

Star Kitchen

Michael Symon unveils his new Cleveland kitchen.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **DAVID A. LAND**

A massive renovation can be the ultimate test of a relationship, but Michael Symon and his wife, Liz, are always up for the challenge. “This is our fourth gut job,” says Michael, a self-proclaimed real-estate junkie. “We love doing it.” And they’ve been together for more than 20 years. Last year they bought this nearly century-old Tudor in Michael’s hometown, Cleveland; he has six restaurants in the area. The house came with a tiny kitchen and a prayer room—neither of which suited the Iron Chef. Renovations took almost a year, and though Michael splits his time between Cleveland and New York City, he and Liz found themselves living in hotels and out of suitcases when they were back in Ohio. “We got many offers from our moms to stay with them,” he says. “But I’m 45; I wasn’t going to move in with my parents.” The wait paid off: Now the couple has a 700-square-foot entertaining space with a six-burner BlueStar range, an espresso station and a wine alcove that holds 850 bottles. Turn the page to see the transformation.



Daily grind

“I have probably 25 mortars and pestles,” Michael says. “People want everything so fast, but when you make pesto with a mortar and pestle, it tastes so much better than it does from a blender.”



AFTER



Fire power

Michael first cooked on a BlueStar range at a friend's house. "I was immediately hooked," he says. "I had to have one for this kitchen. It's the only home stove I've used that performs like a restaurant range. It's got 25,000 BTUs, a French top, and you can fit a whole hotel pan inside."



Michael used double-thick Carrera marble on the island.

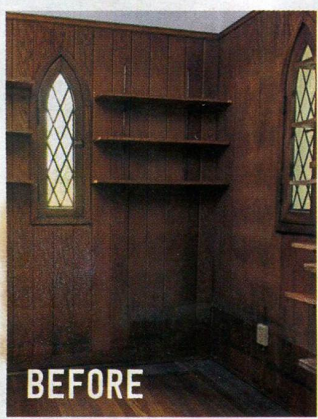
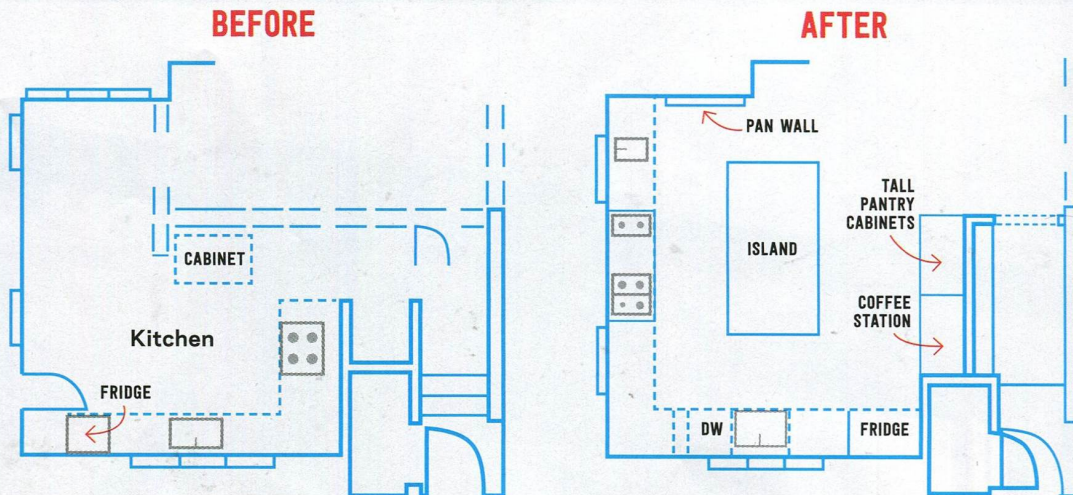
Stepping up

The prep sink has foot pedals instead of faucet handles. "This is my favorite little feature," he says. "The last thing you want to do is touch anything while you're butchering a chicken."



Floor plans

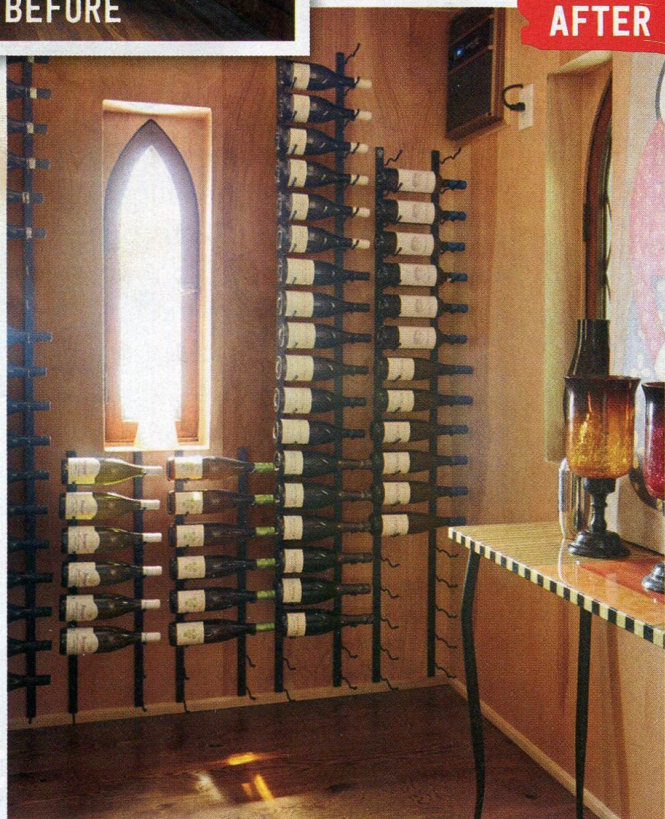
Michael and Liz tore everything down to the studs and knocked out a wall to create their ideal space for cooking and throwing dinner parties.



