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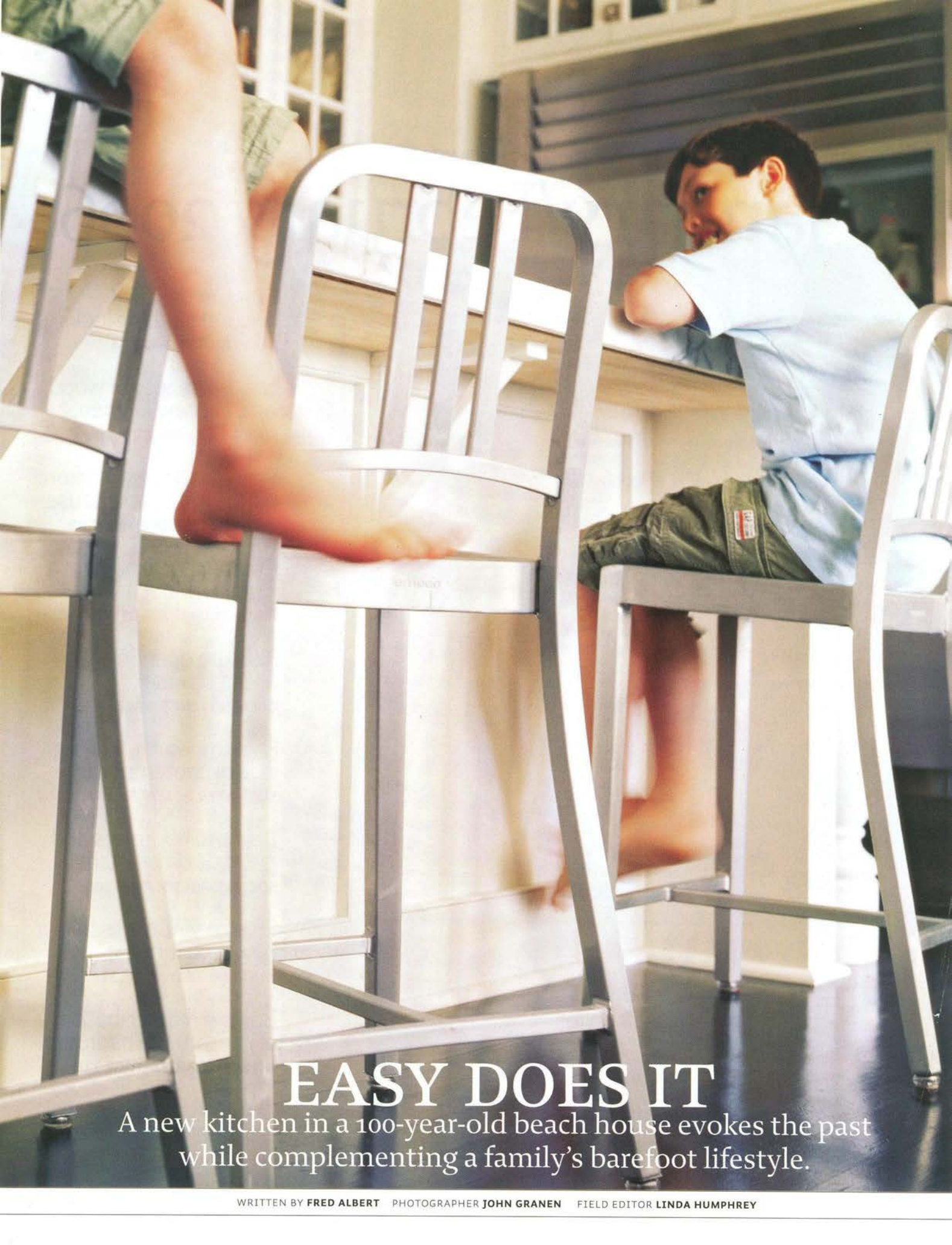


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EASY DOES IT

A new kitchen in a 100-year-old beach house evokes the past while complementing a family's barefoot lifestyle.



THIS PHOTO: Furniturelike cabinetry, subway tile, and schoolhouse light fixtures help Jeff and Kimber Wysong's kitchen look original to their early-1900s home. OPPOSITE: Max, right, and Sam like to hang out at the island.



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12 PACES WEST OF THE BEACH,
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SEE PAST THE FOG!
FIND TREASURE BY 3:00 PM AND
ICE CREAM AWAITS THE
LUCKY PIRATES!

