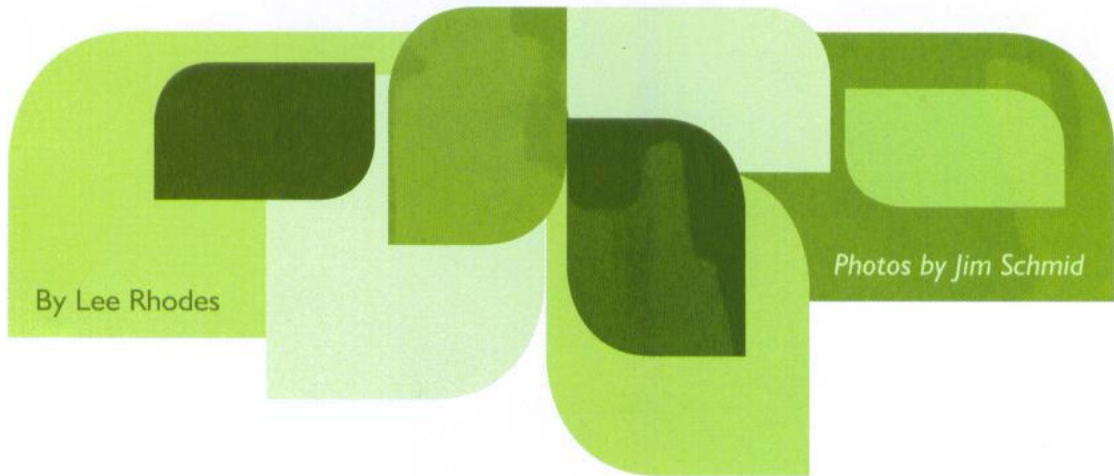


# let there be light

Eco-friendly kitchen a breath of fresh air



By Lee Rhodes

Photos by Jim Schmid

Mornings in Jennifer Pippin's kitchen are bright mornings indeed. Golden sunlight pours in through the windows, which are purposefully situated on the north and east corners, as well as through the overhead skylights. Just beyond the kitchen is a covered porch, perfect for watching boats glide across the glistening waters of Lake Norman, visible through the canopy of trees. A fresh breeze blows in from the lake, and birdsong fills the air, creating a soothing feeling that lasts all day.

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BELOW TOP: Despite its purple hue, this shamrock blends perfectly with the multi-colored tile backsplash. BELOW BOTTOM: The buffet, with built-in wine cooler, connects the dining room and kitchen. OPPOSITE: Pots and pans reside in open racks below the oven.



## Leaving nothing to chance

The kitchen windows were positioned to maximize the views of nature's beauty, and similarly, no other detail within the kitchen or remainder of the house was left to chance. As a nationally acclaimed residential design specialist and a Green Design and Building Consultant, Jennifer is used to creating and renovating homes that are both environmentally friendly and extraordinary in countless other ways. But one of her latest projects took a personal turn. In partnership with Green Design experts from across the globe, Jennifer recently completed a special renovation on the



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home that now serves as the main home office of her company, Pippin Home Designs, and the permanent residence of she and her husband, Wes Stearns.

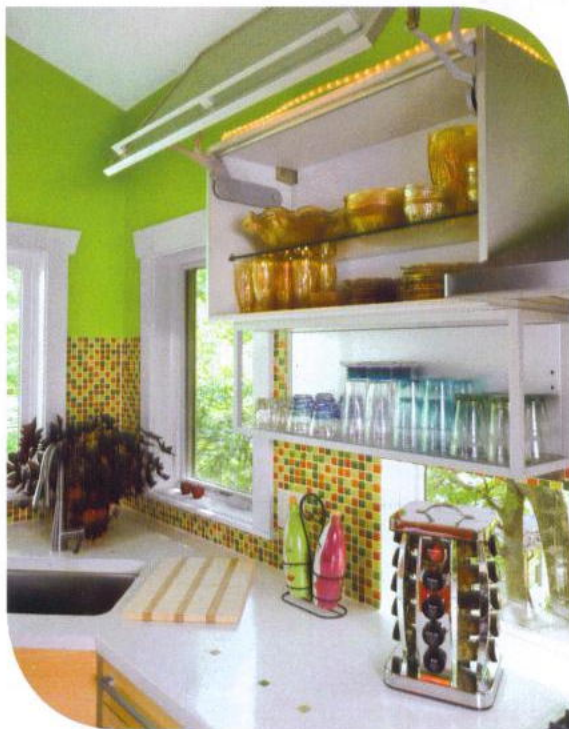
While every room in Jennifer's home is unique, the kitchen is particularly noteworthy for its mix of contemporary luxury and comfortable livability. The mix begins with the color palette, which is bold and fun. A mix of bright green, purple and orange hues, the room colors add punch and complement the backsplash and artwork lining the walls, which is the photographic handiwork of Wes himself.

