



Three countertop surfaces serve different functions in Mary Hanson's kitchen. Marble is used for kneading bread, butcher block for chopping, and stainless steel for other prepping.

New Vision for a Vintage Kitchen

A remodeling updates, yet respects the history of a 19th-century home in San Francisco.

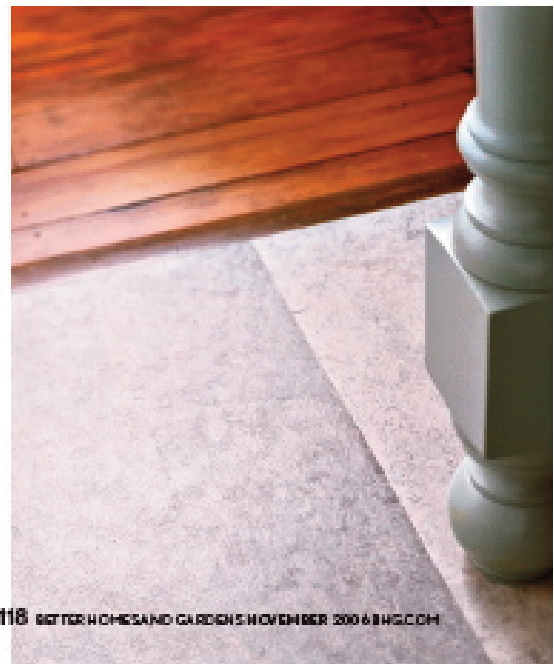
WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY MARY JO BOWLING PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES CARRIER

Mary Hansen faced a remodeling paradox. On one hand, she wanted to preserve and restore details throughout her 1898 Victorian in San Francisco. Before she bought it, the home had been handed down through one family over a century, with few updates. On the other hand, her passion for cooking and entertaining made the vintage kitchen, in her words, unacceptable. "There were no countertops, the appliances were freestanding, and the sink was in another room," she says. "By today's standards, it just didn't work."

Mary lived with it for a year, studying similar-style homes in the neighborhood to see how the homeowners blended updated kitchens with traditional homes. Then she hired architect David Gast and interior designer Deborah Michie. "Mary wanted a space where multiple cooks can work together and people can sit and relax or visit," Gast says.

Gast relocated a first-story bedroom and absorbed an adjacent mudroom to bring the kitchen's size to 24x14 feet. This expansion created space for amenities—a commercial-grade stainless-steel cooktop, double ovens, sinks in two locations, and a large island workspace—that would be foreign to the original owners. Yet the features look right at home in the new surroundings.

"We used materials and forms that are sympathetic to the period," says Gast. "The cabinets have flat paneling and the island has turned legs and beaded-board paneling. We used >> on 120



The linoleum flooring (below left) is a nod to the material that was common in kitchens at the turn of the 20th century. Two shades of linoleum, placed in strips, create a more contemporary and unique look. The traditional style and color of the cabinets (right) make new appliances appear period-perfect. Finishes enhance the effect: White ceramic cabinet knobs echo the dishwasher color; stainless-steel countertops blend with the hood and cooktop.





In keeping with the look of Victorian kitchens, which often featured tables instead of cabinets and countertops, the island (left) has an open end with turned legs. Satin-nickel-finished pendant fixtures are adjustable to provide targeted lighting on prep zones. Mary can easily plug in small appliances at the island. Kitchen designer Deborah Michie tucked a matching outlet strip (below) underneath the marble countertop.

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trim that we copied from existing molding in the house. We also used marble subway tiles and true linoleum flooring—all things that would have been appropriate in that period.”

Color also plays an important role. “Rich saturated colors say ‘Victorian’ to me,” says Michie. “For the cabinets, we used a historic color that was taken from English manor houses.”

Call it a paradox solved. The new kitchen isn’t a museum; it’s a nod to the past that suits the needs of present-day life. “I think we successfully blended it with everything else in the house,” Mary says. “It feels like just another part of the Victorian.”

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