



UNMUDDLING A KITCHEN

Putting timeless design into a mansard cottage.

Text by Steve Erwin / Photos by Sandy Agrafiotis

We're both from Baltimore, but when my wife, Patricia Caya, and I visited Eastport, Maine, we fell in love with the town—and bought this mansard-roofed Second Empire cottage built around 1860. Knowing we were looking for contractors who are respectful of old houses, our real-estate agent recommended Patrick Mealey and Joyce Jackson. They call their firm Fine Artist Made—we were an instant fit. The relationship proved to be wonderfully collaborative, as Joyce and Patrick have an aesthetic similar to ours.

Much of the house was intact, but the kitchen (and two bathrooms) had suffered years of remuddling. In the kitchen, plaster was long gone, and drywall was covered with fake wood paneling. Taking walls down to the studs made it possible to entirely replace plumbing and electrical systems. Ceiling accretions were re-

moved, raising the ceiling height by a couple inches.

This is a cottage, never fancy, and we were pragmatic about the design of the kitchen. It is contemporary in function, though it reflects the house's past. The 1970s triple window, slightly raised and centered and now trimmed to match, lets in plenty of light. The pine flooring and trim are original, dating from the 1860s. A painted beadboard wainscot suggests an 1890s upgrade. Cabinet hardware and lighting evoke the 1930s, a time when many Victorian-era kitchens were updated for the electric era. The cabinet door trim was inspired





by triple-beaded moldings that lean toward Art Deco design; the triple-bead glass knobs repeat the motif. Nickel bin pulls, old-fashioned latches, and ball-tip mortise hinges add to the historical look.

Countertops are affordable laminate, fabricated on site and edged with half-round and cove moldings. Where there was once a wood-burning cookstove on the chimney wall, a propane heater had been installed. Although it looks ugly in the “before” pictures, it seems to blend into the beadboard wainscot, and keeps us and our pets warm during the long Maine winter.



KITCHEN SUITE

Just off the kitchen, next to a set of boxed stairs, a little blue bathroom shares the kitchen’s color palette. Long ago this room was a pantry, but it had already been converted to a powder room and laundry. We moved the laundry, and added a shower in this space to create a compact full bath.

Patrick and Joyce built the tall storage cabinet around an existing heating duct, turning a problem into an asset. And they repurposed an old transom window as a medicine cabinet over the sink.



LEFT: THE CA. 1860 HOUSE IS A DIMINUTIVE MANSARD-ROOFED COTTAGE. ABOVE: A COUNTERTOP RETURN AND BUILT-INS MAKE GOOD USE OF WHAT WAS ONCE AN ODD WASTE OF SPACE. OPPOSITE: THE HOMEOWNERS DECIDED TO KEEP THE LARGE 1970s WINDOW FOR ITS LIGHT AND VIEW.