



TASTE OF NANTUCKET

An Evanston family brings the casual sophistication of Cape Cod summers into their kitchen remodel. All that's missing is the clam chowder.

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Those who travel know the joy of bringing pieces of their adventures home with them. Perhaps it's a painting from that small gallery you stumbled on while lunching in Portofino, Italy. Or a terra cotta terrine that held the triple cream cheese you picnicked on in Provence. If you can't live in your favorite spot year-round, why not replicate it?

That's exactly what Nancy Paridy set out to do with the Evanston kitchen remodel she has spent more than a decade dreaming of, planning, and gathering vintage artifacts from her beloved voyages to the island of Nantucket.

"I have loved Nantucket since college," says Paridy, who

worked with Dan Thompson at DMK Kitchens to make her dream kitchen a reality. "My husband and I got engaged out on Nantucket 30 years ago, and I love the simple but unique feeling of that area. It's rustic, but also very sophisticated, and that's what I wanted to have in my kitchen and in my home."

With touches of barn wood salvaged from Michigan and pieces Paridy gathered on her travels, Thompson took the home's existing 110-square foot kitchen and turned it into a gracious, 375-square-foot Nantucket-inspired culinary retreat.

"She wanted a big open space where she could entertain, bringing a little bit of Nantucket home," explains Thompson. "They have vacationed extensively out on the East Coast and

HOME TOUR



that's what she came up with. This was, without question, one of the greatest transformations we've ever done. It is really something. She had this vision, and she was very gracious and very open to suggestions and ideas to ramp it up."

In addition to the usual high-end Subzero and Wolf appliances, Paridy had envisioned a white and gray palette with touches of rough-hewn timber. Thompson found a place in Michigan where they could purchase remnants from a historic barn from the late 1800s.

"She had the idea of taking accents of barn wood and we took that and created rough-hewn timbers, and even created a hood for the stove vent," Thompson says. "We took a nice idea and really ran with it without going too far. We also

created a very unusual table pedestal out of these rough-hewn beams."

Another wood accent that Paridy loves is the sliding barn door that hides a thoughtfully designed and well-appointed butler's pantry—which she says is essentially her old kitchen reinvented as a staging area for entertaining.

"That pantry is old school," adds Thompson. "It's got butcher block countertops, open shelves. Looks like the old cupboard from way back in the day, and it is stocked, so it's really fun."

While Paridy admits it was a challenge getting by with that small kitchen all those years, she's grateful she waited. Her ideas and vision have had time to marinate.

HOME TOUR



The younger two of her three children are now students at Loyola Academy with busy social schedules: one on the tennis team, and the other on the water polo team. The kitchen she dreamed of when they were children has evolved into the kitchen that serves their needs as young adults today—down to entertaining an entire tennis team and their families.

“The kids are always having their friends over. It’s just a fabulous space to be able to entertain comfortably, whereas my old kitchen was literally a box,” she explains. “It was tiny, tiny, tiny, and one of the frustrations is because I do love to cook, I would be stuck in the kitchen and the rest of the family would be in the very spacious family room the previous owners put on as an addition.”

With the new kitchen addition in place, the space feels more intact, and that elegant Nantucket vibe flows beautifully from space to space.

One of Paridy’s favorite features is one that she and Thompson initially disagreed about—a grand 10-foot granite island that forms a “T” shape with a six-foot extension. Typical islands of this style include a portion that is lowered to table height, with counter stools for at-island dining. Paridy wanted it all on the same level.

“I was adamant that the T is all one level,” she explains. “And I have to say that every day I am thankful I did it that way. Having this T, people are constantly gathered around it. I now can’t imagine not having a T island.”

Thompson agrees. “It is smashing,” he says.

“Nancy was open to different things we suggested and also had ideas we had never even done before. This was definitely our most unique project to date. And we do beautiful kitchens, day in and day out.”

Paridy and her family vacationed in Nantucket again earlier this summer, this time with the distinct intention of bringing back the perfect accent for her now-perfect kitchen.

“I have been collecting Nantucket signs for years, because we go so often. This year, I wanted to find a truly antique sign to go outside the kitchen area, in the doorway between the kitchen and the dining room.”

The artifact, which once hung at an old fish wharf on the island she loves, now serves to evoke that heavy, salty Cape Cod air right here in Evanston, every day of the year. Those who travel know there is no better souvenir.

