



A BIG CENTER ISLAND is the focal point of Michael and Liz Symon's new kitchen. "Even though we have a table in the kitchen, too, guests always love to hang out around the island," says the chef.

CHEF SECRETS

One part professional-caliber workspace and two parts cozy gathering center: That's the recipe food star Michael Symon and his wife, Liz, followed during the gut rehab of their Cleveland kitchen.

DAVID A. LAND



BEFORE: dated and dingy

A great neighborhood and a beautiful, tree-lined lot drew the Symons, who were downsizing, to their new house. The choppy layout, dark rooms, and 1960s-era kitchen, however, left something to be desired. A gut renovation improved the flow, efficiency, and style.



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ICHAEL SYMON likes to be part of the party. So when he and his wife, Liz, bought a 1910 Tudor-style home in their hometown of Cleveland, creating a kitchen with a link to the home's living areas was job one. "As a chef, you're always in back, behind a wall," he says. "So when I'm at home entertaining, I want to be right there with my guests."

With that goal in mind, the Symons, who commute back and forth from New York where Michael co-hosts ABC's *The Chew* and films his Food Network programming—he's an Iron Chef on *Iron Chef America* and host of *Burgers, Brew & 'Que*—designed an airy space that's outfitted for serious cooking and easy entertaining.

From dark and dreary to light and inviting

When they first saw the house, the main floor was broken up into a series of small rooms, the kitchen hadn't been updated in decades, and there was a distinct lack of light. But Liz, who's the lead designer on all twelve Symon restaurants, could see its potential. "When we took down the interior walls on the first floor to open

up the layout, we found it got a lot of light, from every side," says Michael. With the brighter, more open shell of the kitchen in place, the couple then turned to outfitting the workspace with high-powered equipment and simple, elegant materials in keeping with the architectural character of the home.

Professional-grade picks

"I cook at home all the time," says Michael. "We do all the holidays here, and though our son lives in New York now, my parents and my wife's parents both live in Cleveland, and we're often hosting our families." Accordingly, the Symons chose appliances that could stand up to the demands of an award-winning chef and make it easier to serve a crowd. "I like to get as close to a restaurant set-up as possible," says Michael. "I picked a BlueStar range because it has the BTUs of a restaurant range and the oven fits a whole restaurant-size sheet tray, not just a little cookie sheet. The one I chose actually has two ovens—last Thanksgiving I cooked

It may be beautiful, but don't let the good looks fool you: This is one hard-working kitchen. "All the essentials are within arm's reach," says Michael. Cookware and knives hang on the wall by the range, espresso has its own bar, and every cabinet is fitted with pull-out shelves.

four turkeys in it." Topping the 60-in.-wide range is a high-powered vent hood, an essential, according to Symon. Other pro-kitchen conveniences include a pot-filler faucet—"It's not a big expense if you're already gutting the whole space," says the chef—and foot-pedal controls for the sink faucets. "If you're not touching the handle, you don't have to worry about cross-contamination when you're working with chicken or meat," he says. "It's a small thing that's a big convenience."

Timeless style and materials

Although they wanted an updated look, the Symons didn't want to abandon the charm that drew them to their house in the first place. "You shouldn't walk into a Tudor and feel like you're in a loft," says Michael. So, Liz chose materials that felt appropriate for the time period of its design: wide-plank wood floors that match the others on the main floor, simple, painted-wood cabinets with glass fronts, soft gray subway tiles, and Carrara marble countertops. Weren't they worried about staining? Not at all. "I actually like the stains," Michael says. "I hate walking into a kitchen that looks like it's never been used. A kitchen should look cooked in—and lived in." Mission, accomplished.

DAVID A. LAND (3); BEFORE PHOTOS: CHRIS LANGER



The pot-filler faucet is one of Michael's must-haves.

SHEER BAR STOOLS

Vapor 30-in. Acrylic Bar Stool, \$199, CB2.com.



VINTAGE-STYLE LIGHT FIXTURES

Maxim Mini Hi-Bay Wall Sconce, \$150, lightingdirect.com.



ESPRESSO ON DEMAND

Alex Duetto, \$2,595, prima-coffee.com.



BRIGHT BOWLS

4-Piece Cafe Multi Mixing Bowl Set, \$22, wayfair.com

GET THE LOOK



COLORFUL CANISTER

Le Creuset Enameled Stoneware Canister, Small, from \$60, williams-sonoma.com.

Liberal helpings of old-meets-new appeal can make your own kitchen feel more open and inviting.



FRENCH COPPER COOKWARE

Mauviel M'heritage 250c Covered Sauté Pan, \$600, surlatable.com.

OPPOSITE PAGE: DAVID A. LAND