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**Small
Kitchen**
Before & After
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Fresh Style

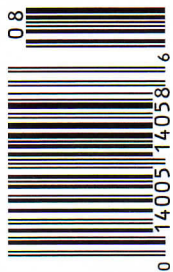
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small kitchen



KNOCK-DOWN KNOCKOUT

Tearing down walls transforms a small San Jose kitchen into an eye-catching family gathering space.

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AFTER LIVING WITH AN INEFFICIENT kitchen for 30 years, Kathy Norton's "favorite kitchens" scrapbook had grown thick with possibilities. "I cut so many photographs out of magazines that I had to number and index them," Kathy says with a chuckle. "We also visited several kitchen showrooms, and I had a few plans drawn up—but nothing felt like it was quite right until I met with Marina and Cathy."

Marina V. Phillips and Cathy Tanner, local kitchen designers, helped Kathy turn her scrapbook of ideas into the family-friendly haven she envisioned. Phillips started by offering three plans: one that left all the walls in place, one that took down one wall, and one that took down two walls. Kathy and her husband, Bruce, chose to take out two

walls and open up the kitchen to the dining and living areas.

The great-room design, Kathy says, is even better than she had imagined. "It's like living in an entirely new home," she says. "The rooms feel larger, and the traffic flow is much better. Friends and family can gather in the kitchen or either of the adjoining rooms, and we can enjoy being together without getting in one another's way."

Removing the walls was just part of the plan. Inside the kitchen, the cooktop occupies the same spot as the original range, but everything else has a new location. "The sink is on the same wall

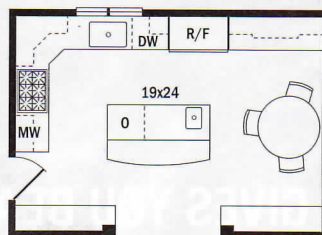
ABOVE: Removing a wall separating the kitchen from the dining room provided space for a two-tier island with a second sink and an oven.

small kitchen *knock-down knockout*



as it was originally, but we moved it a few feet to the right to allow for a larger kitchen window and to provide more counter space,” Kathy says. A new microwave is mounted on the bottom of a wall cabinet and framed with cabinetry panels for a built-in look. “This trick enabled us to move the microwave off of the countertop and make it appear completely integrated,” Phillips says.

A stainless-steel refrigerator fills space once occupied by a wall that separated the kitchen and dining room. “The dining area is actually smaller than it used to be,” Tanner says. “Room borrowed from it provided space for a long kitchen island and the refrigerator.”



