



White lightens the look of an 11-foot-long island and a 9-foot-long table-height dining counter—designed to be accessible for homeowner John Hauschildt, who navigates in a wheelchair—but also user-friendly for the whole family and their guests. Dark mahogany was reserved for perimeter cabinets.

universal appeal

A thoroughly modern kitchen serves up equal-opportunity convenience.

Writer: Michael Walsh | Photographer: Eri Götzlich | Photo Editor: Andres Daughtry



This photo: To minimize heavy lifting, the prep sink and cooktop were snuggled together. The faucet's pullout nozzle, which can be used for pot filling, has a built-in task light. Controls for exhaust fans and lights are conveniently located behind a tilt-out drawer front under the sink.



Voluptuously veined granite, chocolatey wood, satiny stainless steel, and glistening glass mosaic tile make Nancy and John Hauschildt's new kitchen a visual stunner.

But the room hardly discloses all of its charms at first glance. For discreetly integrated into the kitchen's crisp, contemporary design are these deliciously inconspicuous features that enable John, a wheelchair user, to participate fully in the rituals of daily meal-making for a family of six as well as frequent entertaining:

- A cooking zone with a 56-inch-wide aisle that provides ample turnaround room for John and allows him and Nancy to cook together without bumping into each other.
- An undercounter drawer-style microwave oven and two undercounter freezer drawers that cater to a seated user as well as a standing one.
- A tall, narrow refrigerator—with shelves that raise and lower at the touch of a button—and a similarly slender freezer, both with stainless-steel doors that are less massive and lighter weight than standard units.
- Two tall mahogany pantry cabinets with pullouts that bring stored goods out into the open.

- Two dishwasher drawers that are less cumbersome than a conventional unit with a single drop-down door.
- A spacious but deliberately shallow cleanup sink with an easy-reach faucet at the center.
- A prep sink faucet with a pullout nozzle that, because of its proximity to the cooktop, doubles as a pot filler and eliminates the lifting and carrying of heavy cookware.
- A granite counter affixed to the island at dining-table height, a comfortable level for John as well as other members of the family and guests.

Above left: Extra-wide pullout drawers make for easy grasping. Pots, pans, and everyday dishes are also stored in drawers for easy access. **Above middle:** Just around the corner from the fridge and near one end of the island, a convenient coffee center is built into the wall. **Above right:** Dual ovens are flanked by a 24-inch-wide freezer on the left and a 30-inch-wide refrigerator on the right. Heavily needed items are stored in a row of upper cabinets with doors of opaque glass and stainless steel.



Doors with lift-up stems expose an entire cabinet's worth of contents, requiring fewer movements than hinged doors.

"Our first job is to *listen*, then to bring our clients' ideas to life—to make them a *reality*." — designer Sol Quintana Wagoner

Both John and Nancy struggled for almost seven years with the shortcomings of the previous kitchen in the house they bought in 2002. But they used that time to identify critical problem areas, potential fixes, and material choices that appealed to their shared affinity for sleek, contemporary design. "By the time we got around to remodeling, we had decided that we really wouldn't have to sacrifice style for function," John says. "We knew we could have a really modern kitchen that looked like a kitchen—not at all institutional or clinical—and that would work for both us and our four children."

To turn their kitchen wish list into a plan, the couple teamed with designer Sol Quintana Wagoner of San Diego's Jackson Design and Remodeling. "John and Nancy were very clear about the frustrations each of them had with the old kitchen," Wagoner says. "To address those issues, we focused on their mutual physical abilities, not John's disabilities. It was important that the solutions we came up with to make things easier for him didn't make things more difficult for her."

Balanced, Seamless Style

While the Hauschldts focused on making their new kitchen easy to use, they also knew that doing so would not limit their options for making the kitchen look gorgeous. "We wanted a clean, contemporary kitchen but wanted to make sure it was warm and inviting," John says. The couple also wanted the kitchen to blend seamlessly with adjacent living areas that open to the patio, pool, and ocean views. To achieve their goals, they chose a variety of surfaces, each providing contrast and balance.

DARK MAHOAGANY perimeter cabinets balance the island's white-painted maple cabinets.

LUSHLY VEINED GRANITE countertops on the island have more punch when paired with quieter white perimeter countertops.

A MIXTURE of mahogany and stainless-steel cabinets, some with opaque-glass fronts, provide visual interest.

SHIMMERING GLASS tile covers entire walls rather than just the backsplash, creating a visually compelling counterpoint to the substantial cabinetry and appliances.

