

This condo kitchen renovation is fit for a pro

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Making an offer wasn't on the menu when Lucy Waverman and Bruce MacDougall first toured the 1980s condo on Toronto's east side. Waverman, a noted cookbook author and food columnist for The Globe and Mail, and MacDougall, a lawyer, craved a lifestyle change after raising a family in the same house for 40-plus years. This size was right, but the building had no gas line – a potential deal breaker for Waverman, who was accustomed to cooking on a six-burner gas stove.

But once they saw the expansive view, and learned nothing could be built to obscure it, Waverman and MacDougall knew the condo could be their future home. It was a blank slate.

Waverman is no stranger to kitchen renovations, having overseen two in her previous home, where the space was used as both a cooking school and a recipe lab. This time, she enlisted the help of designer Tara Fingold to create her next-gen dream kitchen. "It needed to be a big, bright, workable kitchen that was comfortable enough to be used as a family room," Waverman says. And one other thing: It needed to be open, but not too open. "I don't ever want to be sitting in the living room and looking at dirty dishes."

The first priority was a functional floorplan. Fingold suggested annexing an awkward L-shaped corner of the living room and moving the adjacent laundry room to a big walk-in closet. The reconfiguration allowed for a small office area where Waverman can keep an eye on whatever's bubbling on the stove. Removing outdated potlights meant the ceiling could be raised by four inches – another big win.

Next came the all-important issue of storage. "One of the first things I stressed to Tara was that I needed a lot of cupboard space to hold my panoply of tools and ingredients," Waverman says. A seven-foot pantry wall with a blend of fixed and pull-out shelves neatly housed her bottles, boxes, bags and jars. All of the lower cabinets around the kitchen's perimeter are drawers – Waverman's preference for ease of organization.

One thing you won't find in this kitchen is a microwave; Waverman has rarely used the appliance, except to heat coffee or tea. "People are shocked and ask, 'How do you melt your butter?'" she says with a laugh. "Well, I just melt it in a pot on the stove." She opted for a steam oven instead and is exploring its many uses, from reheating bread to hard-boiling a dozen eggs at once.

As for the lack of natural gas? Waverman took an induction-cooking course and quickly became a convert. "It took me a while to get used to the heat levels and in the beginning, I was burning things," she says. "But now, I just love it. Induction is quick, it's clean, and you can use the surface for serving as soon as you turn it off." Best of all, she's able to continue using her prized copper pots by adding a heat-conducting stainless steel disc to the cooktop.

The couple moved into the condo in September, and Waverman wasted no time christening the kitchen with a comfort-food dinner of roast chicken and perfectly steamed vegetables. "It's such a beloved family meal, but I made it just for Bruce and myself. It really did feel like a celebration."



Food columnist Lucy Waverman.

BRANDON TITARO/THE GLOBE AND MAIL



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Designer Tara Fingold proposed painting the island Benjamin Moore Laurentian Red (CC-152), a rich berry tone, to inject some personality and differentiate it from the rest of the cabinets, which are painted Benjamin Moore Cloud White (CC-40). Waverman loves watching TV as she cooks or makes jam, so she installed a Samsung The Frame to the right of the dishwasher. "Not only can I watch a movie or the news, but I can even put recipes up on the screen big and bold," she says.



Waverman's Wolf induction cooktop faces the window and view beyond, rather than being situated on a perimeter counter. "There's nothing more boring than staring at a wall with your back to everyone as you stir your sauce," she says of the layout choice. A stacked electric oven and steam oven, both by Wolf, are integrated into a bank of closed cabinetry, making them appear seamless.



Wrapping the durable and easy-to-clean porcelain counter slabs up the wall keeps the room feeling luxe and light-filled. The porcelain's veined pattern mimics marble and creates a stunning backdrop for Waverman's copper pots: "Each of them has a history," she says. "Some I bought in Paris, and some came from my mother, so they're special and I like to see them on display."



Waverman wasn't keen to have another stainless-steel sink: "My old one looked pristine for about a week, and then it was scratched." She spied these Blanco resin sinks at the Interior Design Show in 2019 and decided that's what she would install if she ever moved. Fast-forward to 2022, and the stain- and scratch-resistant sink – in a purple-black colour called "Aubergine" – is a functional and dramatic feature.



FENONCHIO

SUGAR

FLOUR



OREGANO

Paprika

LOVES

ROMANO

SAFRAN

Mustard

Mustard

GINGER

Cardamom

KARRE

Mustard

Mustard

Mustard

Mustard

Mustard

Mustard

Mustard

Ginger

ALLSPICE

ALLSPICE



PAPRIKA

Mustard

Nagelen

Foelie

Nutmeg

Salmag

PEPPER

THYM

Zimt

Semola

When travelling, Waverman visits flea markets to score vintage herb and spice jars for her collection. She displays them on three wooden racks (one shown here) and says the opaque glass protects dried herbs from light, which makes them lose flavour and disintegrate.



Waverman devoted seven feet of floor-to-ceiling wall space to two pantry cupboards. In each, the bottom four shelves pull out. This system allows her to store a wealth of globe-spanning specialty ingredients within easy reach. The side-by-side column refrigerator and freezer are from Fisher & Paykel. The apartment's original herringbone floors were repurposed and moved from the bedroom, where Waverman and MacDougall decided to install carpet.

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