## LIVABLE A BOLD REMODEL TURNED A COLORADO KITCHEN FROM CRAMPED AND SHABBY TO SLEEK AND FUNCTIONAL WITH MORE THAN ENOUGH SPACE FOR FAMILY TO GATHER. WRITER JOSH HAPNER PHOTOGRAPHER DAVID PATTERSON PELO-ID/TOF ELANE ST, LOUIS

The remodel of Janis and Robert Smith's kitchen gave them a minimalist work space, left, that ultimately serves their family with functionality and conversience. Annexing a room allowed ample cabinetry, while cool grays and clean lines achieve a modern look.

Unless the accessing update to just the beginning

After two decades in their Denver-area home, Janis and Robert Smith made the call: The split-level's green shag carpet had to go.

So did the dim lighting and the outdated colors. And the worn-through parquet flooring.

"One thing led to another, and we basically gutted the house," kitchen designer Chris Awadalla says. "But the kitchen was definitely the star of the show."

The Smiths had imagined a hub for family gatherings, yet after 25 years living there, the space had come to feel shabby and cramped. Get-togethers happened elsewhere.

"What makes a kitchen warm is the people in it," Janis says. "Rob has a big family, and we wanted them here."

Without a quick remedy for the 19g-square-foot space, the Smiths and Awadalia decided on a full do-over. "They were willing to consider anything," Awadalia says. "I said, "Let's look at doing this with a clean style.""

The Smiths were reluctant at first. Minimal design doesn't have a reputation for warm welcomes. But Awadalla showed them some drawings, explaining that minimalism was about function, practicality, and a clean look. They liked it.

"He talked about things you can clean easily. About replacing cabinets with drawers because that's what we prefer to use. Basically making the space work for exactly how we live," Rob says. "So much of it was functional. He saw what we wanted and gave it a name."

Awadalla expanded and updated the kitchen, adding restrained dashes of color, lots of storage, and enough room for a bustling family of cooks. Knocking out a wall between the kitchen and adjacent office added try square feet. That meant space for a new pantry—the old one was on the lower level—plus a new office nook in the corner.

The Smiths' bright red oven inspired floating shelves of the same color that pop like racing stripes against the timeless grays. Sliding the oven down the wall 2 feet added counter space, enough for each of Robert's four siblings to stake out a spot at family gatherings. Flat-front drawers and slab doors contribute to the minimalist look, as does the subtle backsplash tile that stretches to the ceiling on the range and sink walls. "I didn't go crazy with the backsplash. I kept it simple and subtle," Awadalla says. "It's easy to clean because it's large tile. It blends because it's white, but it contrasts with the countertops."

Making contemporary style approachable came down to details. Scapstone counters, black with natural veins, add an organic touch. So do the cabinets' matte finishes (no glossy treatment here). The No. 2 oak flooring—a budget-price flooring grade characterized by vivid color variation and natural markings, such as knots—warms the space right up.

"Design can be clean and modern without being cold," Robert says. "You can mix materials to bring warmth to any style. For us it was about finding the right person to help us."

Last Christmas, Janis and Robert's family gathered at their house, in their kitchen, to cook. Everyone found a place. With the relatives in a circle, Robert raised a glass to toast.

The kitchen was full of people, and it was warm.



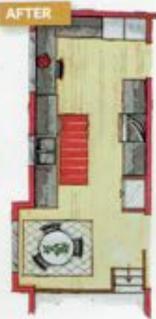
## The existing over was a keepen and guided all other colon choices in the moon CHO KIT WAS minimal with warmth Add some soul to a sleek, contemporary kitchen with these tips. DISPLAY PERSONALITY, A favorite collectible, a well-loved cookbook, or stationery on a desk helps a room feet tived in. AVOID GLOSSY FINISHES on cabinets. and countertops. A low sheer goes a

Two sophisticated grays, above, keep this spacious kitchen from feeling monotone.

## the plans

Homeowners Janis and Robert Smith's kitchen lost a wall but gained an office nook. Other minor tweaks. simplified the traffic flow.





long way toward making a space

DASH IN BRIGHT COLOR, Break up

with rugs, towels, or even appliances. LEAVE SOME OPEN WALL SPACE IS

all those neutrals by adding warm colors

feel approachable.







signature pieces

Don't you love that shapely matte-white dinnerware set on the Smiths' kitchen shelf (opposite)? Designer Eva Zeisel shirked convention in the early 1900s. with ample, curvy, sensual designs inspired by the human body. She was the first woman to join Budapest's local pottery guild, igniting a career in ceramics that took her from making humble pottery in her own garden to crafting internationally noted designs. Find more of her stuff - mostly tableware--in permanent museum collections around the globe, including MoMA and the Met. But grabbing a few pieces of your own won't mean spending collector-caliber cash: The whole set is \$550 at Design Within Reach; dwr.com (individual preces also available).

Awadalla likes the Noire sospetone countertop, above left, because this pure black lacks any hints of green, which is common for other black stones. The Smiths love it because it's functional: "It's great to be able to set anything hot on it," Janis says. "And today I was feeling locky that it doesn't stain-I overflowed coffee all over it."

## Custom-matched paint

allowed Aveadalla to repeat the apple red color, above, of the Smithe' Viking range throughout the room to unite the space.

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6 I NEVER WANT TO DESIGN A SPACE THAT FEELS LIKE YOU CAN'T TOUCH ANYTHING. THIS FEELS LIVED IN. IT FEELS COMFORTABLE.

- kitchen designer Chris Awadalia