

# DECOR MAINE

| ARCHITECTURE ART DESIGN EXPERIENCE FOOD SUSTAINABILITY |

The  
February 2020

## KITCHEN ISSUE

Come for the Trails,  
Stay for a Beer  
IN NORWAY,  
OXFORD, AND  
PARIS

### 5 STANDOUT KITCHENS

In Kennebunkport,  
Falmouth, Rockport,  
and New Harbor—  
And Why They Work

A Winter Pasta  
Recipe from  
SOLO ITALIANO

PLUS:  
An Essay by  
ELISSA  
ALTMAN



# ARIANA

## *Ariana Fischer Interior Design* FISCHER

**MORE THAN ONCE** we've heard the story of designer and client ending up friends, but surely this must be the starkest instance. When Ariana Fischer's longtime friends and oldest clients (technically her *second*-oldest clients; they first hired her to design their professional offices over 20 years ago) asked her to update their Rockport condo's aging kitchen, they did something highly unusual: They walked away. "No questions,

PHOTOS *by* MIKE DAY

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Chrome legs give the island a boost and help open up a tight space.





When the clients finally arrived one morning, they couldn't see the fresh-cut flowers at first because they entered the kitchen with their eyes covered. "It really was the sweetest thing," Ariana says. She and her team had restored every detail. "When you're this close with a client, it's like you're giving them a gift," she says. In a space designed for literal nourishment, it sounds like there was plenty of the incorporeal brand. The clients, of course, were thrilled and much celebration followed.

They also said the lack of stress was unbelievable.

**opposite page, far left** Notice the window treatments hang several inches above the frames. As with the faux-top cabinets, Ariana does this to create the illusion of height. **opposite page, left** "There is a way to marry aesthetics with practical living," Ariana says. "These clients get that one-thousand percent." **right** Paving stone floors offer a deep maturity that ensures this kitchen will never veer too modern. **below** Believe it or not, this island is only 20" deep. Note also the stove-side pot filler faucet.



no check-ins. Nothing," Ariana says. A true "before" and "after." "You *never* have that. Never. But they trusted me. A client trusting you that implicitly brings out new levels of creativity. You push boundaries."

The vibe would be sleek and sophisticated. Ariana had absorbed her friends' aesthetic over the years and knew the premium they placed on displaying their substantial collection of modern art (the piece in the dining area is a Cindy Sherman). Still, given the condo's locale and bucolic views, there was no escaping its country mood, and an urbane design still needed to reflect that texture.

Ariana indulged an impulse.

She used reclaimed Belgian paving stones for the dining area floor. The stones' natural undulations and large scale reveal a subtle earthen quality. On the island, she employed flat gray marble with grainy white striations. "Like a sandpainting," Ariana says. "I wanted simplicity, but also that imperfection. It ties to the reclaimed stone and keeps it all from becoming too full-on, flawless

modern. The paving stones and the island add real warmth. You get that in European kitchens—very old surfaces paired with modern fixtures."

By all accounts, the original kitchen was pretty rough. Wainscoting, faux stone, some unfortunate gingerbread work. And cramped. Another of Ariana's charges involved establishing a more workable, maneuverable space, one to accommodate her friends' three children and seven grandchildren. The answer was light and height.

"There was absolutely no light on one whole end of the kitchen, so we added the window nearest the hood," Ariana says. Polished tile went on the backsplash—surprising in New England—to bounce in additional sun. For height, she had Bench Dogs—"the best custom cabinet makers in the state"—faux-top the cabinets. "On the corner soffit, they even built the interiors at a slant to follow the roofline. Otherwise, the cabinets would have ended at the shelf over the sink and left a completely inordinate amount of ceiling above."

