

HOUSE & HOME

BEFORE & AFTER

FROM BIG TO SMALL,
MAKEOVERS YOU
WON'T BELIEVE!

*Is this kitchen
custom or catalogue?
See page 88*

INSPIRATION, COAST TO COAST

NYLA FREE IN CALGARY
COREY DAMEN JENKINS
IN DETROIT

SHELAGH KELLAM AND
MEGHAN CARTER IN TORONTO

ISABELLE FISH IN
PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

JOHANNE NADEAU
IN SAINT-LAMBERT, QUE.

**BEST
NEW SPRING
FABRICS &
WALLPAPERS**

**PLUS: The Only Sticky Buns
Recipe You'll Ever Need!**

QUICK-CHANGE Artist

Design by GILLIAN ATKINS
As told to WENDY JACOB
Photography by ALEX LUKEY



Designer Gillian Atkins spills the tea (and the numbers) on her budget-friendly kitchen redo.

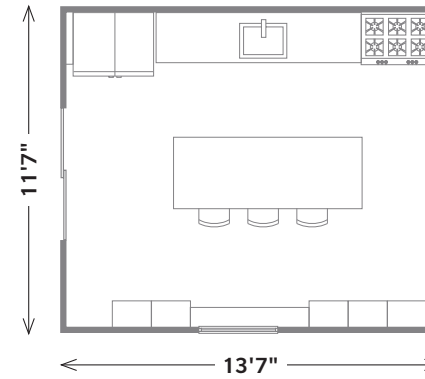
When I saw the dark-stained Ikea Lerhyttan door fronts with their Shaker-style rails, I knew they would contrast nicely with the new blond floors. I keep my everyday dishes in the 24-inch-deep drawers in the island, nearest the dishwasher. **Cabinets, Ikea; custom oak bench, Davenport Kitchens; stools, Crate and Barrel; engineered wood floors, PurParket.**



Gillian is the managing partner at Lynda Reeves Design Studio.

I bought a Toronto century home in August 2020 for me and my three sons, Euan, 14, and twins, Oliver and Rhys, 12. It wasn't pretty, but it had good bones — one of those coveted, diamond-in-the-rough construction projects. With a tight closing date, I had just three months to complete a renovation and move my family in. What could go wrong? Well, add a global pandemic, and my contractor Rob and I had our work cut out for us... not to mention that I'm a designer and my clients have to come first! A lot of the decisions for this reno were driven by what I was able to do quickly, efficiently and inexpensively — oh, and it had to look beautiful, too.

The Floor Plan



THE LAYOUT The existing kitchen was falling apart and only occupied one wall of the otherwise spacious ground floor. I reorganized the floor plan to create a bigger kitchen. First to go was the main-floor powder room (I know, I know — never rip out a main-floor bathroom, but this powder room was just a little too close for comfort to the kitchen). Not moving your plumbing or appliances is the first rule of keeping costs down, so I left them where they were. I knew I wanted a big island, lots of storage and no traditional upper cabinets, but the rest of the design unfolded organically.

THE ABSOLUTE MUST-HAVE Having a long, narrow island was my first priority. I wanted a place where all three boys could gather to hang out or dine. Now we have a nice, long surface with no cooktop or sink in the way — perfect for entertaining. Euan is a bit of a chef (lucky me), and he and I are often cooking together on the working side of the island while the twins perch on the stools awaiting his creations. When your kitchen looks good but also functions for everyone, it's a huge victory.



Gables added to the top and sides hide the unfinished ends

The drawers at the bottom of this cabinet are a lifesaver; they're chock-full of snacks that are easy to access and hidden from view. **Mugs, apron, tea towel, Ikea; throw pillow and drapery fabric, Tonic Living.**

Produced by Stacy Begg / Floor plan illustration by Madison Pflance



SEE SOURCE GUIDE

THE HACK The hacking of Ikea products is the worst-kept secret on the internet and also the best way to get more bang for your buck. A good millworker can modify Ikea pieces to elevate the look. We made the tall kitchen cabinets feel custom by running the side gables to the floor, recessing the toe-kick quite far back and finishing the top with full panels; even though you don't see much of the panels, they complete the look nicely. I chose equal-sized drawers wherever possible to make the units feel more like furniture and, inside, I used Ikea's Variera bamboo flatware tray inserts, which are great for keeping things organized. When my math didn't work out perfectly, my carpenter, Tom, made an open tray slot from the leftover gables (see page 90) and, voilà, a custom fit.



The white oak shelf was a great alternative to traditional upper cabinets, and it's an easy way to mask the transition from the backsplash to the wall above. Quartz counter, APR Marble & Granite.

A dead space is turned into tray storage



Before

THE MAJOR PLAYERS If I had unlimited time and budget, I would have opted for custom cabinets. For those of us who don't have either of those luxuries, thank goodness for Ikea! This is my third Ikea kitchen, and they've all served me extremely well, so I didn't hesitate to install another one in my new house. Plus, with a few minor tweaks, it actually feels custom. Believe it or not, the black stainless appliances are Ikea, too.

