

Rummer redo: Removing a walk-in pantry expands a cramped galley kitchen

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Eliminating the wall of upper cabinets and moving the ovens opened the sightlines to the great room and created more counter space. New cabinetry and concrete counters updated the look without overshooting the era of the house. The floating breakfast bar has become a favorite place to hang out.

THE HOUSE: A 1965 Rummer in Lake Oswego

THE OWNERS: Glenn and Suzanne Walker

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When the Walkers bought the iconic midcentury home designed by **Robert Rummer**, they knew they had some work to do. The original mahogany paneling had lost its luster, and the

previous owner had made some cosmetic changes that were not in keeping with what Rummer would have done.

They got to work remodeling the great room, uncovering the original aggregate floors and bringing back the spacious, open look associated with the single-level darlings of the '60s.

The kitchen posed some challenges.

The counters, which Glenn thinks originally were most likely white laminate, were covered in basic white 4-inch-square tiles generally reserved for bathrooms. The floor was Pergo, and the storage

and counter space inadequate.

A large pantry toward the rear of the galley design took up a great deal of space, leaving little room for the refrigerator. And although there was ample natural light from the window that looks to the backyard, the other side of the galley was walled off from the great room.

The space was so tight that two people trying to work in the kitchen would bump into each other.

"It was kind of a nightmare," Suzanne says.

THE GOAL

To keep the kitchen in line with the style of the Rummer home but to improve its functionality and efficiency

THE PROCESS

The Sawzall got it going.

"When Suzanne was at the mall, I took the Sawzall and cut a hole in there," Glenn says, making a square in the air where the wall between the great room and the kitchen used to be.

"We were going to remodel anyway," he says, but added that his "work" was a bit of a surprise to Suzanne, who hadn't envisioned a pass-through, let alone taking the wall down. "But when we looked at it," Glenn says, "it made total sense."

Removing the wall allowed the light from the spacious kitchen window to spill into the great room and opened the view from the dining table to the backyard.

Glenn says he made several sketches of what he thought the kitchen could be. Suzanne thumbed through magazines for more ideas. They had a few designers come over to give them estimates, but the Walkers' strict budget seemed to paralyze them, Suzanne says.

That's when they wandered into a showroom in the Pearl.



Courtesy of William Roy

BEFORE: The kitchen in the Walkers' home was well used. With three kids and two working adults, the galley kitchen served as the place to prepare food, pack lunches, grab snacks and post pictures and agendas. It wasn't, however, a nice place for more than one person to be at a time, and it was closed off from the rest of the house.



Fredrick D. Joe/The Oregonian

Before the remodel, the large windows in the kitchen were not enjoyed unless you were at the kitchen sink, Glenn Walker says. Now, natural light floods the kitchen and adjacent sitting area, and the outdoors can be seen with the turn of a head.

THE DESIGNER

William Roy of [William Roy Designer Kitchens](#)

HIS TAKE

"Now, we need to give credit where credit is due," Roy says, leaning against the concrete counter in the Walkers' kitchen. "Glenn is an artist in his own right. He came in with an idea of what this kitchen should look like, and it looks a lot like that."

Roy agreed with the Walkers that it was important to keep the look of the kitchen in line with the Rummer style.

He had the cabinets custom-made locally out of apple plywood, which mimics the original plywood used in Rummer houses. Although they extracted the white, painted sliding bypass doors used extensively in the original kitchen cabinetry, Roy made a nod to that. Above a workstation across from the refrigerator, he covered one of the upper cupboards with an aluminum-framed glass bypass door.

The galley floor plan stayed the same, but some appliances moved. Although Suzanne was wary of losing the walk-in pantry, Roy knew that if he pulled it out, the fridge could slide in there, opening up room for more counters and cabinets.

"It's now designed so well," Suzanne says, "I have a lot more space."

In fact, she admits to having some empty drawers.



Fredrick D. Joe/The Oregonian

Originally, the back left corner of the kitchen housed a cumbersome pantry. Suzanne Walker was skeptical about removing it, figuring she'd lose a lot of storage. Designer William Roy made up for that loss with more efficient cabinetry throughout the kitchen and put the refrigerator in the pantry's place. That move freed up room for more counter space and the floating shelves where the refrigerator used to stand.

A SURPRISE

Even though Glenn had cut a hole in the wall and it was obvious that eliminating the wall would be an improvement in some ways, Suzanne was still concerned about opening it up and putting in a breakfast bar. A bar, she thought, would simply create another place for stuff to accumulate. With the dining table so close by, she said, how useful would it really be?

Very, apparently.

Suzanne now includes the bar as one of her favorite things about the remodel. She says the kids love it and use it to do homework, and it works out perfectly for laying out buffets and for extra seating when entertaining.

She also loves how the kitchen now feels like part of the house.

BOTTOM LINE

The kitchen, although no bigger in square footage, feels larger, the Walkers say.

And it works.

"We're a family of five," Suzanne says, adding that function was critical for everyone.

"William did it just like we imagined it would be," Glenn says. "We're thrilled."

-- *Bridget A. Otto*; bridgetotto@news.oregonian.com

William Roy Designer Kitchens

THE DESIGNER: William Roy

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 30

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: "While everyone knows the phrase 'form follows function,' I think the concept needs rethinking. I believe that form should equal function. One does not need to override the other. You can strike the perfect balance. This philosophy guides the design approach behind every project at William Roy Designer Kitchens."



William Roy

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