



# Divide and rule

Over 65ft long, this kitchen has been broken down into three niche spaces. Dividing elements retain a sense of connection between the areas and also refer back to the rest of the home's interior

A spacious, elongated kitchen might seem an asset to a home's interior, but it can also leave its occupants feeling a little lost within its dimensions. One design response might be to partially divide up the room, while still retaining a sense of the greater space.

This kitchen design by Douglas Durbin of nuHaus addressed just such a consideration. The owners wanted the reworked space to retain an open-plan feel appropriate to a large family home, but they also wanted it to feel cosy and intimate.

Durbin says that the original kitchen design was nearly 54ft long, with several long islands and

all the appliances banked along one wall.

"This had caused the space to look a little like two bowling alleys separated by the islands," he says. "In response, we introduced two strong elements running perpendicular to the space in order to change the feel and square it up."

The resulting kitchen is divided into three areas: a semi-formal eating and bar area at one end, the kitchen proper in the middle, and an informal family room at the other end.

The designer wrapped cabinets and work surfaces around three sides of the central kitchen, in order to create a separating element between the

*Above: This design by Douglas Durbin of nuHaus breaks up an elongated space with perpendicular elements. The resulting layout creates three separate areas that also retain a sense of the greater room. Classic paneled nuHaus cabinetry, and an integrated refrigerator and freezer, as well as traditional granite and wood work surfaces, contribute to the kitchen's classic feel.*



**Above:** The kitchen's double oven provides ample cooking options, while the millwork surround conceals a heavy-duty range hood. Despite the overall size of the space, the work triangle is compact and efficient.

family area and the kitchen on one side. The family area is light-toned, with a feature stone fireplace. Cabinetry here and in the kitchen area is finished in a distressed pewter-green glaze.

On the other side of the kitchen's upscale island, a custom peninsula, designed by Durbin, provides the dividing element between the kitchen and the breakfast and bar area.

"The see-through surround and peninsula define the boundaries of the kitchen at this end, while still fulfilling the client's desire to retain a sense of the open-plan space."

As with many effective design elements, the



peninsula works well on several levels.

"Originally, the family's primary entrance to the kitchen had provided an unattractive view of the main clean-up sink through the walkway of islands," he says. "We moved that main clean-up sink and window towards the small family room. Now, the millwork peninsula features a leaded glass door centered on the hallway to provide a more inspired greeting. I also put in a cased passageway at the other end of the hall to frame this view."

The peninsula's dark cherry millwork ties in with doors, crown moldings and baseboards in similar wood tones found throughout the



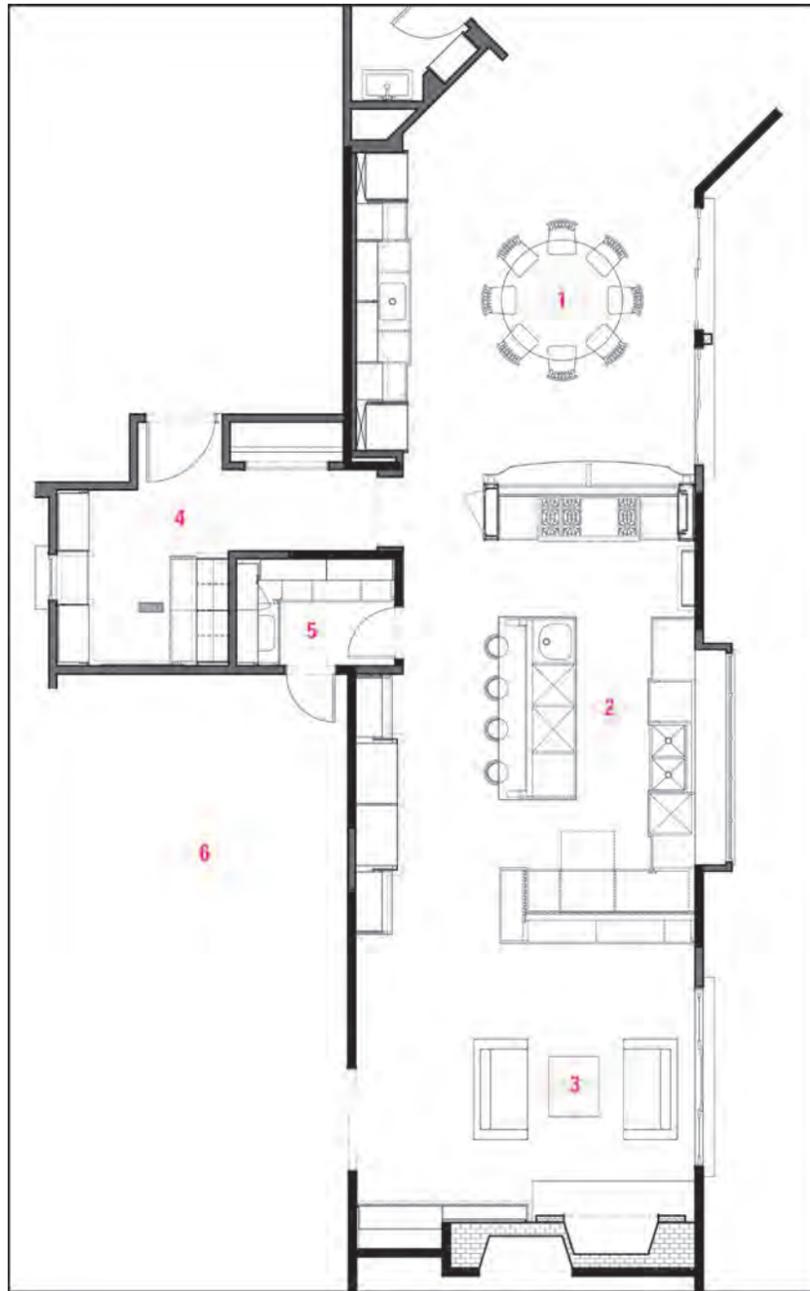
home. Its countertop height shields the kitchen's practical workings from the breakfast area, and creates an atmosphere all of its own from this side.

