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MAINE'S 'PAINFUL BEACHES'
IN HIS NEW BOOK

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SPACES THAT WORK,
WELCOME, SOOTHE,
SUSTAIN—AND LOOK
GREAT, TOO

PLUS HOW TO
HIRE A DESIGNER

A spacious addition provided a Wellesley Farms family with the cook-friendly kitchen of their dreams.

Now We're Cooking

A first-floor addition creates the space of a Wellesley Farms couple's dreams.

By Jon Gorey

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT DELPHINICH

EVEN BEFORE THEY BOUGHT their Cape in Wellesley Farms seven years ago, Tawnee and Brian Felice were dreaming of a new kitchen. The cooking space was cramped, and the stove was “literally the size of an Easy-Bake Oven,” Tawnee Felice says. “I had to go buy smaller cookie sheets, because all of mine were too big.”

Cooking isn't just fun for the couple; it's a key ingredient in their love story. “Part of us dating was all about us cooking together,” Felice says. “It's our passion and hobby.”

Meanwhile, as their family grew—they now have two children—the two-bedroom house felt ever smaller. “What we learned with a newborn is you're held hostage in your bedroom by a squeaky stairwell,” Felice says. They loved their neighborhood, but they wanted space to host out-of-town relatives, and to prepare meals for them.

With years of Pinterest boards as inspiration, the Felices worked with architect Chris Brown of b Architecture Studio on an ambitious transformation. They gutted the kitchen, dining room, and bath, which made up more than half of the first floor, clearing the way for a 725-square-foot one-story addition. The mudroom





Brian and Tawnee Felice — with Harper, 1 — wanted a more functional kitchen, as well as more space to share meals and moments with their growing family and out-of-town guests. Brian was passionate about having a larger oven, a wish granted by the six-burner Capital range. The blue prep island hides a second oven. Reclaimed oak beams add a dramatic, eye-catching element to the spacious new addition. The wood floors were milled from the same oak.



Your Home: Kitchens & Baths

and a bathroom replaced the original dining room, and the master suite and the large, open kitchen and dining area take up the rest of the space. “We went from a house that was really small and broken up into separate spaces to an open concept,” says Felice.

A cook-friendly kitchen was the top priority. “First and foremost was functionality, and second was the overall aesthetic,” she says. “We definitely wanted a lot of counter space, a lot of prep space.”

Strictly Custom Woodworking in Wayland carved the waterfall-edge walnut top of the breakfast island, and Curtis Cabinetry in Georgetown built the base as well as the custom cabinets. A second island, which serves as a dedicated chef’s station, has a bright blue base, Himalayan white granite countertop, prep sink, extra oven, and plenty of storage.

“There’s no seating at the cobalt blue island, and that was very much on purpose, so we could have back-to-back storage,” Brown says. “When you turn around at the sink, there are base cabinets right there.”

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space. “We committed to a blue,” Felice recalls, “and then proceeded to go through 50 different paint chips” before settling on the cobalt. Barn light sconces in the dining area match the island, and black metal pendants hang above it.

To open things up even more, Brown vaulted the ceilings in the addition, using white shiplap and oak beams for a contemporary farmhouse look. “The reclaimed-oak floors fit the style they were after, and we complemented that with the beams in the ceiling,” Brown says. “Many of those beams were milled to make their floors, so they’re the same oak.”



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TAWNEE FELICE

Facing page: The subway tiles in the backsplash are “longer than typical,” says architect Chris Brown. “It looks a little cleaner.” This page, above: The one-story addition included a new front porch with sliding doors off the kitchen. The vaulted ceilings, combined with the position of a second-floor bedroom window, “led to kind of a kink in the roof’s main gable,” says Brown, who was mindful of making the addition look natural. Below: French doors open from the dining area to a new side patio with a pizza oven. “It’s a nice space that takes the kitchen and extends it all the way outside when there’s good weather,” Tawnee Felice says.

Avery, then 1, lends a hand in the framed addition.

The beams pack a wow factor for guests, but using the kitchen day in and day out, Felice is just as delighted by the small details, like a drawer with all of her spices neatly arranged. “It’s that level of organization with a larger space that I’d only dreamed about,” she says.

Not all the cooking happens in the kitchen. In good weather, oversized French doors in the dining area open to a new side patio anchored by a wood-fired pizza oven—a fun conversation starter that gets guests involved in the meal. “In the summertime, my husband’s using that more than the grill,” Felice says.

What she appreciates most are the opportunities for family connections that the new space creates—as when Avery, now 3, drags a step stool over to help make Jell-O or cookies. “Pretty much every single day my kids’ first memories as they’re developing are of us playing chase, running around that kitchen island,” she says. “We’re very lucky for sure.”

Jon Gorey is a regular contributor to the Globe Magazine. Send comments to magazine@globe.com.



Surviving a Kitchen Remodel

Upgrading a kitchen typically means living without one for a while, and that’s not easy. Tawnee Felice’s kitchen demolition was timed to coincide with a family vacation. “When we came back, it was a huge shock,” she says. The family was looking at months of cooking and eating in the living room, using the grill, microwave, and slow cooker to prepare food, and washing everything upstairs in the tiny bathroom sink or shower.

“That first day, I broke down and said, ‘No way. There’s no way we can do this. We’re moving out,’” Felice recalls. “And my husband said, ‘We’re not giving up.’ And he took a cutting board, vegetables, and a knife and sat on the front stoop, waving at the neighbors walking by as he cut up vegetables for dinner.”

It was a rough start and a challenging few months, she says now, but “it definitely was worth it.”



WILLIAM HORNE