JEFF AND KIMBER WYSONG'S century-old beach house in Bainbridge Island, Washington, is blessed with sunny, rambling rooms and a generous back porch that frames postcard-worthy views of Mount Rainier and Puget Sound.

The setting is straight out of *The Saturday Evening Post*, but when the Wysongs bought the place, the kitchen was more *Saturday Night Fever*. The 1970s-style oak cabinets, laminate countertops, and black appliances seemed totally out of sync with the home's vintage coastal character, plus the kitchen occupied a cramped corner far from the living areas and views.

Kimber pined for an old-fashioned kitchen—the kind where the screen door slams and sandy footprints trace pathways on the floor. For help, she called on her neighbors—architect Jeb Thornburg and interior designer Belinda Thornburg—who'd remodeled their own '70s space next door.

They first moved the kitchen to a new spot: the playroom, an underutilized space originally designed as a sunroom. Jeb Thornburg removed a wall separating the playroom from the living and family rooms, then replaced it with a doorway flanked by stout half-walls and stocky square columns.

"This is a house of sturdy, beefy bones," the architect says, "so we felt that the interior should reflect that character." Besides offering a wide perch for elbows and glasses (and nooks below for displaying seashells and beach glass), the half-walls permit views into the kitchen while providing a modicum of enclosure, hiding dirty dishes and protecting the cooking zone.

Not that kibitzing with the cook is discouraged. The 11½-foot-long island is a magnet for friends and family members alike, a place where sons Max and Sam can spread out their homework while Mom and Dad check in with them on the events of the day. "I wanted the kitchen to be really kid-friendly," Kimber says.

In response, the Thornburgs chose materials that would withstand preteen use without hiding the wear and tear. For example, the stainless-steel perimeter countertops and marble island top have already sustained a few scratches and chips—and that's OK. "The scratches that come from the dog and the kids and the furniture are part of what gives the house a sense of being used—of being loved and lived in," Jeb Thornburg says.

To enhance the easy, lived-in feel, the Thornburgs employed white cabinetry that looks like furniture. Turned-wood legs adorn the island, while base cabinets appear to float atop scrolled feet. Upper cabinets are backed with beaded board and fronted with old-fashioned wavy-glass doors. (When Kimber ruled reproduction glass too fake looking, contractor Ken Burningham bought some \$5 windows at a salvage yard and reused the panes.) Brushed-nickel door latches and flush-mounted schoolhouse lights add period charm.

Lest it all be an exercise in nostalgia, Belinda Thornburg added edgier twists, including svelte aluminum barstools and a stainless-steel range hood studded with rivets. "If there isn't anything unexpected, it's a little boring," the designer says.

The power of a striking French range is rivaled by a four-door commercial refrigerator with a hum so pronounced that the manufacturer tried to discourage the Wysongs from buying it. The company finally relented—family members simply speak a little louder when the compressor kicks in. Dirty dishes are absorbed by a quartet of dishwasher drawers in the island.

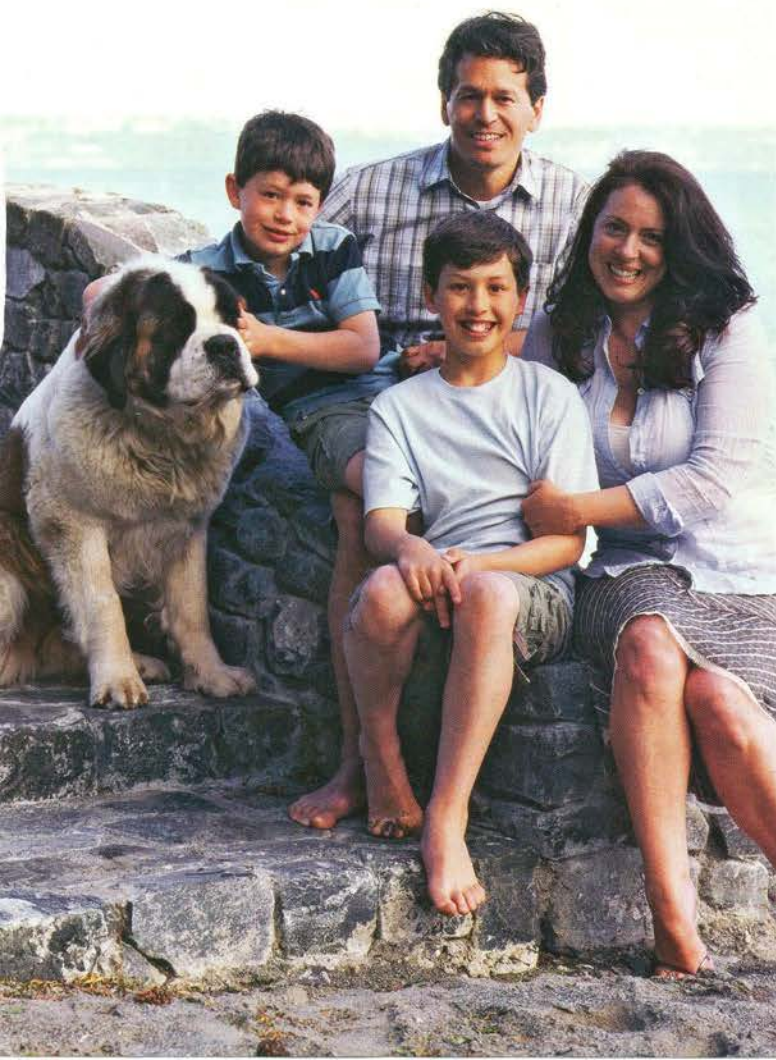
Because the wood floor was a patchwork of oak and fir, the Thornburgs treated it with an ebonized stain that conceals variations. The dusky patina is repeated on the fireplace—original to the room—and on a chalkboard above, where children's art vies for space with sentiments scrawled by friends.