The dark wood is continued around the cabinetry in the breakfast and bar area, with a dedicated bar sink and wine refrigerator giving it autonomous functionality. The area combines a semi-formal feel with a cozy den-like ambience, and bookcases are built into the millwork.

Durbin's design replaced an earlier plan for revamping the space and in this earlier design there had been no formal butler's pantry proposed, despite the client's request for additional storage.

**Above:** The cherry millwork surround is a feature of the space and has a high degree of design detail, including mantles in antique bronze, and a leaded-glass display case to greet people entering the kitchen from the hallway. A medallion cast in bronze adorns a fluted supporting leg.

**Left:** Wood mosaics on storage baskets match similar elements on the surround.



**Above:** legend: 1 breakfast and bar area, 2 kitchen, 3 family area, 4 mud room, 5 butler's pantry, 6 dining room.

"To address this, I relocated an adjacent powder room to another area of the home and a butler's pantry was designed in its place. This opens directly into the kitchen on one side with another door into the home's formal dining area on the other side."

Maximizing light in the greater space was another design prerequisite and Durbin's response to this also had two-fold benefit.

"We added large sliding doors onto a deck at both ends to introduce additional natural light," he says. "When the doors are open, they effectively bring the outdoors in, further emphasizing the room's width over its considerable length."



**Kitchen designer:** Doug Durbin, nuHaus Custom Cabinetry and Millwork (Highland Park, IL)  
**Kitchen manufacturer:** nuHaus Custom Cabinetry and Millwork  
**Flooring:** Brazilian cherry  
**Cabinetry:** Stained cherry and custom glazed painted finishes  
**Backsplash:** Granite from nuHaus Custom Cabinetry and Millwork  
**Countertops:** Bar, Golden Lightning granite; kitchen perimeter, Costas Esmeralda granite; kitchen island, teak; hutch countertops, cherry; surround countertop, honed Absolute Black granite  
**Sink:** Custom granite farm sink by nuHaus Custom Cabinetry and Millwork  
**Faucets:** Perrin & Rowe in Satin Nickel  
**Oven:** Wolf Dual Fuel  
**Ventilation:** Custom hood surround by nuHaus Custom Cabinetry and Millwork  
**Refrigeration:** Sub-Zero  
**Dishwasher:** Miele Incognito  
**Lighting:** Antique fixtures

**Photography by**  
 Hedrich Blessing

**Left:** Highlighted by dark millwork, the breakfast area beyond is also in rich wood tones, creating a semi-formal ambiance here. Despite being broken up by the countertops and peninsula, the areas are still long. For example, the bronze bar sink sits in an 13ft-long countertop.