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10 FARMHOUSE KITCHENS WE LOVE

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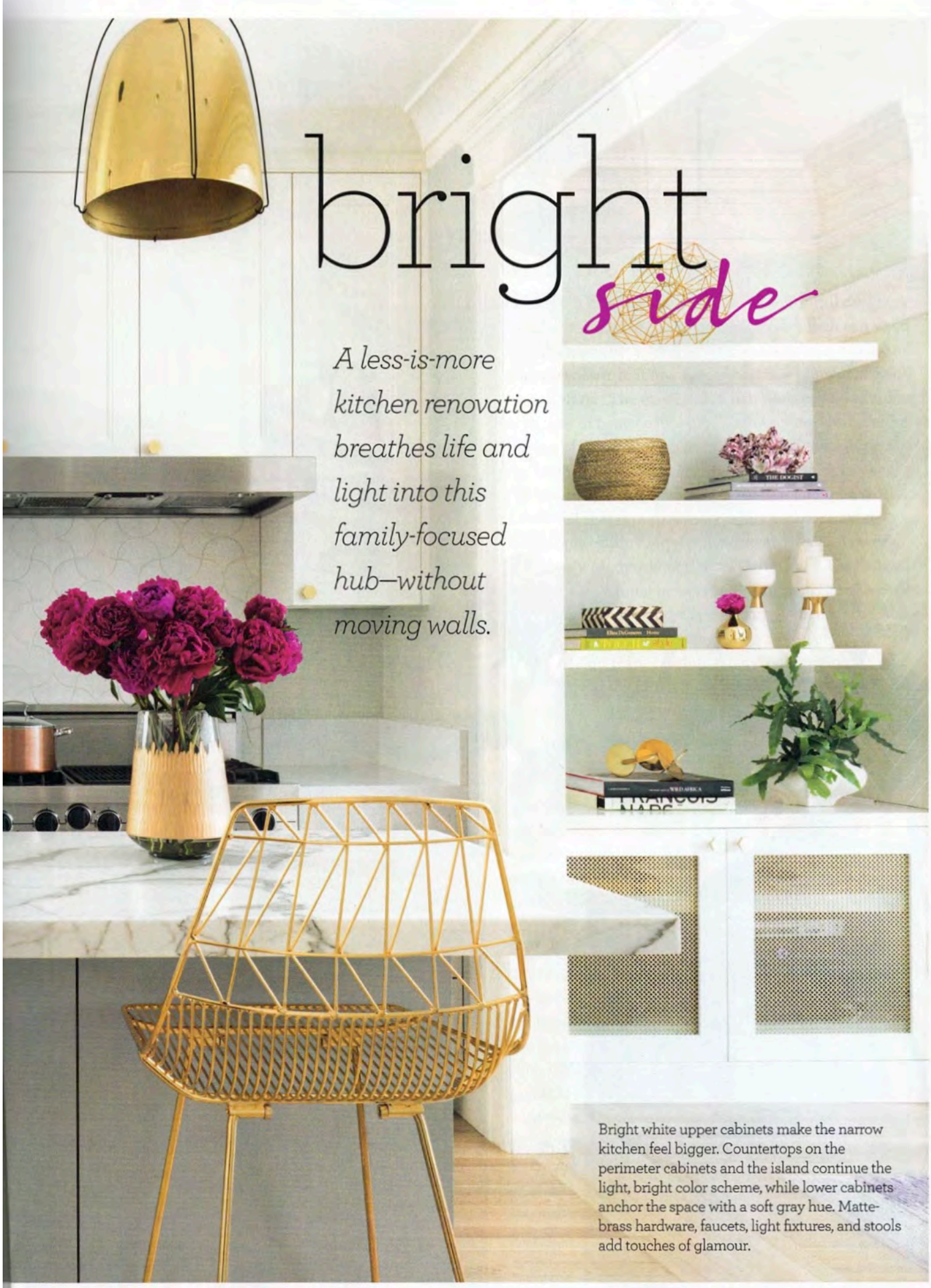
bright side

A less-is-more kitchen renovation breathes life and light into this family-focused hub—without moving walls.



Bright white upper cabinets make the narrow kitchen feel bigger. Countertops on the perimeter cabinets and the island continue the light, bright color scheme, while lower cabinets anchor the space with a soft gray hue. Matte-brass hardware, faucets, light fixtures, and stools add touches of glamour.

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Many remodeling projects operate with the mind-set that more really is better. But a thoughtful design solution that doesn't upend every square inch can yield enviable results. Take the California kitchen of Lisa and Chris Hauswirth: It functioned just fine but was closed off and dark. "The existing kitchen was super traditional with tons of heavy cabinetry," architectural designer Sarah Reeves of Sazen Design says. Despite all the cabinets, the kitchen lacked the size and scale of storage space the Hauswirths required. But all of that changed with a remodel that repurposed a nearby bathroom and—shockingly—didn't require moving any walls. Reeves and Nancy Madynski at builder Jeff King & Co. instead focused on minimal moves, and designers from Decorist incorporated style updates that complemented the home's original architectural elements.

The design team carefully analyzed proportions and traffic flow in the kitchen, moving the sink and dishwasher to strengthen the room's work space. A long, linear island was replaced by a shorter, wider version with seating—the command center for the busy household. A new wood desktop faces a bank of windows, which often serves as Lisa's sunny work space and offers additional seating for get-togethers. An added doorway into the kitchen enables easy access to the new butler's pantry across the hall—once a rarely used bathroom. The homeowners now enjoy an abundance of storage and extras, such as a wine fridge and prep sink in the pantry.

Materials choices also lightened and brightened the hardworking space. A streamlined vent hood recedes into the bank of upper cabinets, while two sets of open shelves contribute to a light, airy feel. An organically inspired tile mosaic backsplash offers design interest above the range. Matte-brass accents, including cabinet knobs and pendant lights, supply a bit of glam. Walnut shelves and whitewashed oak flooring offer contrast to the cooler tile, stone, and stainless steel as well as the white and light gray custom cabinets.

Lisa is shocked by "how dramatic the transformation was," she says. "The design team didn't just bring our vision to life, they made our vision better."

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opposite: The new kitchen includes a place for meal prep, a breakfast area, a work space, and serves as an all-around family hangout. Decorist Elite designers MAS Design specified wood floating shelves to add texture and storage while maintaining the kitchen's airy, modern vibe. ***above:*** Originally a bathroom, the new butler's pantry was designed by Decorist Elite designer Ashley Redmond to organize wine, food, and serving pieces.

"We enjoyed the challenge of finding practical design solutions for a busy household."

— Nancy Madynski at builder Jeff King & Co

clockwise from above: The refrigerator and adjacent cabinets are flanked by doorways—new (left, allowing easy access to the new pantry) and original (right). Matte-brass faucets emphasize the space's interplay of warm and cool tones. The walnut built-in desk complements the kitchen's floating shelves. Pendant lighting over the island—in the same glamorous golden finish as the faucets and cabinet hardware—offer task lighting beyond the room's can lights.

this photo: A small counter below a lift-up cabinet door with a metal mesh panel is the perfect spot to drop keys and charge mobile devices.

farmmade modern

lesson number 3

Open shelves—rather than light-blocking upper cabinets—can be hung atop or adjacent to windows to provide storage while maintaining a light and bright space.