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*The down-to-earth practicality
of a farmhouse-style kitchen
meets modern family life.*

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Rustic farmhouse staples mingle with contemporary touches in this new kitchen in northern Virginia. A young family of six lives here, and the owners put a premium on kid-friendly surfaces as well as indigenous materials like the rough-sawn poplar beams on the ceiling.



AT THE PLANNING MEETING FOR THIS NEW KITCHEN

near McLean, Virginia, words like *rustic*, *simple*, and *bright* were flying around, along with a sheaf of inspiration photographs. But kitchen designer J. Paul Lobkovich was thinking from the ground up. His question: What's the flooring going to be?

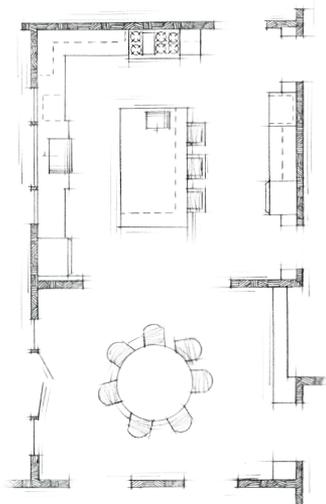
It sounds like an unusual starting point, but Lobkovich relies on it for almost every project. "It tells a lot about the personality of the home," he says. His clients, a young couple with four small children, chose French oak plank flooring marked with divots and worn spots—the easier to hide wear and tear. "It was warm, homey, not too finished," Lobkovich says, and it helped him focus in on a farmhouse-inflected design.

Creamy white Shaker-style cabinetry set that tone immediately, along with a classic fireclay apron-front sink and subway tile. A handsome island with casual seating and a prep sink provided necessary contrast with its dark hickory base.

From there, Lobkovich went off-script. "I like to introduce something contemporary into everything I design," he says. "In five or 10 years, we're going to be more modern than we are today, and this way the kitchen will always seem fresh." One such touch is a baking zone done in contrasting hickory—matching



the plan



The kitchen opens to the breakfast room, with sight lines to the playroom and screen porch beyond. With such an open plan, virtually the entire main level shares the same flooring, beams, and subtle color palette for a cohesive look. At the heart of the kitchen, an approximately 9x5½-foot island welcomes kids and grown-ups alike for casual meals and conversation.

TOP: Contrasting materials at the baking zone modernize the farmhouse look by shaking it up. The area also provides visual relief from all the white, says kitchen designer J. Paul Lobkovich. ABOVE: The encaustic tile was included at the homeowners' request. Rather than use it for the whole kitchen, the design team limited it to the backsplash above the cooktop, where it helps showcase the hood and adds color. "The Mediterranean look is nice because it keeps the kitchen from being too Americana," Lobkovich says. A brushed-nickel pot filler coordinates with the nickel fixtures on the sink wall.

THIS PHOTO: A strip of bronze distinguishes the custom hood and pushes the kitchen out of conventional farmhouse territory. "Every kitchen should have something that's one-of-a-kind," Lobkovich says. "The bronze brings just enough punch to that wall and connects to the wood on the island."







OPPOSITE: Black window frames are a classic farmhouse element that also help keep the kitchen from being too monochromatic. Hardware and light fixtures carry the accent throughout the room. FAR LEFT: Clear sight lines allow parents in the kitchen to keep an eye on kids in the breakfast room and the playroom behind the barn doors. LEFT: The breakfast room follows the kitchen's simple, unfussy lead. Shiplap walls stand up to tossed toys and need no adornment. A table with a lazy Susan and black Windsor chairs are the only furnishings in this über-practical space.

the island—with slab drawer fronts. Others include metal accents on the range hood and the island feet.

Such sophisticated details hide the fact that this kitchen can take hard knocks. The clients wanted their kids to have the run of the home without worrying about fragile materials. So interior designer Kristin Peake clad the barstools in vinyl (although they have fabric slipcovers if the client wants to dress them up) and persuaded the family to embrace patina for elements like the marble countertops. “You go to Europe and see the wine stains. That’s part of the ambience of it,” she says.

In step with Lobkovich, Peake made sure to add what she calls “today moments” in the finishes and accents. The conical metal pendants over the island are right on trend. Dashes of black throughout the rest of the room—in the hardware and painted window frames—deliver an edge. “You can never go wrong with all white. But to not contrast it would have been a mistake,” Peake says. “The black gave us the depth the kitchen needed.”

She carried that contrast into the breakfast room, where black Windsor chairs and a hefty round table are positioned against a farmhouse-perfect backdrop of white barn-style doors. It’s a one-room lesson on knowing when to stop. “Less is always more,” Peake says. “Keep it clean and classic, and you’ll never get bored, even after years of having it.”

Resources begin on page 108.

DESIGNER INSIGHTS: WARMING TREND

Take the chill off a predominantly white kitchen with these strategies for adding interest without sacrificing brightness.

- *Skip white altogether.* Surprise! The white cabinets in this kitchen are actually a very pale gray with warm undertones (Sherwin-Williams Frosty White). The effect is slightly softer than a true white.
- *Mix in wood.* Working warm wood tones into a kitchen, even just a little, prevents an antiseptic feel, designer J. Paul Lobkovich says.
- *Pick a splashy tile.* The large-scale tile pattern above the range introduces subtle color and, more important, a sense of movement that’s essential in a rectilinear space.
- *Try sconces.* Wall-mount lights bring the coziness of the living room to the kitchen, along with focused task lighting.