

Keep what works and lose what doesn't—
that's the mantra
for making an inspiration real.



BY SALLIE BRADY PHOTOGRAPHS BY CATHERINE TIGHE STYLED BY SAMANTHA CODLING

GREAT

ADAPTATION



How a 1920s butler's pantry inspired a very 21st-century kitchen

It usually happens in a doctor's office or in Barnes & Noble on a Saturday afternoon. Mindlessly leafing through a magazine, you halt suddenly, awestruck by the great room, deck, or kitchen of your fantasies. The impulse to tear out the page is overwhelming, and it's just a matter of time before the architect, contractor, and, yes, bank-loan officer are on speed-dial.

When you're looking to renovate or add on, there's nothing more motivating than a perfectly styled photograph of a finished space. While you might not duplicate it down to the drawer pulls, the image does serve as an inspiration, something you can modify to meet your own project's needs.

When Richard Pasquarelli and Valerie Pels spotted a photo of a Chicago millionaire's 1920s butler's pantry in *This Old House*, they knew they were looking at the bones of their new addition. "We were envisioning an old-fashioned kind of urban kitchen because of the age of the house," says Richard of their 1894 Hoboken, New Jersey, brownstone, with its patterned parquet floors, icinglike plasterwork, carved mantels, and crystal chandeliers still intact.

Having just moved from a light-drenched New York City loft with two young children and a dog, the couple—who are known to make their own pasta and ice cream and think nothing of sit-down holiday dinners for 30—wanted to build a kitchen they could live in. They started by relocating it from the basement to the parlor level. Working with local architect Peter Johnston and Stackpole Construction, they pushed out an existing three-sided bay window and built a 400-square-foot cooking space and windowed eating area.

The butler's pantry, which still exists at Castle Hill, a 59-room summer home on Cape Cod built by Chicago industrialist Richard Crane, "was a starting point," says Johnston, citing the cabinetry style, color scheme, and dark floors and countertops that Richard and Valerie ultimately selected. "But we were not literal." Let that be the mantra for adapting an inspiration: Keep what works and lose what doesn't. "The original pantry looked like a kitchen in a house with a staff," says Valerie. "This is a family kitchen."

What a surprise their adaptation would be to Richard Crane, whose name lives on in perpetuity on the sinks and toilets of his Crane Company. The owner of that butler's pantry is said to have aspired to "make America want a better bathroom."

Seems he didn't do badly with kitchens either.

At the far end of this vintage-look kitchen, which was inspired by a 1920s butler's pantry (INSET, ABOVE RIGHT), is an informal eating area topped with a skylight and furnished with contemporary pieces. The entire space feels like one, thanks to the continuation of the old-fashioned cabinets.

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Here's what the couple borrowed—and what they discarded—from the pull-out-the-stops butler's pantry that inspired their family kitchen



1 TWO-STORY PLAN

Here, a second floor is suggested with an extra tier of storage cabinets that runs up to the 10-foot ceiling and a rooftop garden's wrought-iron railing visible through the skylight. These details echo ones in the second story of the butler's pantry, where the finest china was kept.

2 CABINET NICHE

No soup tureens in this kitchen alcove, but a favorite drawing and a flat-screen TV with DVD player for tableside watching.



3 LINEN DRAWERS

Homeowner Valerie Pels loved the wide, slim linen drawers in the original pantry; she uses hers for place mats.

4 COUNTERTOPS AND BACKSPASH

Wood counters worked for the original pantry, since the space was largely for storing dishes and staging meals, but they weren't a consideration for this hardworking kitchen. Honed granite provides a similar light-and-dark contrast. The white-tiled backsplash—a virtual replica—is easy to clean.



9 GLASS-FRONT CABINETS

"We went for a cleaner line," says Valerie of their wider, 36-inch-wide version of the flat-panel cabinets with glass fronts. With their cupboards' interiors now on public view, the couple stocked up on new glassware and dishes from Crate & Barrel.

8 PERIOD HARDWARE

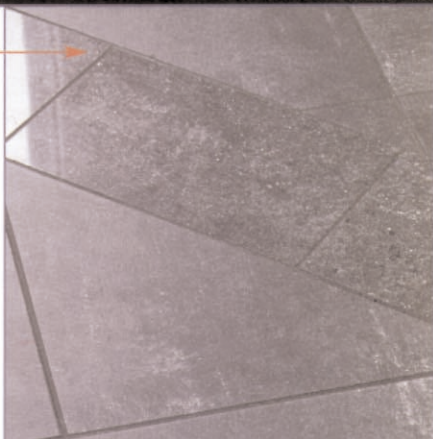
Antique bronze knobs and drawer pulls from Restoration Hardware have the burnished, oft-fingered look of those on the 1920s pantry cabinets.

7 PRO-STYLE RANGE

Since this family kitchen was built for cooking, a powerhouse Wolf range was at the top of the couple's wish list. It's a dual-fuel model with gas burners on top and an electric oven below for optimal temperature control. Quite by accident, its stainless steel surfaces echo the prep island in the butler's pantry.

5 SLATELIKE FLOOR

While the couple loved the look of the original slate floor, they went for a maintenance-free alternative: ceramic tile from Crossville that looks like quarried stone. An inset accent border of polished soapstone traces the outline of the skylight overhead.



6 COLOR SCHEME

What first caught the couple's eye in their inspiration photograph? Those brilliant cabinet interiors. Here, Ralph Lauren's Durango Blue "really gives them depth," says Valerie. The rest of that old-fashioned palette was perfect, too: Benjamin Moore's Sandy White for the cabinets and Kittery Point Green for the walls. Why green when the original is blue? "That's what it looked like in our copy," says Valerie. Never mind, it still looks great.



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