

Kit of Parts

A Hopewell kitchen addition weds salvaged treasures with a homeowner's passion for cooking and the beach

**by gwen mcnamara
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Gail Samse loves three things: cooking, the beach and salvage. At her more than 100-year-old Victorian home on Broad Street in Hopewell Borough these three passions have come together to create a one-of-a-kind kitchen addition.

"It all started with the stove," says Ms. Samse. "I found this amazing La Cornue stove and at first we were just going to move a few things around to make it work, but one thing led to another and before we knew it we had plans for a whole new space."

Today, the Samse's old kitchen has been transformed into an elegant den, and the new 25-foot-wide by 20-foot-tall addition melds a color palette artist Claude Monet would love with everything a serious foodie needs to cook and entertain.

"I really love to cook and am passionate about people cooking together," says Ms. Samse, who has a degree in chemistry and worked for years as a nutritionist and product developer in the food industry. "It's what I did with my family when I was small and now what I do when I help kids and teens learn to cook in their own homes."

With help from Princeton architect Ronica Bergenger and Hopewell builder Frank Pasquito, Ms. Samse now has a great kitchen of her own where she, her husband, Mark — a partner at HDR CUH2A in Lawrence — and 17-year-old son Skye can cook together and enjoy fantastic meals as a family and

with friends.

"The other day, Skye came home and said he invited the entire ice hockey team over for dinner," Ms. Samse says. "With our new kitchen it was no problem. It's nice to have room to work and have everyone together."

A kit of parts

When the Samses began planning their new kitchen they knew they wanted a room that went beyond the traditional kitchen set up. "Kitchen designers today seem to push for a lot of the same features — islands with barstools, high cabinets with glass doors — and we knew we had other ideas," says Ms. Samse.

Inspired by a collection of salvaged treasures and classical Victorian patterns, the Samse family has created a kitchen all their own.

"I call the addition our 'kit of parts,'" says Ms. Samse. "Over the years we accumulated a lot of great salvage pieces and really had to come up with a plan to make it work." Enter the expertise of Ms. Bergenger and Mr. Pasquito.

"We couldn't have done it without our amazing team," says Ms. Samse. "Ronica has done a lot of work with old buildings and has a keen eye for how to expand old homes, and Frank and his crew of contractors knew how to deal with a >>



complicated project. There was great energy and synergy with everyone who worked on this project."

The new addition was completed in nine months and incorporates a myriad of salvage finds. Two 14-foot tall stained glass doors from Argentina welcome visitors to the new space. In the center of the kitchen a wrought-iron pastry table base topped with a huge slab of lavender, amethyst and azure striped granite from Adamstown, Pa., invites guests into the room. The same granite is used for the kitchen's countertops.

Above Ms. Samse's prized La Cornue stove is another stained glass window that originally went with the pair of doors from Argentina. The window is framed by metal tiles and a hand-hammered cooper nickel backsplash created by Francois Guillemain of Firedance Studio in Hopewell Borough.

A 6-foot-long and 5-foot-wide 1800s satin nickel chandelier from C. Neri Antiques & Lighting in Philadelphia hangs from the gray bead board paneled ceiling. Salvaged from a home in Brooklyn, N.Y., the chandelier is surrounded by six skylights, which bathe the room in natural light. At the room's peak, a plaster pediment from a home in upstate New York pops against blue Venetian plaster, while tall white cabinetry with delicate egg and dart borders and molding with classical acanthus scrolls complete the kitchen's fresh appearance.

"Old homes are like little jewel boxes with so many small rooms that are real treasures," says Ms. Samse. "Now we have one room that's homey, spacious and spectacular." >>



Colors of the sea

With so many unique salvaged items in one space, color was essential to bringing all the different pieces and styles together. With a love of seaside living, Ms. Samse says blue hues were a natural choice to tie everything together.

"I wanted the feeling of being in a beach house — what Jersey girl doesn't love the beach," says Ms. Samse. "I was afraid that all the blues and purples would make the room feel cold, but with the light and amazing breeze that sweeps through when we open the windows, it's really warm."

In addition to the skylights, a spacious bay window and ample windows above the sink really bring the outdoors inside. "We actually reused all the old kitchen's original windows," says Ms. Samse. "I love the wavy glass of old windows."

And while the windows above the sink are new Marvin windows, the Samse family ordered the sashes without the glass so beveled glass, which casts rainbows and waves about the room, could be added instead.

At the sink, the granite counter is extended to provide room for plants and flowers, like hyacinth gardenia and jasmine. "I asked for a kitchen in a conservatory and really couldn't be happier with the results," says Ms. Samse.

The seaside theme continues in the kitchen's new pantry and adjoining bathroom. To reflect the original part of the house, stained cherry cabinetry lines the pantry and shows off undersea-themed Rosenthal china. The blue Venetian plaster walls wrap in from the kitchen and mesh nicely with a light blue granite countertop with prep sink and hidden wine cooler underneath.

Salvaged French 1940s era mermaid paned doors beckon at the bathroom entry. Inside, the same granite from the kitchen is paired with amethyst Venetian plaster walls, a mother of pearl sink with seashell drain and glass starfish handles. Above the sink two colorful seashell in-swing French windows offer amazing visual interest and calming breeze when opened in the spring and summer.

"It just goes to show that anyone can incorporate unique architectural pieces in building design," says Ms. Samse. "Now it's on to the next project." 