On the long exterior wall, Jeb Thornburg removed one of two doorways and added a row of windows. A rustic breakfast table hugs the wall to take in the view, as naturally as if the vista had been available for decades.

"I've had people come in and say, 'Ahh, didn't they do great kitchens back then?'" Kimber says with a smile. "That was the whole goal."

OPPOSITE: Part of the kitchen's relaxed, easygoing charm is that so much of it is open and clearly visible, including serving bowls in the glass-front upper cabinets and items behind the glass door of the refrigerator. Perhaps the most hidden elements are the four dishwasher drawers to the left of the island sink.

LEFT: Max, Sam, Jeff, and Kimber are joined by the family's Saint Bernard, Lulu.





The island divides the kitchen into cooking and gathering zones while uniting a design that values both early-20th-century elegance and early-21st-century ease.





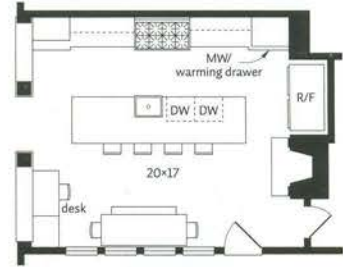
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FRESH OUTLOOK By moving the kitchen into an underused space, the Wysongs gained square footage, views, and a better floor plan. Function is confined to the interior walls and island, leaving the view wall unobstructed.



DESIGN DELIGHTS Occupying space designed as a sunroom and later turned into a playroom, the kitchen draws on the best of both prior uses—it's a light-filled room where people can relax and act like kids. Perhaps it's architectural destiny: It's the kitchen the home was always meant to have.

OPPOSITE: Half-walls with columns open the kitchen to adjacent living areas while maintaining a sense of enclosure. The old kitchen was far from both scenery and socializing. **ABOVE LEFT:** Jeff and Kimber enjoy the view from the breakfast table. Removing one of the doorways from this wall made room for more windows and a table. **ABOVE RIGHT:** One of the half-walls supports a built-in desk. The mint green adds unexpected color, and the ledge is a natural drop-off point for mail and messages. **LEFT:** Kimber asked to have the closing mechanism removed from the screen door so that she could enjoy its reassuringly old-fashioned slam when Sam and Max enter.



RIGHT: Though most of the kitchen has a vintage look, the custom hood with riveted straps is more contemporary, as are aluminum stools originally designed for the Navy. A vintage warehouse light over the island picks up some of the edgy industrial feel, as does the polished-nickel finish of the old-style faucet and cabinet latches. Cupboards alternate with open shelving for a casual, unfitted appearance.

TOP LEFT: Countertops in the cooking area are stainless steel, a durable choice in a busy kitchen and a contrast to the marble island top. Beveled edges tweak the classic subway tile on the backsplash.

MIDDLE LEFT: Kimber displays her collections of china, cake stands, and hotel silver behind cabinet doors fitted with slightly wavy vintage glass. She keeps more utilitarian items behind solid doors, such as those on the appliance garage, a niche backed with beaded board.

BOTTOM LEFT: Kimber fell in love with this French-made range after seeing it in a store. Brass dials control the seven burners and two ovens.



