

Designer MA Allen had the backsplash from Byrd Tile installed in a vertical format, reminiscent of long bamboo stems, and infused the space with French influence through brass accents like sink hardware from Newport Brass and cabinet hardware from Bird Decorative Hardware. A vintage Oushak runner in orange brightens the space.

Subtle *Infusion*

DESIGNER MA ALLEN BRINGS A SUBTLE EAST-MEETS-WEST VIBE TO A WELL-TRAVELLED COUPLE'S KITCHEN RENOVATION.

WRITTEN BY ANNE MARIE ASHLEY

WHEN DESIGNER MA Allen was tasked with designing a kitchen renovation and addition alongside home designer Carter Skinner, she knew her globe-trotting clients would be looking for a worldly design that reflected their personality. Avid collectors of Asian artwork, Allen was aware that the client's affinity would leak into the design, but it wasn't until the designer visited Hanoi, Vietnam, shortly after they began the project that her concept really blossomed.

"When I was in Hanoi, which was historically a French colonial settlement, it really struck me how beautiful the Asian modern

and French colonial design styles combine," says Allen. She pulled these concepts into her client's kitchen design with bamboo drawer pulls, subtle pagoda-styled pendant lights, and a beautiful vertically tiled backsplash that mimics growing bamboo. Alongside, she used French blue hues, a French-influenced range hood, lots of brass elements, and simple taupe cabinets that let the different languages speak. "Carter gave us a gracious footprint to work with in this bump-out addition that included a family room, covered porch, and this kitchen," says Allen.



ABOVE: Sink hardware from Newport Brass warms the space while adding a French infusion, and counterops in leathered Fantasy Brown bring some texture in neutral tones.

LEFT: MA Allen worked with a local metalsmith to create a custom stainless-steel hood with brass accents to add to the French feel, which pairs perfectly with the Byrd Tile backsplash and soothing taupe cabinets.



TOP: In the breakfast room, MA Allen designer Margaret Richards chose a pretty Schumacher Ikat print for the curtains, pulling in the bright pop of orange that pairs so easily with the brass Arabelle pendant from Visual Comfort. Vintage Ming-style chairs are paired with a modern tulip table for a perfect East-meets-West vibe.

BOTTOM: A hidden pantry and scullery houses small appliances, a carbonated water tap, and a work space, all while creating clean lines in the kitchen cabinet run. Cabinet hardware is in Colonial Bronze from Bird Decorative Hardware.



Because of the extra room, Allen added a hidden scullery and pantry behind paneled cabinet walls, which created a seamless cabinet run that was pivotal to preserving the design quality. “I would say 95 percent of my current projects have a working scullery because it just keeps the kitchen looking so clean and beautiful,” she says. “We tailor each pantry to the clients, typically having a water source (here, it was a carbonated water tap), countertops, small appliances, and storage.”

Allen says her kitchen designs are always zone-led. “I focus on designing kitchens in zones—a baking zone, often with wall ovens, a range cooking zone, and then a prep and serving zone,” she explains. “This helps us map out the kitchen for best client functionality.” Ease of living is top of mind with Allen, and a personal and unique design for each client’s style is inherent in her work—even when it calls for the unlikeliest of pairings. ♦