

order a copy

get our newsletter

## Clever Countertop Fix





Ellen McGauley

Outdated or unsightly countertops are nearly impossible to overlook, but also **super expensive to replace.** How to cheat them? Try the trick I discovered during this year's Designer Showhouse (it ran March 18-April 18). Kitchen designer Sandra Gaylord (or the gal I refer to as "she-who-can-find-a-solution-to-any-pesky-design-problem) took on the kitchen of this year's South Battery house, tasked with redoing the room with a VERY limited budget. Wait—I'm not even sure there WAS a budget.

Now we all know, you may be able to skate by on pennies in most any other room of the house, but kitchens and bathrooms? That's when most folks either fork over dough or go home. And by "go home," I mean, "find another one—with a kitchen someone ELSE updated."

So this is where we found Sandra, ready to get to work shining up a dated kitchen, in which its most glaring and costly obstacle was black countertops. Now I'm not saying that black countertops always equal black sheep in the world of kitchen design, but they were a tough stumbling block in a kitchen that had to be lightened, brightened, and overall overhauled.

What did she do? She taught us all something about the power of problem solving, that's what. She made them disappear. By painting the lower cupboards a dark gray, she blended the countertops to the cabinetry so that they would no longer stand out. Take a look at the picture—you hardly notice them! Then, rather than sacrificing the whole room to darker hues, she painted the uppers a crisp white (painting over the former green hue) to set the tone for a brighter, more harmonious kitchen.

## **Other Cool Notes**

- 1. Get a load of her light fixtures! Not your average task-oriented cooking shades. The "Phrena" lights (designed by Karl Zahn for Artecnica) give the room a contemporary bent and add some much-needed friction to the otherwise traditional and non-descript space.
- 2. Morning beverage station she created just by adding shelving and repositioning coffee and espresso makers.
- 3. The top half white/bottom half gray separation really pulls the room together. It neatens it up. And the custom-made table in the middle takes it from an oversized equivalent of a pass-through galley to a kitchen where you can stop and stay awhile.

Design info:

Gaylord Design, LLC 642 Grassy Hill Ln. Charleston, SC (843) 327-4635