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BHG SPECIALS

*An Italian designer  
draws from her own  
background and love  
of history to create her  
dream kitchen in the  
Chicago suburbs.*

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WHEN FROM

ROMIE



THIS PHOTO: Interior designer Alessia Zanchi Loffredo skipped upper cabinets to maximize the windows and chose tongue-and-groove paneling because it complemented the architectural style of her 1920s cottage and highlighted the kitchen's almost-12-foot ceilings. She likes to paint trim, walls, and ceilings the same color so as not to interrupt the flow. OPPOSITE: Wood shelves are stained to match the pantry doors.





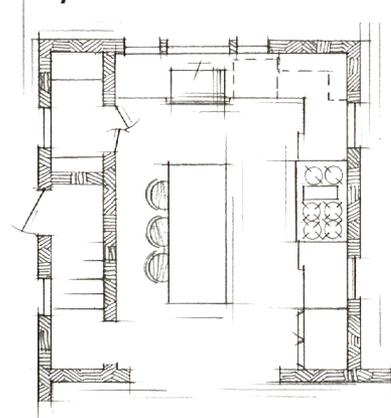
TOP: An apron-front sink and polished-nickel bridge faucet are a classic pairing. ABOVE: The island is a storage workhorse, making up for the lack of upper cabinetry around the perimeter of the room. The cabinetry and countertop match the rest of the kitchen for a cohesive look.

**BORN AND EDUCATED IN ROME**, Alessia Zanchi Loffredo loves anything with history and soul. So when she and her husband were searching for a home in the Chicago area, it was no surprise that a suburban 1920s English cottage—with original windows, doors, and hardware—captured her heart. “I’m drawn to older details and patinas,” says Alessia, principal of reDesign Home.

Though the original details were compelling, a three-season porch added in the 1980s and the home’s cramped, dated kitchen were decidedly less so. Alessia resisted the urge to alter the footprint of the house while figuring out how to make the space work more efficiently for her family, which includes three children. “The way I approach design is different,” she says. “I grew up in Italy, and we’re very cautious of space because space is limited there.”

As an avid cook with a talent for organization, Alessia converted the porch addition into a bright kitchen with good traffic flow and plenty of storage, including a walk-in pantry. Her love of natural materials and desire for efficiency were the driving forces behind the renovation. “I cook every day and I do dishes every day,” she says. “The kitchen has to be user-friendly.”

### *the plan*



Although not a classic work triangle, this well-thought-out layout gives the cook plenty of room to work while guests converse at the island or help themselves to a beverage from the refrigerator at the end of the room. A narrow pantry near the sink provides additional storage.

THIS PHOTO: The custom hood was designed with a curve to contrast the linear window casings and the tongue-and-groove panels on the walls. "It softens all the lines," Alessia says.





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—ALESSIA ZANCHI LOFFREDO, DESIGNER



**ABOVE LEFT:** Alessia outfitted the small pantry with deep cubbies that stretch almost to the ceiling. **ABOVE:** Tongue-and-groove paneling creates a compelling backdrop for the kitchen's vintage-inspired design. The white boards add texture and emphasize the tall ceilings, which are just shy of 12 feet. **OPPOSITE:** The butler's pantry is original to the house. It now contains a bar, beverage fridge, and espresso machine. "It's my first stop in the morning," Alessia says.

Alessia went without upper cabinets to maximize light and views. Knotty alder floating shelves keep some dishware and favorite objects on display. Lower cabinets sport black paint for a contemporary twist that grounds the airy room. Custom-stained hardwood floors deliver richness underfoot.

For timeless character, Alessia opted for marble countertops, knowing full well that scratches and stains would be part of the deal. "In this country, we are taught to seal the stone and keep things looking brand new and polished and shined," she says. "But in Italy, it's not like that. We let natural materials patina. We let them sit in a space and change. Is my marble perfect? No, but it brings uniqueness and character to the space."

*Resources begin on page 100.*



## DESIGNER INSIGHTS: PERFECT PANTRY

Beautiful kitchens deserve equally beautiful pantries stocked with everyday essentials. "It makes you feel like you have your own market," says interior designer Alessia Zanchi Loffredo, who put her principles into practice in her own kitchen.

- *Choosing materials* and finishes similar to those in the kitchen raises a pantry's existence from drudgery to delightful. Alessia chose white subway tiles to complement the kitchen's elegant white marble and millwork. Built-in cubbies are painted dark green to complement the black-painted kitchen cabinets. Pantry lighting includes brass accents to match the cabinet hardware.

- *Decanting grocery items* into canisters and containers is a simple way to streamline a pantry and keep everything in its place. Proper storage also increases the shelf life of many products.

- *Antique double doors* sport glass that allows sunlight from the window to brighten the rest of the kitchen.