LIMESTONE FLOORING stretches from kitchen to pool, naturally extending the home's interior to the outdoors. "There is zero transition," John says. "When the window wall is open, it all feels like one great room." The kitchen's connection to the family room and the outdoors makes working at the cooktop John's favorite part of the new space. "From there, I can see the family room, whatever movie is playing, and outside to the vanishing-edge pool," he says. "It's the perfect place to take advantage of the entire design of the room. The kitchen is not just functional. It's a beautiful and pleasant place to work."

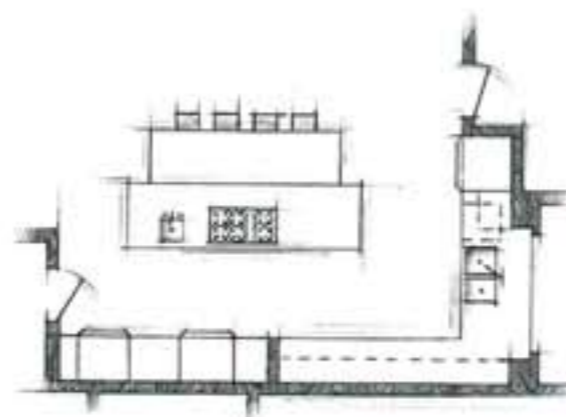


This photo: Larger than it looks at 30 by 40 inches, the prep sink has a faucet that's only 10 1/2 inches away from the front edge of the white quartz countertop as a conventional model would be. **Opposite:** Sparkling glass mosaic tile provides color, pattern, texture, and, depending on the light source, constantly changing visual energy.

Those solutions include wide passageways; a high oven for Nancy and a low one for John; elongated handles on the freezer, refrigerator, and built-in wine cooler; single-lever faucets; and storage assigned primarily to drawers rather than cabinets with doors. "The new kitchen just requires a lot less effort for both of us," Nancy says. "Now we can cook together, which we really enjoy. Also, John can access everything he needs and be self-sufficient even when I'm not around."

The new kitchen, John says, has been liberating, both physically and emotionally. "It has really reduced my stress level," he says. "I don't have to try so hard to cope, to work around obstacles or think twice about doing routine things."

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Universal Acclaim



The simple translation for the term "universal design" is user-friendly. When applied to kitchens, this approach fosters ease of use by the largest audience possible—short or tall, young or old, strong or weak, with disabilities or without. "The objective of universal design is to eliminate unnecessary complexity and to minimize physical effort and fatigue," says designer Sol Quintana Wagoner of Jackson Design and Remodeling in San Diego. "But that doesn't mean a kitchen has to look odd or clinical."

Indeed, the 68 million baby boomers who have become more aware of their aging parents' desire to stay in their homes for as long as possible—and their own future needs—want kitchens to be more than just functional. Like the Hauschildts, they insist on beauty as well. As a result, many universal design solutions have already been integrated into today's kitchens, and their design often reflects equal parts form and function: easy-to-grasp single-lever faucets, touch-latch cabinet doors, touch-pad controls on appliances. Even ice and water dispensers incorporated into refrigerator doors fall into the universal design category, as do roll-out bins, baskets, and shelves.

Specialized equipment, such as hydraulic height-adjustable sinks and mechanisms that automatically lower wall cabinets to the countertop for easier access, is also available. But these alternatives are often more

expensive than common-sense solutions. For example, something as simple as a plate rack, hutch-style cabinet, or pullout pantry unit can accomplish the same objectives. "Start with the easiest and most affordable elements first—things that benefit every member of the family," Wagoner says.

Some of the most popular options—all unobtrusive—include:

- LOWERING** a cooktop, cutting board, or section of work surface 4–6 inches.
- RAISING** a dishwasher 8–18 inches to minimize bending and stooping.
- POSITIONING** built-in double ovens side by side and at waist level, rather than stacked, for easier access.
- INSTALLING** a faucet to the right or left of a prep sink rather than at the rear so it's easier to reach.
- STORING** everyday dishes and glassware in deep drawers just under the countertop, preferably near the dishwasher. To avoid nesting pots, pans, and mixing bowls in a cabinet, store them in wide and deep drawers under a cooktop.
- OUTFITTING** drawers and cabinet doors with wide, easy-to-grasp pulls rather than small knobs. High-quality self-closing drawer glides and cabinet hinges also require less effort.
- MINIMIZING** lifting and carrying by making sure there is countertop space on each side of an oven, microwave, or refrigerator. A pot filler faucet above a cooktop is another step-saver.