



\* **THE KITCHEN AFICIONADO** | by LORRAINE FORSTER Photos by ANDREI FEDOROV

## The Revival of the Kitchen Nook

Ross Taylor knew what he wanted. It had to integrate a place to entertain friends, a comfy space to sit and relax with a morning cup of coffee, and a functional work area to pursue his passion for cooking. He didn't jump right into the project. After two years in his all too typical seventies Saanich home he finally took on the challenge.

This was no simple makeover. Two interior walls were completely eliminated and an external wall was pushed out onto an existing deck. Standard eight-foot ceilings were removed and the new ceiling was snugged up to the rafters then anchored by an impressive Parallax beam that accents the room. The addition of skylights eliminates the need for daytime lighting even in the darker days of winter. Taylor said he was very pleased with the draft free ventilation provided by the easy to open skylights.

The pay off of all this demolition was a new space that gave 200 square feet of possibilities where Taylor was careful to integrate all the components of his ideal kitchen. As he loves to cook and entertain, the configuration of eating bar, table and lounge area gives diverse seating for twenty-four.

In the centre of it all are polished Nero Assoluto black granite counters and island with cross cut white oak cabinetry by Jason Goode. Sleek, Hoppy Adjustable Bar Stools by Bonaldo provide club style perches for six. Perfect. Guests can sip wine, nibble on apps and entertain the host who might be putting the final touches on an aromatic hand crafted pizza.

Taylor didn't stop there is his quest for the ideal cooking and entertaining environment. In spite of the lack of walls a huge bank of pantry cabinetry provides oodles of storage for all the trendy gadgets and ingredients necessary for a serious cook. Sleek stainless steel appliances include a three zone beverage centre and a versatile micro-convection oven.

With larger gatherings in mind or for more traditional dining a European look York table by Cattelan Italia was installed adjacent to the island. It offers spacious seating for six. But with the stainless steel pop-up leaves deployed the seating is doubled.

With all this happening in the vast new kitchen space Taylor came up with a brilliant concept for the original dining room which was now available for reassignment. A large rectangle was cut out of the dining-room wall giving a framed view into the kitchen. Another smaller eating bar takes advantage of this view thereby tying the two areas together. With the addition of four red leather Metro swivel tub chairs manufactured in Victoria by Gabriel Ross around a low circular tempered glass and walnut table this room was reborn into the cozy relaxed environment of the urban coffee house. Six oversized windows draw in the natural light and the green space from the outdoors. **CONT'D ON THE NEXT PAGE**



TOP: Homeowner Ross Taylor created his dream kitchen where he could cook, entertain and relax in both comfort and style.

ABOVE: Metro swivel tub chairs, tempered glass and walnut table and oversized windows make this new-style kitchen nook into a relaxed place to hang out.

LEFT: An espresso machine awaits coffee orders.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Detail of the cross cut white oak cabinetry.



Evening transforms this comfy nouveau-nook into an intimate place to kick back with the latest bestseller. A striking fifty-branch Flos chandelier hovers half way between floor and ceiling providing a touch of warmth contrasted with the Spartan lines of glass and leather. Taylor should be pleased with the results of his multi-zoned kitchen makeover. It's original, welcoming and a great place to enjoy food and friends.

## Steam Heat

Q. What can brown toast, roast a crispy skinned yet deliciously moist chicken, and seal all the flavour and nutrients into an artichoke?

A. A steam convection oven, of course.

Don't be surprised if you've never heard of this wonderful appliance before. Even though it has been used as a popular cooking alternative in Japan and professional kitchens for years, it is just starting to gather steam (no pun intended) in the North American market.

And please don't be put off by the term "steam," which might conjure up images of pale, flaccid, institutional fare. Steam ovens use a combination of super-heated steam (up to 550°F/228°C) and convection to cook foods 33 percent faster than a conventional oven. This oven is an extremely healthy way to cook because the super heat melts away fat molecules yet leaves meats, fish and veggies perfectly juicy.

The first built-in steam oven was created by Miele in 1999 and is now available in two sizes, a 24-inch and a 27-inch built-in model for \$3,000 to \$4,200. It has 900 pre-programmed settings.

A less expensive yet nonetheless efficient alternative is the Sharp AX-700. It has a 25-litre capacity, almost as large as the 30 litres of the 27-inch Miele and is priced between \$1,000 to \$1,400. The Sharp is extremely user-friendly with four automatic categories: roast, grill, steam and convenience foods. Both the Miele and Sharp have a refillable water reservoir so they can be easily installed without any special plumbing requirements.

If you are considering a complete kitchen makeover with the best in high-end appliances, take a look at the Gaggenau 220/221 CombiSteam for \$3,700 to \$5,200. A Good Design Award winner with its matte 24-inch stainless exterior, broad temperature range and graduated humidity settings, it needs to be integrated into redesign plans from the start because it requires both a water source and a drain.

With reduced cooking times, this versatile appliance should be considered when looking for greener options for the family kitchen. If space is an issue, install it in lieu of a microwave; all models have pre-programmed reheat settings that produce flavourful, moist results as opposed to the dried-out leftovers that emerge from a microwave. —L. Forster

Where to shop in B.C.

Coast Wholesale Appliances, [www.coastappliances.com](http://www.coastappliances.com)

Trail Appliances Ltd., [www.trailappliances.com](http://www.trailappliances.com)

The Ultimate Kitchen, [www.theultimatekitchen.com](http://www.theultimatekitchen.com)



Gaggenau 220/221 CombiSteam

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