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A Weekend In
Wine Country

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Bay Area designer Florence Livingston brings form, function, and flair to a hardworking kitchen in Tiburon, California.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON

At first glance, this California kitchen is a minimalist's dream—there's little clutter, well-styled open shelving, and a neutral color palette that feels restful. Dig a little deeper, and you'll find a few secrets—all courtesy of a savvy design plan by Florence Livingston Interiors.

"The family was looking to have a hardworking and inviting kitchen with great storage, a space where they'd be able to entertain more, an open floor plan, and a large island where people could gather," Florence says of her clients. Their previous space was cramped with poor circulation. A fireplace obstructed flow and blocked the views between the kitchen, dining, and living areas. "The clients and Peter Brandelius of PB Design Build decided early on to expand the house on the back side and capture the new square footage to roughly double the kitchen area."

1. One kitchen must-have was a large island for friends and family to gather. For durability, Florence selected quartz (Colton by Cambria) for the countertops—it requires little maintenance and can be easily cleaned up with soap and water. Three pendants by Allied Maker drop in from above.

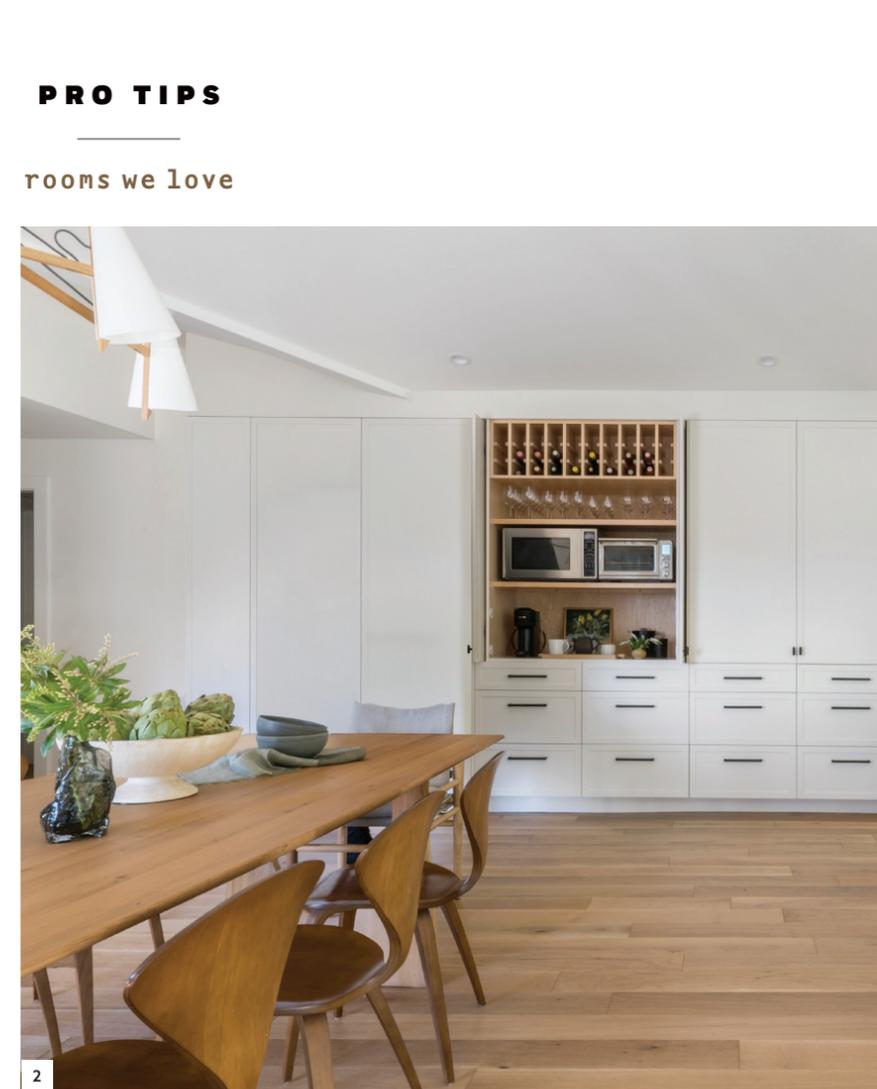
2. The clients already owned the classic mid-century modern Cherner chairs. Florence paired them with a large dining table in a neutral white oak.

3. "I love the versatility of the office nook," Florence tells us. The pocket doors tuck away for a nice and open workspace, but at night the office gets shut down and is instantly out of sight. "We designed painted handles for the tall office nook doors so that they would blend in with the painted finish."

4. "I love the texture of the Robert A.M. Stern for Walker Zanger backsplash tile," Florence says. "The proportions and color are those of a classic subway tile, but the unexpected texture gives such great movement to the entire back wall. It also complements the mid-century modern touches we have in the rest of the home, like the Cherner chairs."



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With added space, Florence was able to create a simple, warm, and inviting home, with accents of mid-century modern. "We envisioned a long wall of cabinetry that would run from the kitchen into the dining room, to house all of the family's needs," she says. Robert Takeshita from Eichi Design built the cabinets (painted in White Dove by Benjamin Moore). They hide an office nook, a morning beverage center, pantry space, and plenty of cabinets for kitchen essentials.

Since the family loves to cook, high-end appliances got top billing. A plastered hood contrasts nicely with the floating shelves, which are oak with a custom stain. The clients selected a fully integrated Sub-Zero refrigerator and a Wolf range, as well as a large sink with components that the chef husband really loves.

The renovation took around seven months, and Florence admits it had a few difficult moments—which are

to be expected. "The design of the cabinetry was somewhat complex, but thankfully we had a dedicated and meticulous cabinetmaker," she says. "The tall pocket doors of the office nook, floors that were not leveled, an island top that was very large and heavy—all of that was challenging. As professionals, I think we were reminded that more communication is always better than less, and as with every project we all grow and learn."

Of course, just as closing the pocket doors to the adjoining workspace can make way for a lovely evening, the design challenges led the way to one beautiful kitchen.



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