliché as it sounds, the kitchen really is the heart of our home,” Molly says. “From my baking to fixing breakfast for my babies to hosting friends for dinner—the kitchen is where most of our life happens. A more inspired design brought our kitchen to life and catered to what my family and I needed.”

This inspired design materialized in many practical features, such as a double oven and a separate cooktop, as well as floor-to-ceiling cabinets that offer seemingly endless storage and a large, uninterrupted Danby marble island with ample work space and seating for four. “These two elements make the kitchen feel and look grand, but also make my time in the kitchen easier,” Molly says of the cabinetry and island. “As a baker and mother of small children, functionality was a high priority.”



“Details are what make this kitchen so unique and beautiful.” —MOLLY BOLTON



In terms of look, Leigh Misso, co-owner of River Brook, describes the aesthetic as English cottage style with plenty of personality. “The vision for this space was bold but inviting—a space where the family could enjoy meals together and also a space where the client could work day in and day out,” she says. The team’s bold approach started with an eye-catching paint color, Narragansett Green by Benjamin Moore, which they offset with a classic white handmade subway tile backsplash.

Overall, a streamlined design led to a beautiful union between form and function. “We worked to mix traditional and contemporary styles in both the casework design and the fixtures selected,” Leigh says. Concealed pantry storage within the cabinetry contributes to the sleek, clutter-free appearance throughout. They diverged from this common thread with one set of glass-front cabinets to bring in display space reminiscent of a butler’s pantry.

Modish pieces like the linear lantern and abstract artwork harmonize with antique décor that softens the space, from chinoiserie lamps to an Oushak runner. Molly requested the island’s built-in bookshelf and filled it with meaningful accents, such as cookbooks that belonged to her late grandmother.

When Molly envisioned her dream kitchen, she hoped for something functional, timeless—with a touch of luxe—and most importantly, welcoming. “When working with River Brook, I often said, ‘I want to love this kitchen in 30 years’—and I genuinely believe I will,” Molly says. “It is elegant and cozy, modern and classic. I wanted my kitchen to make people feel at home. While it’s newly renovated, it gives you a warm feeling—like it’s been lived in for decades. It feels like an invitation to come in and stay awhile.”



BEFORE

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