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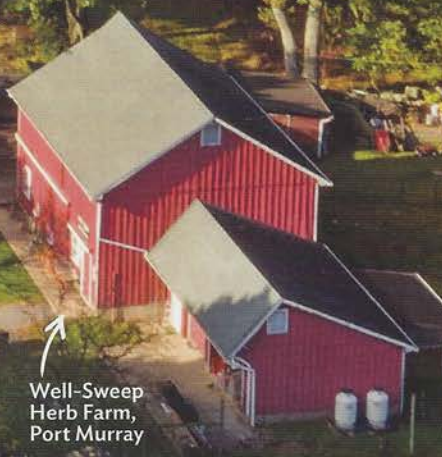
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# LOW BUDGET HIGH STYLE

With clever cost-cutting ideas and just a few splurges, a Maplewood family updates their kitchen. *By Lauren Payne*



**DANA SIOMKOS AND ZANE LATTA** had outgrown their tiny Brooklyn apartment. They needed more space for their daughter Georgia, now 4. Another daughter, Clio, now almost 2, was on the way. “We wanted a backyard and public schools,” says Siomkos. They found a three-story colonial with a full basement in Maplewood. “I fell in love with the third-floor

space for a home office,” she says. “Zane fell in love with the man cave.”

What they didn’t love was the kitchen. “It was wood on wood on wood,” says Siomkos. Figuring it would be an expensive renovation, the couple decided to live with the kitchen for a while. “I thought it was a \$50,000 project.”

Then they met Amy Hughes, owner of

Salvage Style, a Maplewood design shop filled with vintage furniture, accessories, art and rugs. Hughes was making a delivery when she got a look at the Siomkos/Latta kitchen. She immediately suggested a renovation project, assuring the couple she could revamp the entire space for about \$7,000, new furnishings included. The first step would be decid-

### SAVVY SPENDING

With help from Salvage Style's Amy Hughes, Dana Siomkos and Zane Latta renovated their Maplewood kitchen on a shoestring. First up: applying a fresh coat of white paint to brighten the space.



**BEFORE**



### DARK & DATED

The original kitchen suffered from entirely too much wood, all agreed. Hughes suggested keeping the cabinets, but painting them a stylish blue-grey on the bottom.



### GOODBYE CABINETS

The upper corner cabinet was ripped out and replaced with open shelving. The solid-surface countertop material remained, as did the wood floor.



### LIGHTEN UP

Hughes replaced the hefty, outdated chairs with visually lighter acrylic bar stools in the pocket-sized space.

ing what to keep, what to replace, where to splurge and where to save.

### KEEPERS

All of the appliances were in working condition. They stayed. The stained-wood cabinets were of good quality, but needed updating. They were painted. The milky-white countertop stayed, as did

the honey-oak flooring. For a fresh look, Hughes suggested an inky, grey-blue color on the bottom cabinets and bright white on the top. "The white upper cabinets disappear into the wall now," she observes.

### REPLACE

All new lighting can make a big difference. Hughes found a mid-century



#### FOR KEEPS

The couple kept all the appliances from the original kitchen. New stylish hardware instantly updated the cabinets.

## SAVE

The custom, rustic shelving only looks expensive. It's actually reclaimed wood from a local lumberyard. "We bought a plank with lots of variations and defects so it looks reclaimed," says Hughes. She had it sanded and coated with clear polyurethane. "The open shelves are my favorite feature," says Siomkos. Another cost-cutting tip: Hughes framed Georgia and Clio's pictures instead of splurging on costly art. "It's original artwork," she jokes, "and it personalizes the space."

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The project—including labor and new furnishings—totaled about \$7,300. "It's maximum impact with minimal budget," Hughes says. "They now have a super-swanky kitchen that will get them through the next 10 years." 💰

**RESOURCES:** Salvage Style, Maplewood, 973-735-3798, salvagestyle.com **Cabinet Hardware:** Nest Studio, South Orange, 973-315-1737, nest-studio-home.com **Custom shelves and coffee bar:** Nathan Diana of Earnest Works, Maplewood, Earnestworksllc@gmail.com **Cabinet painting:** Hue Strong Painting, Union, 862-485-2816. **Tile backsplash installation:** Chris Lynch Artistries, Plainfield, chrislynchartistries.com/index.html

Baccarat light fixture at auction for \$10; it now hangs in the center of the kitchen. The breakfast room fixture from IKEA cost about \$60. Flush-mounted LED lights were installed without having to cut walls or move wiring.

For the backsplash, Hughes found inexpensive subway-like tile at Home Depot, but set it in a herringbone pattern. The breakfast-room furniture came from estate

sales and flea markets, including a glass-top table on a Lucite base—vintage pieces totaling less than \$500. The acrylic counter stools were \$45 each at a thrift shop. "All these pieces are beautiful and chic, but barely there," says Hughes. "They're see-through, so it opened up the space."

## SPLURGE

"I always splurge on a professional painter," says Hughes, citing the need for proper surface preparation—especially for cabinets. "The painter took off the cabinet doors and hand-brushed them," she says. "New, sleek hardware updates the cabinets."

## 10 RENOVATION TIPS

We asked top New Jersey design experts for ideas about planning a kitchen renovation. Here are their tips:

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH**  
"Use websites like Pinterest to search different kitchen styles," suggests Jennifer Watty, an interior designer in Mountainside. Once you have an idea of what you want, you can add and subtract features based on your budget.
- **PLAN FOR EFFICIENCY**  
Your plan should keep essential appliances within arm's reach. For starters, Anthony Passanante, a certified kitchen designer at Anthony Albert Studios in Waldwick, suggests under-counter refrigerator drawers. "The refrigerator is often out of the way," Passanante says. "Refrigerator drawers gain back those steps."
- **HIRE A PROFESSIONAL**  
"The kitchen is more than a place to prepare food," says Jack Purvis, an architect in Allenwood. "It's the center of the home. It requires a design professional to understand all a family requires and to act on those needs." And, he adds, when moving appliances, opening walls or changing plumbing, working with a professional from the get-go is going to save time and money.
- **PICK A FOCAL POINT**  
"A great tile backsplash has a big impact," says Betsy Berner, an interior designer in Red Bank. Or choose a statement range hood. "A massive, custom-made hood in solid iron or black copper makes a great focal point," says Berner.
- **MAXIMIZE NATURAL LIGHT**  
Additional windows can open up any kitchen, says interior designer Julie China of Idea Space Architecture + Design in Maplewood. "Consider replacing double-hung windows above kitchen counters with casement-style windows," she suggests. "This allows for ease of opening."
- **LIGHT PROPERLY**  
This includes task lighting for work spaces and ambient lighting overall. "There's plenty of good-looking, inexpensive lighting," says Watty.
- **SIMPLIFY**  
Designate a spot for recycling, keep kids' snacks in low cabinets, plan outlets for charging your devices, and hang a
- noteboard for grocery lists or a family calendar. Or write your shopping list directly on the wall with Sherwin Williams chalkboard paint.
- **PICK THE RIGHT MATERIALS**  
Choose matte-finish countertops that don't show crumbs and spills.
- **TAKE SMALL RISKS**  
"Introduce color in small doses or in objects that are easily swapped out, such as bar stools," suggests China.
- **SPLURGE WISELY**  
Ask yourself if you'll really use that pot filler or the second dishwasher. "It may sound strange, but save on the cabinets and splurge on the hardware," suggests Watty.