

KITCHEN + BATH IDEAS

Small Spaces

How to Make
The Most of
Every Inch

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OUR BEST
SMALL
KITCHENS

COOK'S CORE

A passion for cooking inspires
the look and layout of this
hardworking Denver kitchen.

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With floors evoking
the plains, cabinets
brown like trees,
mossy green counters,
and bright white
tiles symbolizing the
snow-capped Rockies,
this Colorado kitchen
perfectly reflects its
natural surroundings.



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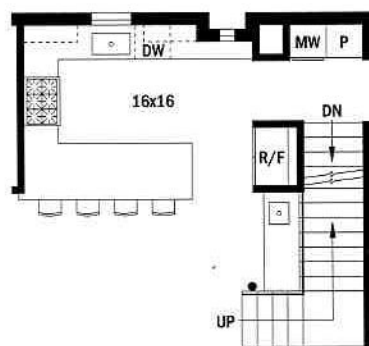
his was one opportunity Stefan Douglas and his wife, Allison, could not pass up—a strip of prime real estate in a beloved Denver neighborhood just perfect for building their dream house. Well, almost perfect. At only 37 feet wide, the narrow lot meant the couple and their architect, Dan Craine, had to get creative with the layout—especially in the kitchen, where Stefan loves to prepare family meals and entertain guests.

Craine shares insight into his approach: “We worked closely with Stefan, the chef of the house, in laying out the kitchen and understanding how he prefers to work. He likes to be connected with his family and guests while prepping and cooking, but he also likes to have his private cooking space defined.”

“I love the U-shape work area,” Stefan says. “It’s understood that if you are inside the U, you are cooking, assisting the cook, or doing dishes. Everything else someone might want to access while we’re cooking—refrigerator, pantry, microwave, prep sink—is located outside the U.”

Storage also played a key role in the design. Initially, Stefan didn’t want upper cabinets, but he’s happy Craine persuaded him to install them. “They give the entire space

ABOVE: Lift-up glass doors on upper cabinets keep the look light and airy while enhancing the room’s contemporary aesthetic. **RIGHT:** Quartz-surfacing, which homeowner Stefan Douglas chose because of its uniform look, makes an ideal countertop for a modern kitchen. **OPPOSITE:** Forming the bottom of the U-shape work space, the pro-style range—Stefan’s tool of choice for searing steaks and coddling sauces—is topped with a sleek, chimney-style hood.



DESIGN TIP

Clean lines and minimal upper cabinets create the illusion of more space in a small kitchen.





ABOVE: “This pantry is so efficient—with slide-out drawers that hold a ton—but it almost disappears into the background,” Stefan says. **RIGHT:** Stefan chose cabinetry laminated in real walnut veneer because it resembles the timeless Danish furniture his father built for his boyhood home. **OPPOSITE:** Intentionally parked outside the work zone, a wet bar allows guests to help themselves to drinks without getting in the cook’s way.



a more refined look,” Stefan says. Additionally, Craine created a floor-to-ceiling pantry that also acts as a service station for the dining room. Stefan didn’t want small appliances on the kitchen counter, so base cabinets have pullouts large enough to house the food processor, toaster, and blender in a single drawer. Pots, pans, and skillets are also in one large drawer near the range. “Our daughters even have their own ‘baking drawer’ that holds their cookbooks, cake forms, frosting tools, you name it,” Stefan says. “My love of cooking has rubbed off on them. They are becoming comfortable in the kitchen, which is great to see.”

Although the scale of the house is small, Stefan says the rooms feel larger thanks to high ceilings, big windows, and a smart floor plan. Aesthetically, the house is modern, but it includes rustic materials such as brick and cedar that complement the historical neighborhood as well as the Colorado landscape. Stefan draws not only design inspiration from the outdoors, but also culinary inspiration. “In the summer, I run out to our small garden in the backyard, grab whatever looks good, and base dinner around that,” he says. “Our kitchen is a great place to spread everything out, get organized, and start cooking!” **KBI**

RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 136.

Takeaways

- 1** A U-shape layout creates a compact and efficient work core for a busy cook.
- 2** Frosted-glass doors and open shelves minimize the visual weight of upper cabinets.
- 3** Quartz-surfacing countertops are a low-maintenance alternative to natural stone.
- 4** Wide drawers in the base cabinetry keep everything visible and handy.