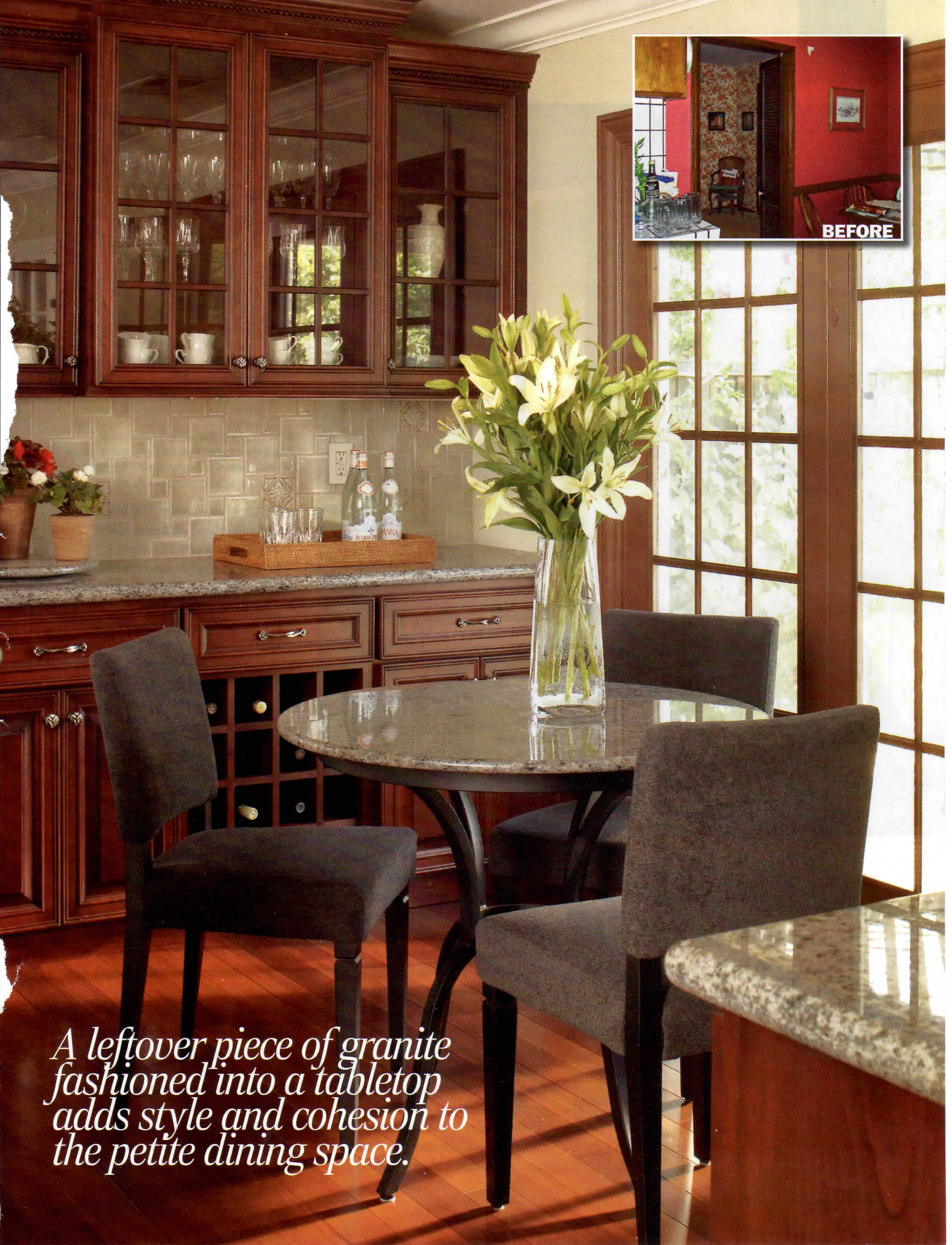
A built-in buffet with wine storage—elements plucked from Kathy’s scrapbook—pack efficiency into the smaller dining space. Where a full wall once separated the dining area from the living room, there’s now a half wall filled with cabinets opposite the buffet.

The classic decor was also inspired by images from Kathy’s scrapbook. Traditional cherry cabinets, enriched with ebony glaze, line two walls of the kitchen. French doors to the patio are finished to match the cabinetry. Cabinet heights are purposely varied to create a sophisticated furniture look. Paraju wood—a hardwood that resembles Brazilian walnut—warms the floors throughout the new great-room. The granite countertops are by far Kathy’s favorite new surfacing material. “Specks of amethyst make the counters sparkle in the sunshine,” she says.

The result is an inviting work space that is more efficient than the owners ever imagined. “I am able to spend less time cooking and more time enjoying our guests,” Kathy says. “My only regret is that we didn’t make these changes years ago.” **KBI**

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ABOVE: Homeowner Kathy Norton loves the color variations in the Paraju-wood floors. “The planks are durable enough to stand up to my grandson’s Big Wheel,” she says. **TOP LEFT:** A counter-depth refrigerator keeps the walkway wide enough for two people to pass. **TOP MIDDLE:** Varying tile sizes lend interest to the pale sage backsplash, made of crackle-finish tiles containing 50 percent recycled materials. **TOP RIGHT:** An extra-deep sink accommodates large pots and pans. **OPPOSITE:** Glass-front buffet cabinets increase the room’s perceived depth and display wineglasses.



A leftover piece of granite fashioned into a tabletop adds style and cohesion to the petite dining space.