The kitchen is spacious, with plenty of room for extra people and guests. In fact, the kitchen, dining room and great room form an open, triangular space that flows together. A buffet serving area is a tangible connection between the kitchen and dining room and works well during dinner parties.

"We tried to be as universally friendly as we could," Jennifer adds. "Pots and pans are stored on racks that can be easily pulled out. We created four feet aisles between the cabinets and left areas open so someone could roll up in a wheelchair."

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TOP RIGHT: Environmentally safe and odor-free paint in green, orange and purple tones brighten the main living space. TOP LEFT: Aluminum wall cabinets, with hinged doors, hold glassware. ABOVE: The floors, comprised of bamboo, are also environmentally safe.

### Environmental protection

Embracing the green movement was another goal. The kitchen boasts a built-in recycling center comprised of four bins for glass, plastic, aluminum and compost. Paper is collected in another basket under the sink, and a Ziploc bag dryer resides next to the sink. The stainless steel faucets are not only aesthetically pleasing but also water-efficient and the wall and ceiling paints are low and no-VOC, so they are environmentally safe and odor-free.

"The house is as green as we could make it," Jennifer says. "People say, 'I can smell the difference in the air in your house compared to other new houses.' We also use a pure air cleaning system and try to use no formaldehyde."

The formaldehyde-free cabinetry exudes a contemporary look. The cabinet line from Pedini, one of Italy's top kitchen manufacturers, offers hidden toe-kick storage. The upper cabinets are aluminum and mesh nicely with the stainless appliances, all of which come from the innovative KitchenAid brand and are Energy Star qualified.

The countertops solved the puzzle of how to match granite with purple and orange hues. Instead of granite, the couple had concrete poured and laid in-house, and utilized a white formula that works well with the brilliant wall colors. The beeswax finish can handle hot dishes and gives the countertops a smooth, slick finish. Within the concrete, Jennifer and Wes collaborated on designs

## RESOURCES

**Cabinetry:** Pedini, DCI Home Resource;  
**Countertops:** Concrete, Mudwerk; **Backsplash:** Tile Collection, Inc.; **Sink:** Elkay; **Faucets:** Brizo;  
**Contractor:** Spivey Homes; **Interior designer:** Tracie Johnson-Sawyers; **Flooring:** Bamboo;  
**Appliances:** KitchenAid; **Wallcovering:** Sherwin Williams Harmony paint; **Lighting:** LED rope lighting, Electrical Distributors, Inc.; **Plumbing:** Hughes Supply;  
**Windows:** Pella; **Insulation:** Carolina Foam Solutions

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for the tile inlays and overall tile pattern. In a fit of inspiration, the couple incorporated an outlet within one of the tile designs. It recesses down into the island's countertop and therefore stays hidden away. It also has a gasket around it that prevents moisture from seeping in.

### Bringing the space to life

The kitchen's unique lighting options illuminate all the aforementioned features. Paper stars dangle in clusters above the island and light up from the inside. LED-based lighting, known for its

high efficiency, is installed under the cabinets and is completely wireless. Soft recessed lighting lines the perimeter of the room, and within the walk-in pantry, natural sunlight flows through a window to mix with a fluorescent light operated via a hinge switch on the door.

Finally, the kitchen floors are bamboo, and healthy green plants reside throughout the space. "We have a beautiful shamrock, and it just loves the corner here behind the sink," says Jennifer. "We love bringing nature inside and making everything as green as we can." 🍀

close up

