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PHOTO IT LOOKS LIKE A PIECE OF FURNITURE—OR ART—BUT ANYONE CAN HAVE A UNIQUE LAMINATE KITCHEN. FINISH

When Barbara Jakobson decided it was time to add a new kitchen to the beach bungalow she had owned and enjoyed for 37 summers, she had some definite ideas about what she wanted. "I don't believe summer houses should be like winter houses," she says. "It's boring to have a duplicate." Since her art-filled Manhattan townhouse is "sophisticated and serious," this trustee of the Museum of Modern Art wanted her Hamptons home—which she calls "Bunk One, my summer camp"—to be anything but.

What she created with her collaborators (designer Lloyd Schwan, architect Christian Hubert and builder Robert Plumb) is a giddily colored homage to plastic laminate that's part art installation, part functional furniture and totally in-your-face fun.

"The beauty of laminates," designer Schwan says, "is the ability of the colors to blend together or bounce off of each other." Laminates can also take images, like the various photographs of tiles, flowers and wood grain Schwan took and sent to Wilsonart to be transferred onto four-by-eight-foot sheets. The cost: less than \$10 a square foot (the solids cost less than \$1 a square foot).

The plan for the kitchen suited Jakobson just fine: She wanted a functional room, and this one works hard. Furthermore, the new configuration has no overhead cabinets on two sides, to allow sunlight to stream in and worker bees to enjoy the scenery outside.

The free-floating kitchen has 30 colors and eight images. Limited overhead storage helps the views; pendant lights by the designer, Lloyd Schwan, echo the pyramid ceiling.

Produced by Linda O'Keeffe. Photographs by Antoine Bootz. Written by Kathleen Beckett.





The kitchen is the first thing you see as you enter the house, and it dominates the living room in which it floats on three-inch legs. "It's really way out of proportion for a home this size," Jakobson concedes. But it satisfies her priorities, replacing a tiny galley arrangement and a cinder block fireplace she rarely used. "It doesn't attach to any wall anywhere," she points out. Instead, she and her family can move in and around it; when they do, the kitchen always looks different, because every facade is different. Touch latches on cabinets eliminate the need for any hardware that would disrupt the flow of color.

"I love that Barbara let me loose with 30 different colors of laminates and eight photo images in her kitchen," says Schwan (another of her singular choices: a dazzling silver Airstream trailer used as a pool house). The colors and patterns are random, like some hippie quilt—an artistic challenge that paled beside the realities of plumbing and electricity. "It's one thing to create a piece of sculpture," Schwan says, "but a kitchen has to work."

"I felt that professional appliances would be out of place here," says Jakobson, who chose a KitchenAid stove, Maytag dishwasher and GE refrigerator. Schwan covered the latter with more laminates, including one of a work sign he photographed in Italy.

"There's no other refrigerator like it," he says. "In fact, at this point, no one else on the planet has a photo-laminate kitchen—but they could." ■

See Resources, last pages.

Above, left: The laminated refrigerator. Below: A photo of a 1975 Chevy Caprice, permanently parked on the back of a kitchen cabinet just inside the front door. Right: Looking into the kitchen past an outdoor dining set.

