

# Country Home<sup>®</sup>

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## REAL-LIFE REDO

*An 1830s Connecticut farmhouse meets the 21st century with a new kitchen and a combo mudroom/laundry room.*

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**THE MISSION:** TO CREATE A KITCHEN WITH ENOUGH STORAGE, WORK SURFACES, AND PERFORMANCE TO SATISFY A CHEF, WHILE PRESERVING THE CHARM OF AN OLD HOUSE. It was the character of the 1830s Colonial saltbox that drew Phoebe and Charlie Cole and their children to Connecticut 12 years ago. “We left our Manhattan apartment for this great old house on three acres,” says Phoebe, who was particularly taken with the country kitchen and its six-burner stove. But they soon realized the drawbacks of a kitchen that had just two freestanding hutches and no counters. “I was desperate for storage and surfaces,” says Phoebe. The family also needed a more workable laundry room: The washer and dryer were jammed in a utility room not much bigger than a closet.

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*Phoebe Cole prepares a tomato and mozzarella salad at the work table in her renovated kitchen. Flanking her are urns filled with herbs grown in the garden of what she calls her “baby farm.” Interior designer Leslie Allen collaborated on the project: “It still reads as country, but in a gutsy, more hip way,” Leslie says.*



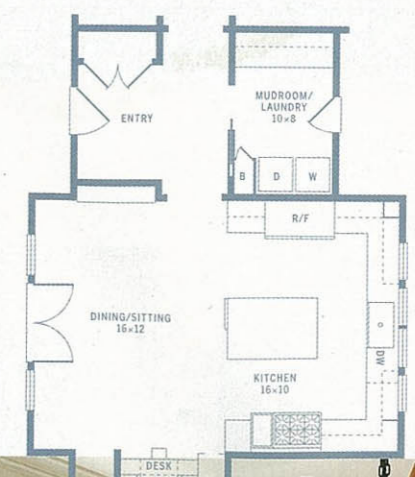
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EVEN AFTER ALL THE RENOVATION WORK, "IT STILL FEELS LIKE A WONDERFUL OLD HOUSE," SAYS PHOEBE.

**THE PLAN:** The Coles enlarged the existing kitchen with a 2,000-square-foot addition onto the back of the house. The added space also accommodates a master suite and a mudroom and laundry room. In the process, they took down a wall to incorporate the space once housing a pantry and utility room, and reoriented the kitchen layout. (See floor plan on the opposite page.)

**THE LOOK:** Contributing a crisp, clean look to the spaces are painted custom cabinetry, beaded-board paneling, flat-panel doors, and built-in shelves. The mudroom's Dutch door provides an old-house reference, as similar doors were used by early settlers to keep their livestock out and the fresh air in.

**THE PALETTE:** Lots of white warmed with timeworn antiques and a dose of black.

**THE FUNCTION:** Phoebe, a graduate of the French Culinary Institute, had strong opinions about her kitchen. She kept the old industrial stove for its six burners and reliability, but added a pot-filler spigot and black enamel backsplash. She

chose soapstone counters for their warm, informal look, and a single soapstone sink.

**THE PROBLEM SOLVERS:** To create an additional work surface, an antique carpenter's table steps in as the island. (Inserting locking casters in the table brought it up to a taller-than-average 36-inch height, which is more comfortable for Phoebe, who stands 5 feet 10 inches tall.) Shaker pegs in the mudroom are hefty enough to hold everything from skates to tote bags. The built-in bench makes a ready surface for backpacks and other items jettisoned by kids as they race in the door.

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1) Anchoring the 18x28-foot kitchen is a woodworking table outfitted with baskets for storage and installed above an electrical outlet in the floor so small appliances can be used. Strip oak flooring is stained; the rest of the floor is covered in sisal painted with a checkerboard pattern. 2) Wood shelves by the kitchen windows—one at the sill level—add display space for artwork by Phoebe Cole's mother and sister. The windows over the sink are casement style, opening out to create a sense of the outdoors. 3) Called "mission control" by Phoebe, the built-in desk contains essentials, such as the phone, cookbooks, and calendars. 4) Meals are eaten at a new table surrounded by antique Swedish chairs. A reproduction chandelier lights the area. 5) Wood crates fitted with casters from a home center hold newspapers and sporting gear. Custom-built upper shelves house wicker storage baskets, and the built-in bench makes the most of the mudroom half of the 10x8-foot space. 6) Beaded-board walls and recessed-panel cabinetry surround the washer and dryer. A retractable clothesline accommodates air-drying.