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Light Waves

BUSY RESTAURATEURS SPOIL VISITORS TO THEIR BEACH HOME WITH A FRESH, BRIGHT KITCHEN.

AS AN 8-YEAR-OLD APPRENTICE AT his grandmother's restaurant, chef Bob Patchen learned the secret of cooking. "The simplest and the best ingredients are still the best way," Bob says.

The same is true in kitchen design. Bob and his wife, Donna, made heavy-duty function and light, fresh style the key ingredients of their Connecticut kitchen. The couple own Paci, a posh, popular Southport restaurant. With Bob baking its delicate desserts at home and the couple entertaining often, their by-the-beach kitchen works and plays hard.

An island for prep and separate walls for cooking, cleanup, and food storage ease the work flow. "Our restaurant is designed as a very small, tight area, but it works really well, and we have five people on the line," Bob says. "It's the same thing here. It's how it flows, and you work from one area to another."

Entertaining is easy, too, thanks to the island. "We can pour wine from there and put hors d'oeuvres out and later go into the dining room," Bob says.

So who does the cooking at home? Married nearly 40 years, Bob and Donna have a deal. "Donna's a great cook, but she cooked for the first 20 years, and I'm cooking for the next 20," Bob says. "After that, she says the next 20 are negotiable."



THIS PHOTO: Easy flow between the island prep area and the cooking wall gives Bob and Donna Patchen's kitchen restaurant efficiency. OPPOSITE: Gentle curves help soften the edges of the contemporary space.



“WE DIDN’T WANT IT REALLY HIGH-TECH MODERN WHERE IT LOOKED LIKE AN OPERATING ROOM.”

—HOMEOWNER DONNA PATCHEN

COOKING LIGHT

Efficient undercounter storage and a tall pantry by the refrigerator allow the sink wall to be free of upper cabinetry and full of windows. For ease in entertaining, the U-shape perimeter breaks for a doorway to the dining room. With a warming drawer and sink, the island can be a prep space or bar/buffet. The round end is open to a main gathering room.





