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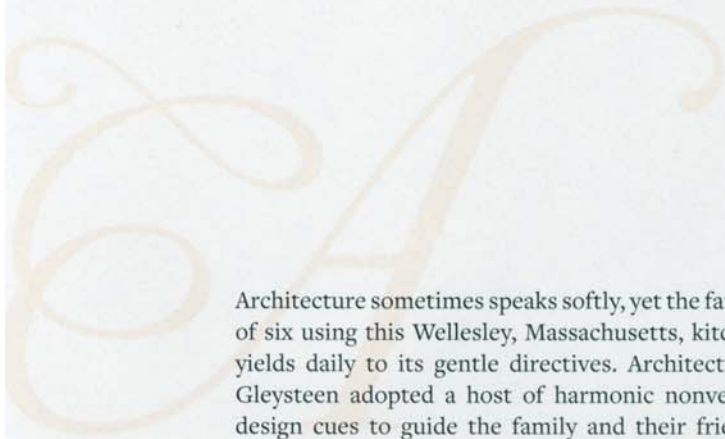
Custom cabinetry, Carrara marble perimeter countertops, and a coffered ceiling set a sophisticated tone in this spacious traditional-style kitchen.



Poetry *in Motion*

Clean, classic style
and soothing
architectural rhythm
bring harmony to
the busy life of a
large family.

BY JAN SOULTS WALKER | PHOTOS MICHAEL PARTENIO | FIELD EDITOR STACY KUNSTEL



Architecture sometimes speaks softly, yet the family of six using this Wellesley, Massachusetts, kitchen yields daily to its gentle directives. Architect Jan Gleysteen adopted a host of harmonic nonverbal design cues to guide the family and their friends through the motions of cooking, enjoying meals, and socializing. A striking coffered ceiling and a generously sized island do most of the talking.

“There is a pleasing subliminal message sent out by a coffered ceiling that makes everything feel very ordered and pulled together,” Gleysteen says. “And because the coffers are centered on the island, you view it as the heart of the kitchen, even though the island isn’t really centered in the space.”

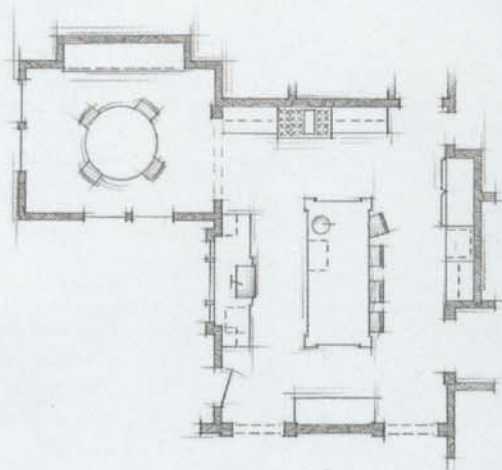
A smooth band frames the coffered portion of the ceiling, echoing wide walkways around the island. “The island also brings order to daily life, providing one side for the chef to work and the opposite side for the family,” Gleysteen says. “The refrigerator is positioned at the end of the wide range aisle so it’s accessible to both the chef and the family.”

Wide pilasters at each corner of the island and a dark mahogany countertop suggest the look of an old kitchen table, Gleysteen says. Interior designer Barbara Wright values the beauty of the mahogany top as well as its practicality. “Wood is a very family-friendly and comfortable work surface,” she says. “When you’re sitting at the island in winter having a snack or coffee, it’s nice and warm to the touch.”





Opposite top: Columns define the kitchen but keep it open to the family room. **Opposite, bottom left:** A double-ogee edge lends a flourish to the substantial 2¼-inch-thick mahogany island countertop. **Opposite, bottom right:** Narrow pilasters flanking the cooktop pull out for quick access to spices and oils. **This photo:** The arched detail above the apron-front sink balances the square, rigid lines of the coffered ceiling.



At 2¼ inches thick, the generous expanse of wood countertop is a formidable presence within the room. Perimeter countertops, dressed in white honed marble, follow suit at 2 inches thick. “The thick countertops make a huge difference in how you perceive the space,” Gleysteen says. “They feel luxurious and appear substantial so the look is classic and solid.”

A marine-grade finish preserves the wood top by repelling stain-makers such as water, wine, and oil. “With the rest of the kitchen all done in white,” Gleysteen says, “this dark brown wood surface provides a visual anchor.”

Selecting off-white for the cabinetry and perimeter marble countertops makes the kitchen “clean, fresh, and elegant,” Wright says. “The room is naturally light, and the white cabinetry helps emphasize that quality.”

A white subway-tile backsplash flatters the cabinetry without stealing the spotlight. An adjacent breakfast room completes the kitchen.

“The key thing in the breakfast room is lots of tall windows,” Gleysteen says. “We purposely sized it to feel cozy to emphasize that this kitchen is all about family living.”

RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 122.

DESIGNER INSIGHTS

Cabinet Character-Builders

Basic cabinets get a style upgrade with thoughtful character-enhancing details.

- **Unify.** Connect upper cabinets to the ceiling or coffered. “This unifies the ceiling and cabinets so they appear built in and fitted,” architect Jan Gleysteen says.
- **Repeat elements.** Small multipane glass doors cap upper cabinets as a visual cousin to the coffered ceiling.
- **Display artisanship.** Inset doors and drawers are a common feature of custom cabinetry. “They bring in another layer of richness,” Gleysteen says.
- **Include softness.** Each recessed panel features a round ogee bead for a delicate architectural element.



Opposite top: As a transition to a formal dining room, this mahogany hutch in the butler's pantry includes a wine refrigerator and glassware storage. **Opposite bottom:** Cabinetry panels conceal the refrigerator, conveniently located just steps from the island and cooktop. **This photo:** The adjacent breakfast room maintains the kitchen's crisp, classic style.