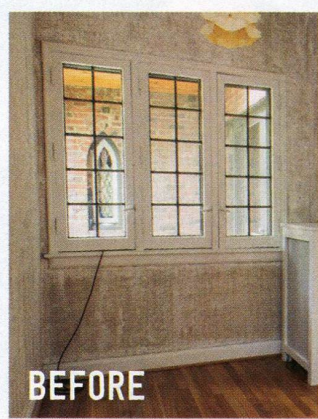
Wine room

Previous owners used this tiny space as a prayer and meditation room. Michael and Liz decided to install enough hooks to hold 850 bottles of wine, including Lulu 62, an Oregon-grown pinot noir blended by Liz and served at all of Michael's restaurants.

BEFORE



AFTER



Pan wall

The couple bricked over a set of windows to create a wall for pots and pans. "Liz came up with the idea of using a slat wall like the ones you see in stores for displaying products," he says. It holds three times the pots and pans that would fit in a drawer.

BEFORE

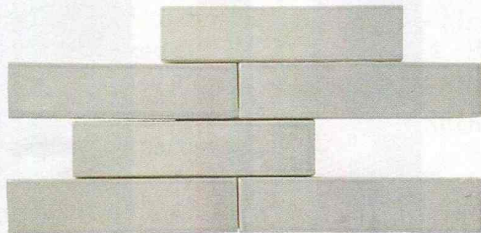


AFTER



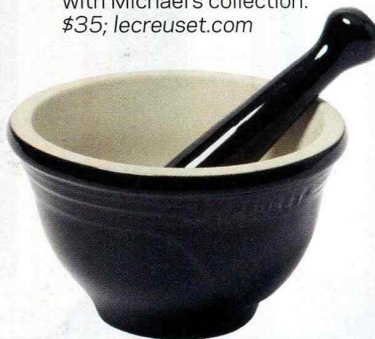
Get the Look

Pick up some of Michael's finds for your own kitchen.



Michael's **handmade ceramic tiles** (in Touch of Gray) are a shade darker and a bit narrower than standard subway tiles. \$20 per square foot; alancourtassociates.com for information

This 10-ounce **mortar and pestle** fits right in with Michael's collection. \$35; lecreuset.com

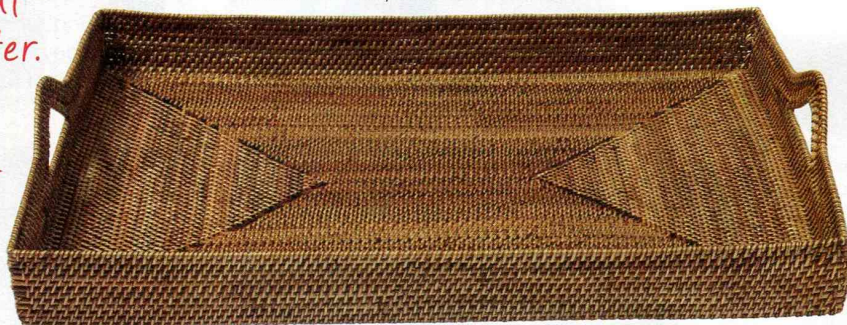


Liz chose an antique black finish for these **2.25 Satellite Sconces** so they'd match the industrial range hood. \$125/sconce, \$52/shade; schoolhouseelectric.com



This tray has a lacquer finish that resists water.

Filipino artisans crafted this **Nito Rectangular Tray** from sustainable forest vine. \$80; williams-sonoma.com



Michael and Liz are longtime fans of ceramist Laura Zindel. They keep her **Nigella vase** on their windowsill. \$138; laurazindel.com

Liz picked these lightweight clear-acrylic **Vapor counter stools** because, she says, "they almost disappear" in the room. \$189; cb2.com



This 5.8-quart Mauviel **sauté pan** is an investment, but copper pots like these last a lifetime, Michael says. They remind him of ones he inherited from his grandfather. \$685; mauvielusa.com

