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Open for Entertaining

When the owners of this Cedar Creek traditional home became empty nesters, they decided to inject their kitchen with a shot of fresh pizzazz.

Gone was the need for a practical family kitchen in dark colors that showed fewer stains, or utilitarian countertops that could absorb grape juice spills from sippy cups or the greasy residue of teenagers' pizza boxes.

In their place came cabinetry repainted in a soft "Dorian Grey" and yards of gleaming white Carrera marble for the countertops.

Jill Tran and Carmen Thompson of Tran + Thomas Design Studio expertly oversaw the transformation from fam to glam, moving the entire décor of the house, including the kitchen, in a more transitional and

modern direction.

The aged and yellowed wood of the original cabinets was given a fresh coat of paint in a warm gray, a color trending high in home décor right now, and repeated in the adjoining sitting room of this house. Silvery accents complement the color scheme and add a bit of sophistication. For example, the three pendant lights suspended elegantly over the kitchen island are wrapped in a silver fabric that emits diffused light.

And the pièce de résistance of the kitchen is the fancy new backsplash of white marble and smoky glass in a honeycomb-like pattern. The designers installed subtle under-cabinet lighting to further spotlight the eye-catching tile pattern.

"The tile was the backdrop for the whole space," explains Thomas. "Together with the light fixtures, it

Designer: Jill Tran and Carmen Thomas of Tran + Thomas Design Studio

Countertops: Carrera marble, fabricated by SCI

Light Fixtures: Tran + Thomas Design Studio

Tile Backsplash: Marble and glass ogee pattern from International Materials of Design

Kitchen Cabinets Paint Color: Dorian Grey by Sherwin Williams

Kitchen Wall Paint Color: Kilim Beige by Sherwin Williams

Bar Stools: Tran + Thomas Design Studio

brought a little bit of needed bling to the kitchen."

Another focal point of the kitchen is the attractively angled island, with a shape that helps facilitate the flow between the eating area and adjoining sitting room. Furniture-like swivel bar stools with upholstered backs and sides by Tran + Thomas Design Studio add to the formal appeal of the space.

A final clever design feature is a concealed walk-in pantry door just to the right of the refrigerator.

The client agonized over the decision to choose high-maintenance marble over the easier-to-use granite countertops that can bear any heat, cuts or stains. However, in the end, the couple got a showcase kitchen tailor-made for entertaining — and the only grape juice now being served is for adults in fancy stemware.