



The countertop-height breakfast bar plays many roles – a casual dining spot, an extension of the food-preparation space, and a serving area for parties. An apron gives a tabletop appearance to the L-shaped breakfast bar and pulls out to reveal storage room for linens. Hardware, thoughtfully omitted, would have given away the secret.

Photography by Bob Narod

◀ A Working Breakfast

Bethesda, MD, homeowners Brian and Caroline Smith wanted a breakfast area and workstation in their then 126-square-foot kitchen. They called Jennifer Gilmer Kitchen & Bath Ltd. to troubleshoot. President Jennifer Gilmer and Designer Amy Pasek carved out a niche for the desk by borrowing a few feet from a closet and removing part of a wall to open up the space. An L-shaped teak breakfast bar adjoins the desk on one end. The Smiths can now enjoy a casual meal and check e-mail from one location.

“You need to truly understand how you want to use the space,” says Caroline Smith. “Jennifer and Amy thought through all the details and came up with solutions that worked within our space. I got a true gourmet kitchen that I enjoy cooking and living in.”

To open up the space even more, Gilmer removed part of the wall next to the refrigerator and replaced it with a fully integrated, custom-built pantry set at an angle. “The angled pantry gave us more room for the bar stools,” Gilmer says. “It also created a softer entry or transition into the kitchen. By carving out these spaces, we only added 9 square feet to the kitchen, but it made a huge difference.”

Gilmer also removed a soffit and extended the cabinets up to the ceiling. She selected semi-custom maple cabinets with a Cameo White finish from Greenfield Cabinetry LLC and added flexible storage options, such as the open horizontal area above the Sub-Zero refrigerator for storing decorative trays and open deep shelves to the right for wine bottles and cookbooks.

“This kitchen reminds me of an old-fashioned butler’s pantry,” Gilmer says.

An angled pantry creates more space for the breakfast area.

A fully integrated Sub-Zero refrigerator blends with the semi-custom Greenfield cabinetry. Gilmer recommends open shelves, rather than a traditional rack, for storing wine bottles. The custom farmhouse sink is a charming nod to the past.



Designer Jennifer Gilmer gained space for the computer workstation by taking some from a closet. The teak breakfast-area countertop adjoins the work surface, which is honed soapstone to match the sink and kitchen countertops. A glass-front cabinet above and open shelves below provide storage options.