

organize

In Good ORDER

Warm and inviting, yes. But this renovated Ohio kitchen moves beyond looks. Its smart storage and organization keep a young family humming along.

Ask Bre Bertolini to rate how much she's into organization, and she gives herself a solid 7 out of 10. She's not a total stickler—with four young kids, she's a realist—but she's also not someone who wants small appliances, coffee pods, and school papers running amok on kitchen countertops. And she admits she still gets a bit giddy when she opens the spice drawer in her Youngstown, OH, kitchen and sees jars with labels all neatly aligned. "It makes me smile every time," she says.

After living with a dated and inefficient 1980s kitchen, Bre was eager to create a warm and functional space for her family, which includes her husband, Dan, and father-in-law, Emil. (The couple moved into Dan's childhood home when his job brought them back to Youngstown eight years ago. The arrangement worked so well, they stayed.) "I wanted to bring character and charm into the kitchen," says Bre, who leaned into a renovation that cast a cozy European sensibility over the previously cold-looking space.

Shifts such as moving the sink under the window and getting the cooktop out of the island

"Rather than go with trends, I design more by what I love and what I'm going to continue to love," says Bre Bertolini, shown with kids Eloise and Hawkins, of her European-inspired kitchen. On the range wall, a quartzite shelf that matches the tall backsplash and counter provides both functional and decorative space.

by JODY GARLOCK photos NATHAN KIRKMAN styling JESSICA THOMAS

"THE KITCHEN IS THE HEART OF OUR HOME. I JUST FEEL LIKE FOR ALL THE THINGS WE DO IN OUR LIVES, IT HAS REALLY HELPED US DO THEM IN AN EASIER AND MORE ORGANIZED WAY." —BRE BERTOLINI, *homeowner*



helped the layout fall into place, improving flow. A cabinetmaker helped her make sense of the room's awkward angles and incorporate smart storage solutions. Bre, a DIYer, content creator (Instagram: @brepurposed), and former graphic designer, flexed her skills by applying a Roman clay finish to the new range hood so it would resemble Venetian plaster. When she found barstools for \$25 each on Facebook Marketplace, she cut their legs to counter height to make them work at the island. Walnut-stained cabinets and unlacquered brass accents reflect two more favorites: dark wood and anything that will patina.

But seeing how the kitchen lives has been most rewarding. The kids know to head to the appliance garage to pop a waffle in the toaster for breakfast. At night, Bre summons the family by ringing an old-school dinner bell hanging on the sink wall. "I thought the dinner bell was a cute way to add more charm—and to become a memory as my kids get older," she says. That small detail also fits with her ultimate goal: "I want the kitchen to feel lived in and loved."

A wall of cabinetry serves as a pantry and integrates the refrigerator and two appliance garages. "I said, 'Let's pack as much storage as we can on this wall, and I'll fill it up.'" Deep stained-wood cabinets are easier to keep clean than painted ones.



SMART RENO SOLUTIONS

To smooth out the kitchen's angles, Bre had upper cabinets removed in favor of the storage wall and tons of deep lower drawers. She had the new island built as large as possible (it's 9' long); the curved, fluted end offsets the room's hard edges.



before



The renovation squared off what was a tricky angled corner. An apron-front sink (where daughter Odelia boosted herself up) now sits below the window, allowing Bre to keep tabs on the kids when they're outside. Slim, reeded glass-front cabinets wrap two walls to efficiently use corner space.

1 BLEND STYLE & FUNCTION

Curved and fluted doors—four total—open via magnetic push mechanisms to provide storage space in the island's rounded end. When the doors are closed, the look is seamless.

2 TIER THE STORAGE

A shelf in an appliance garage pulls out to allow heat to escape when the coffeemaker or toaster is used. A handy, push-to-open drawer outfitted with an expandable bamboo drawer organizer compartmentalizes coffee and tea supplies.

3 MAKE IT PRETTY

Bre spiced up her spice drawer with glass jars she customized for less than \$20. She spray-painted the top of the lids antique brass, applied a clear sealant, and designed labels that she had printed on a matte, waterproof film. The jars are organized on slanted racks built into the drawer.

4 USE EVERY INCH

A pullout utensil station fills a corner that didn't have enough space for a full cabinet or drawers. Large spoons, whisks, and spatulas drop into removable canisters. Knives sink into a cushy foam material at the back of the cabinet. Shelves accommodate odd-size items such as a rolling pin and grilling tongs.

5 SET SOME BORDERS

Chunky wooden pegs serve as organizational guardrails for plates and bowls. Just like a traditional pegboard, the pegs can be moved to any predrilled hole to create a custom fit for different-size dishes, making it a snap to rearrange the drawer. Tip: Rev-A-Shelf makes a similar buyable system that can be cut to fit your existing drawers.

6 GET CLEVER

A pullout broom closet was added simply for the sake of not wasting any storage opportunity, but Bre decided to turn it into a family message center. ■



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