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THE FINAL DISH

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA MOSS

Learn from this homeowner, who did three separate renovations to bring this kitchen to its ultimate perfect form.



[OPPOSITE] Base cabinets fitted with drawers flank the stove, providing plenty of storage for kitchen essentials. Wall cabinets are punctuated with open shelves. Extra thick, textured subway tiles pave the wall behind the stove and shelves all the way to the ceiling. Sand tracked into the kitchen simply disappears on the easy-maintenance limestone flooring.

Jules salvaged a damaged lampshade by wrapping it in twine, including the cord, and creating a hanging fixture with a beach-like feel. Although the kitchen isn't huge, it can accommodate a good-sized crowd at the table and breakfast bar.



This peaceful coastal kitchen may look pristine, but it's gone through its share of turbulent transformation, proving that with hard work and faith, your dream kitchen can emerge anywhere. By 2014, Jules and Lawrence Duffy's Victorian beach cottage, had withstood five generations of New Jersey's quixotic coastal climate. It even survived super storm Sandy in 2012 with little damage. "We had 18 inches of water in the basement and lost all of our mechanicals," Jules says. "Compared to the rest of the town [though], we really had nothing to complain about." But when temperatures dipped to record lows the following winter, the house could take no more.

THE SANDY AFTERMATH

The Duffys had lived in their beach cottage full time for 11 years, renovating nearly the entire house inside and out. A year after Hurricane Sandy, when the couple relocated temporarily for work, a cold snap wreaked havoc on the house again. "Our neighbor called and told us that water was pouring out the back door." A friend was able to shut the water off, and the family hurried down to survey the aftermath.

What they found was total devastation. Ruptured pipes, a collapsed ceiling and water damage to the walls and floor mandating a complete gut-job for the kitchen. As a talented designer with her own business, Jules Duffy Designs, Jules accepted the situation philosophically. "Over the years we had renovated the rest of the house," Jules says, "but we had put off doing anything with the kitchen. We figured it was time."

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A NEW SPACE FOR AN OLD HOUSE

With the room gutted, Jules was free to create an updated kitchen to meet her family's needs. She incorporated the old back porch into the room, gaining a few precious square feet and creating an entry area, which functions like a little mud-room. Jules added cubbies and boat cleats that act as hooks to organize rain-slickers, boots and beach paraphernalia.

She designed an efficient layout for the kitchen's work zone angled around an island with inset sink and breakfast bar. Industrial-style appliances were set at right angles to the sink, so food prep could be accomplished with just a step or two in either direction. The perimeter walls were lined with ample, white-painted cabinets topped with steel-gray honed granite. A dining area with an inviting banquette was tucked into a sun-drenched corner. The kitchen renovation went on through the spring and summer of 2014. Finally it was complete, and the family was able to enjoy a few weeks of their new kitchen before the winter season of 2014–2015.

ONE MORE TIME

"Exactly one year and one day from the first flood," Jules says, "my wonderful neighbor called again to tell me water was pouring out of a different part of the kitchen."

This time it was harder. "Everything we had just done

A cabinet is strategically placed by the dining room door and stores less frequently used items. It serves perfectly as a small drinks cabinet as well.

[OPPOSITE] Jules got a great deal on the Ruvati sink through overstock.com. The 2 ½-inch thick quartzite countertop is one of her favorite features in the new kitchen.

Jules had to completely renovate her shore-house kitchen twice. In the resulting work zone, industrial-style Thermador appliances are arranged within steps of the sink and island.



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was destroyed," Jules says. "The only things that survived were the floor and the perimeter counters."

But with typical sang-froid, the Duffys did it all again with only a couple of changes. "The Carrara marble on the center island was smashed when the ceiling collapsed," Jules says. "I decided to invest in extra-thick (2 ½ inches) quartzite as the replacement. I love the stone on the island; it's such a beautiful species! I love looking at the crystal structures that run through it."

Jules opted for a thicker, more textured subway tile for the backsplash the second time. "Subway tile is my secret weapon," Jules says. "You can do so much with it, and it's reasonably priced at big-box stores." She ran the tile all the way up to the ceiling behind the stove and open shelves between two of the hanging cabinets. "I really like to store things in drawers," Jules says. The microwave is tucked into a drawer. "Who wants to look at the microwave?" Jules says. "This works so well too. You just pull open the drawer and can see what's going on in there."

ABOVE AND BELOW

High ceilings are one of the gracious Victorian features of the beach cottage. In the kitchen, Jules had multilayered cove molding installed, which helps to unify the space. The limestone floor is another unifying detail. "I didn't want to have to chase the kids around when they come in with sandy feet," Jules says. "This flooring is perfect—the sand just disappears."

This will be first summer since 2012 that the Duffys will be able to enjoy their shore house without some kind of construction taking place. "Sometimes I question how we got involved with this old house," Jules says. "It has been such a labor of love." But with the sounds and smells of the surf pounding at the end of the street, barefoot kids playing outside and the charming downtown a few blocks away, the answer is clear. It's a grand old house that will be lived in and loved for generations to come. 

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 144.

SHELL GAMES

Beachcombers' treasures can add a quick touch of summer to your kitchen. Here are a few fun, kid-friendly ideas for how. These are perfect projects to while away a rainy day at the beach, and some can revive weary garage-sale and flea-market finds.

BALL JARS. You can fill jars with shells, sand, etc. and set them on shelves, windowsills or tabletops for an instant touch of summer. At seasons end, just set the contents free on the beach, and use your jar for something else.

DRIFTWOOD SCULPTURE. Pretty bits of driftwood can be propped on plate-stands for instant sculptures.

FLOWER POTS. Glue a border of shells at the top of a clay pot for a beachy look.

LAMPS. Hot-glue shells on shades, finials, or fill clear lamp bases with beach finds.

CHANDELIERS. Jules Duffy hung a shell-encrusted chandelier in the dining room of a client's shore cottage.

FRAMES. Give shabby photo, picture or mirror frames a fresh look by encrusting them with shells.

TABLE SETTINGS. Write guests' names on shells for place cards on the dining table. Put small shells filled with salt at each place setting, or use bigger shells with salt and pepper to pass. A flat shell works well to serve butter, and deeper shells are great for dips (just give them a good washing first!)

NAPKINS. Loop and tie twine around a paper tube. Glue a shell onto the twine; then discard the tube to create a summery napkin ring.

CANDLESTICKS. Glue a few shells onto tired candlesticks.



[OPPOSITE] Precious floor space was gained by incorporating a small back porch. Jules lined the new entryway with cubbies and coat hooks, so the area functions like a small mudroom. One of the baskets is the family charging station with the cord running out through a grommet into an electrical outlet.

[ABOVE RIGHT] Jules and her family love to collect shells from the beach at the end of the street and as souvenirs of their vacations. She arranges these in still-life fashion on the kitchen's open shelves. The antique breadbox was sold through *Good Housekeeping* magazine in the early years of the 20th century.

SAVE HERE – SPLURGE THERE

SAVED:

Perimeter honed granite countertops were not super-expensive.

Thermador appliances were purchased at a discount by buying the entire suite at once.

The Ruvati sink, with drainer and cutting board, was purchased at a discount from overstock.com.

The pendant light in the dining area was a damaged shade Jules salvaged and wrapped with twine.

SPLURGED:

2 ½-inch thick quartzite on the center island was a worthwhile splurge that will withstand any future disasters.