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## Lafayette Juniors Kitchen

By Catherine Kauder



The center island's butcher block-style walnut counter warms up the kitchen in the Birrell's downtown Lafayette home. Photos Ohlen Alexander

quintessential California home," says Szidon.

Since the kitchen is the first thing visitors see when they enter the home, Szidon wanted to make sure the room was welcoming as well as practical.

She knocked down a wall that separated the kitchen from the eating area to make a larger, more open space. A nine-foot-long center island makes the kitchen an ideal place for entertaining, cooking and her three busy children to do homework.

The cabinets are painted in a lacquered bluish-green color and accented with textured warm bronze drawer pulls. A sunburst pendant light over the dining table and a brass light fixture above the island made from a kit by New York designer Lindsey Adelman are perfect complements to the mid-century modern style of the kitchen.

A minimalist at heart, Szidon removed the upper cabinets in the kitchen and stores her plates and glasses in the drawers under the island within easy reach of her kids. Both the countertops and the top of the dining table are made of Silestone, a synthetic quartz that is durable and low-maintenance. The wallpaper in the kitchen looks like grasscloth, but is actually made of vinyl and can be easily wiped clean.

"There is a lot of texture in this kitchen which goes hand in hand with the materials in this home," she says.

In the downtown section of Lafayette, Jocelyn Birrell didn't have to go very far to find her dream kitchen - she bought the house she grew up in and gave it a fresh revamp.

Birrell and her husband purchased the home from her mother in 2008 and recently renovated the ranch-style house to make space for their two young children. Now almost double its original 1,600-square-foot size, the home has a spacious, airy kitchen that is open to the adjoining rooms and gives them a view of the backyard through the glass doors and windows spanning the back of the house.

"We both wanted a big space to cook and a place for the kids to be," she says. "The fact that we could cook and see everything was important to us."

The transitional kitchen features shaker style cabinets painted a creamy off-white. Gray slate

The Lafayette Juniors Kitchen Tour returns Saturday, May 16 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This year's tour features six creatively designed kitchens that reflect the diverse styles and needs of their Lafayette homeowners.

Tour goers will get a look at a mid-century modern kitchen that was recently featured as a "Kitchen of the Week" on Houzz.com. Nestled in the Hidden Valley neighborhood of Lafayette, the house was designed by Fred Langhorst, an apprentice of Frank Lloyd Wright who worked in the Bay Area in the 1940s and early '50s.

Homeowner Debra Szidon fell in love with the house while searching for a mid-century home in the East Bay in 2012. A transplant from the Boston area and an interior designer, Szidon appreciated the organic architecture of the home, which includes the original redwood trim, concrete floors, exposed brick walls in the family room and floor-to-ceiling windows that bathe the house in light.

"We really wanted to make sure we had the

countertops with white veining provide a contrast of color, while the center island's butcher block-style walnut counter warms up the room. Above the island hang two industrial-inspired glass and metal pendants from Hudson Valley Lighting.

The kitchen also has a 48-inch Wolf range with six burners and an infrared griddle. An Italian subway tile backsplash, white fireclay sink and slightly weathered cabinet hardware lend the kitchen a farmhouse touch.

Next to the kitchen, a large pantry and mudroom feature a beverage refrigerator, built-in bench with coat hooks, storage cubbies and additional counter space where the Birrells can store smaller countertop appliances like their toaster and coffee maker.

These two kitchens can be visited on the 16th annual tour along with four others that showcase contemporary, modern cottage, classic with a bohemian twist and European traditional styles.

Tour tickets are \$40 (\$35 tax deductible), with a box lunch available for \$15. Tickets can be purchased at [www.lafayettejuniors.org](http://www.lafayettejuniors.org) and at Premier Kitchens in Lafayette.

Also featured on this year's kitchen tour is the launch of the new Lafayette Juniors cookbook "Small Bites & Cool Drinks." This collection of recipes from Juniors members and local restaurants will be for sale for the first time on the day of the tour at Premier Kitchens and the luncheon site for \$15. The book will be available after the tour at local businesses including Venture Quality Goods, The Storyteller Bookstore and Diablo Foods.

The beneficiaries of this year's tour are Ruby's Place, Boys & Girls Club of Diablo Valley, Las Trampas, Trinity Center Walnut Creek, and VESTIA. Each of these nonprofit organizations provides exceptional support to children, families and seniors in Contra Costa and neighboring East Bay counties.



Debra Szidon's mid-century modern kitchen in Lafayette was recently featured as a "Kitchen of the Week" on Houzz.com.



This kitchen's Italian subway tile backsplash, white fireclay sink and slightly weathered cabinet hardware lend it a farmhouse touch.



This nine-foot-long center island is perfect for entertaining and bringing the family together.

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