

APRIL 2011

# House Beautiful

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# KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

Design by MADELINE STUART

## Beverly Hills, California

The look is straight out of a 1930s movie, but this charmingly old-fashioned kitchen feels mint-fresh.

Interview by  
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Photographs by  
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Styled by  
SEAN MCGOWAN



The kitchen's retro tile and palette help create a period look. Perimeter cabinets are painted Benjamin Moore's Sherwood Green, and the islands are painted black "to ground the space and tie everything in," says designer Madeline Stuart. Aquamarina marble on perimeter counters from Modul Marble. Revival series tile from Mission Tile West. The hood above the 60-inch Viking range was designed by Stuart and made out of stainless steel with polished nickel trim "so you get that contrast of soft and crisp. And the rivets give a flat piece of metal some sex appeal." Viking refrigerator and freezer to the right of the range.

**CHRISTINE PITTEL:** *Your palette calls to mind a big bowl of mint chocolate chip ice cream.*

**MADELINE STUART:** I'll tell you where these colors came from. The mandate was to update the kitchen but re-create essentially what was there before. The house was built in the 1930s and belonged to the late, great Hollywood hooper Ann Miller. I don't know if we're really going to fool anyone into thinking it hasn't been touched, but the idea was to use old-fashioned materials and a 1930s palette—black and this kind of Ming green.

**Why green?**

So much of what captures a period is color, and this is a green you see on 1930s Kohler fixtures and vintage tile, or if you were chipping off a layer of paint in your grandmother's kitchen. Then, coincidentally, I happened to be at a stone yard and saw this green marble. It stopped me in my tracks because it was the same green. I immediately called my client and said, 'I have found your kitchen.'

**Was the tile work already there?**

Well, the original tile was a crazy bluish-green with black trim. So we replaced the bluish-green with white. We decided to put the green into the cabinets instead of the walls.

**Good decision.**

But these tiles are the same shape. In fact, we used the same tile—it's still being made. It has a very specific look and a very specific joint, called a string joint because the grout lines are so narrow and tight.

**I like the way the black outlines the doors.**

That's typical of the period. I think it makes everything pop and keeps everything crisp and allows your eye to find all the architectural elements. It's why a cartoon character in a coloring book looks so sharp, because he's outlined in black.

**Did you add on to the space? >>**



## KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

We took over the old butler's pantry to add length to the room. And we built two islands, which makes a lot more sense than one giant island.

*Islands just keep getting bigger and bigger.*

They're like aircraft carriers. You could land a jet on one! I find them so obtrusive. You end up having to do laps around the room just to get to the fridge. With two, there's a better flow.

*Do these have different functions?*

One has a prep sink and refrigerator drawers. The other is the baking island, with one of those pop-up mechanisms that brings the mixer up to counter height.

*Is that why there are two dishwashers?*

No. Nothing to do with the islands. There are two dishwashers because a family always has one running and one filling.

*What's on top of the islands?*

Stainless steel. It's traditional in a 1930s kitchen, and there's something about it that I find very warm. I mean, it's crisp and clean and slightly reflective, but there's also a softness to it. The more you use it, the more surface-scratched it gets. Once it develops that patina, it's really welcoming.

*Does a gooseneck faucet say 'period' to you?*

That's not about period, it's about function. You can easily slide pots underneath it. It doesn't get in your way. And it makes a nice sort of exclamation point in the middle of the sink.

*All you need is that simple corner detail on the cabinets to tell us they're old-fashioned.*

I'm just not a believer in super-fancy kitchens with overwrought cabinetry and elements that belong on Louis XIV furniture incorporated into an island. I like kitchens that are quiet, timeless, functional, and calming, the kind of kitchens you find in great old homes like this. >>



LEFT: Antique Holophane pendant lights from PW Vintage "convey the spirit of the time while being super-functional," Stuart says. She chose cork for the floor because "it's warm underfoot, easy on your legs, durable, and when you drop a glass it often won't break. And it's a renewable resource."

BELOW LEFT: Twenty-seven-inch Sub-Zero refrigerator drawers hold vegetables conveniently close to the chopping block and prep sink. BELOW RIGHT: Hunter Douglas wood blinds with black tape have a period look. Blanco's 32-inch sink is paired with a gooseneck faucet in polished nickel by Rohl. Twin Excella dishwashers by Miele.



## KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

### BOCCONE DOLCE (SWEET MOUTHFUL)

Serves 10–12

#### MERINGUE LAYERS

- 6 egg whites at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- Dash of salt
- 1½ cups superfine sugar (or pulse granulated sugar briefly in food processor)

1 Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Line the bottom of three 12-inch cake pans with parchment circles.

2 Combine egg whites with vanilla, cream of tartar, and salt and beat at medium-high speed until frothy. Add sugar and beat until meringue forms stiff peaks. Divide among the pans and bake for 45 minutes, rotating pans halfway through. The meringues should be crisp but should not start to brown. Shut off heat but leave pans in the oven for another 45 minutes to dry. Remove from oven and cool on rack. Carefully remove meringues from pans and store in a plastic bag.

#### FILLING

- 12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips
- 24 ounces heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 pound strawberries, hulled and sliced, reserving some for garnish

1 Melt chocolate chips with 6 tablespoons water in a heatproof glass bowl over simmering water. Set aside to cool slightly.

2 Whip cream with vanilla and confectioners' sugar and set aside.

#### TO ASSEMBLE

Place a meringue on a serving dish and top with a thin layer of chocolate, then a quarter of the whipped cream and half the strawberries. Repeat with second layer, then top with the third meringue and cover everything with remaining whipped cream. Garnish with reserved berries and serve. *Bocccone dolce* is best served the day it's made. ●

## what's cooking?

"This is my husband's favorite dessert, one he has loved since childhood," the homeowner says.



LEFT: Stuart gave the original round breakfast room a playful look, with a faux-painted tented ceiling in Benjamin Moore's Gossamer Blue. "I found those vintage Chinese Chippendale chairs in that funny dirty-orange color and left them as is," she says. "They don't match a darn thing in the room, but they work perfectly."

Vintage 1940s palm chandelier and sconces. BELOW LEFT: Twelve-inch prep sink by Just Manufacturing is compact yet deep. BELOW RIGHT: "I'll often paint window casings a contrasting color, to bring punch to a room," Stuart says. "But these windows have no casings, so we added faux-bamboo trim to accentuate them and give them a greater presence." Red mullions—and tassels on the blinds—add more charm.

#### GET THE LOOK...

Tile by Mission Tile West: missiontilewest.com.  
Marble from Modul Marble: modulmarble.com.  
Range by Viking: vikingrange.com.  
Refrigerator drawers by Sub-Zero: subzero.com.  
Dishwashers by Miele: mieleusa.com.  
Sinks by Blanco: blancoamerica.com; and Just Manufacturing: justmfg.com.  
Holophane lights from PW Vintage: pwvintagelighting.com.  
Blinds by Hunter Douglas: hunterdouglas.com.  
Cork floor from WE Cork: wecork.com.

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