I recently installed PurParket floors for a client and felt a pang of jealousy, so they became a must-have for my house. The beautiful wide-plank, European white oak engineered floors set a serene tone for the whole design. I chose a matte finish that hides a lot of sins — we've already smashed it up a couple of times, and the more nicks and chips there are, the better it looks. I knew I wouldn't regret spending that money.

WHAT IT COST

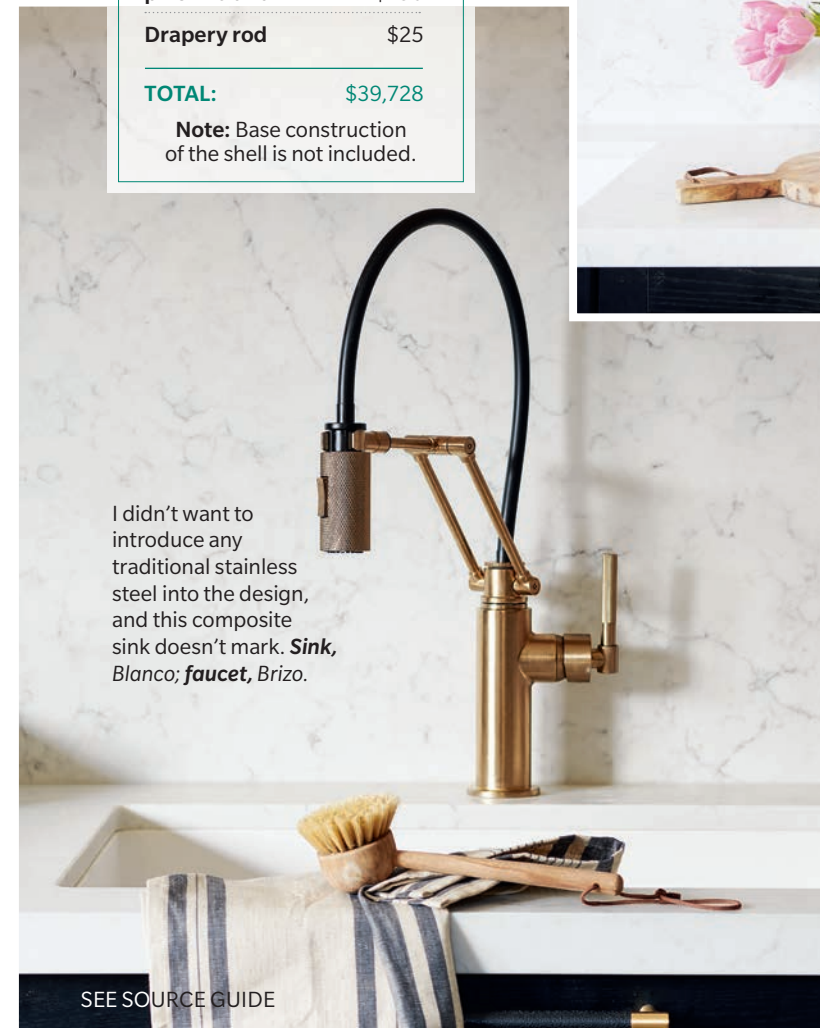
Costs are based on standard retail prices.

Cabinets	\$7,500
Range, vent hood, fridge, dishwasher	\$5,656
Flooring	\$4,000
Electrical, plumbing, painting, drywall	\$4,000
Counters	\$8,000
Plaster crown moulding & installation	\$3,700
Sink	\$600
Faucet	\$1,100
Custom oak shelf and bench	\$2,200
Sconces & chandelier	\$900
Hardware	\$470
Stools	\$1,287
Drapery & throw pillow fabric	\$290
Drapery rod	\$25

TOTAL: \$39,728

Note: Base construction of the shell is not included.

I didn't want to introduce any traditional stainless steel into the design, and this composite sink doesn't mark. Sink, Blanco; faucet, Brizo.



SEE SOURCE GUIDE



"It's nice to switch up something standard and make it feel original"

We love Les Ensembliers' chive vinegar!

ABOVE: Puck lights on the underside of the oak shelf act as task lighting. The leather-wrapped cabinet hardware has brass tips on either end, which looks dynamite without costing a fortune. Sconce, Modern Komfort; range, vent hood, Ikea; oak shelf, Davenport Kitchens; cutting board by H&H, HomeSense.

THE FIXTURES The lighting is from Modern Komfort, a female-run retailer based out of New Brunswick. It's my new favourite go-to for looking like you spent a million bucks, and it's nice to support a Canadian company. In the evening, I just turn on the sconces for a soft glow. The Brizo faucet was a splurge; its luxe gold finish isn't too brassy and the shape is super cool. Fingers crossed, my boys don't break it. The sink is from Blanco, one of the Silgranit composites. I like the idea of a white sink that blends in to a white counter, and it's turned out to be really hard-wearing. H&H