



DOUBLE DUTY

BY MELANIE MCGEE BIANCHI
PHOTO BY DAVID DIETRICH

Stanlee Stahl's requirements for a kitchen went far beyond aesthetics or even basic practicality. After years of having her husband, George Ackerman, haul boxes of special kosher cookware up from the basement of their New Jersey home, she wanted their North Carolina dream house to have a kitchen for all seasons.

The conservative Jewish couple is vegetarian, but they still keep kosher during holidays such as Passover, which means separate cutlery, separate food-processing appliances, separate dishes and glassware, even a different lining in the cupboards — “in essence,” says Stahl, “a whole duplicate kitchen.”

And that's just what interior designer Talli Roberts created. The room hums in ultrasoft neutrals, including custom cabinetry by Mike Roberts, painted in Benjamin Moore's “Classic Gray”; a wooden white mosaic backsplash by Horizon Tile; a wall of honed white limestone behind the stove; a custom-made, free-standing vertical range hood; and “Honed Absolute Black” countertops by Stone Gallery.

But it's what you *don't* see at first that makes the kitchen unique: an entire set of extra built-in cabinets opposite the limestone wall, storage galore in a smartly tucked-away spot, including every feature needed to keep kosher without turning the main kitchen inside out.

“This kitchen is on one side of a long great room,” explains Roberts. The open plan, including a dining space, has a vaulted ceiling and a tall fireplace on the opposite end of the kitchen, in the living room, that's meant to complement the striking range hood. “The two vertical elements provide a center line of symmetry,” says Roberts. “The whole idea is to balance one side with the other.”

For Stahl, who travels the world running the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous — an internationally lauded group that honors and assists elderly non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Holocaust — the sweet convenience of her dream kitchen has already proven itself.

“The way the cupboards wrap around, with even a separate [kosher] rack for the sink — I thought I'd died and gone to heaven,” she says.

RESOURCES

Architect: John Petri, Petri Architecture

Interior Designer: Talli Allen-Roberts, ASID, Allard & Roberts Interior Design, Inc.

Cabinetry: TM Roberts Cabinets

Builder: Living Stone Construction

Countertops: Stone Gallery Granite & Marble *

Backsplash: Horizon Tile & Stone Gallery

Lighting Design: David Terry

Plumbing Fixtures, and Lighting: Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery

Counter Stools: Four Corners Home

* Asheville Kitchen & Bath Show, see page 87