VEN FOR THE MOST organized people, keeping a kitchen tidy 24-7 can seem like an impossible task—a fact that becomes doubly true in an open kitchen—where countertop messes are always in plain sight. What’s a busy family to do?

Faced with this dilemma while designing a childhood friend’s newly built house outside Jacksonville, Florida, designer Krysta Gibbons of Minneapolis-based Kipling House Interiors came up with a deceptively simple solution: Split the room in two.

Behind the main kitchen (which is open to the dining and living rooms), a so-called “catering kitchen” acts as a tucked-away area for everyday food prep and storage. “It’s essentially a walk-in pantry that’s also a ‘mess space,’” says Gibbons, who devised it to store countercluttering appliances like the microwave, toaster, and coffee maker—“the things...
The House Beautiful Kitchen of the Year is filled with ideas to help you create the kitchen of your dreams.

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Nussbaumer designed the grass-cloth wallpaper with Paul Montgomery to evoke Diana—Roman goddess of the hunt—in Mayan lands. An antique chair from Syria anchors the room. Wine columns: Thermador.

The cabinet hardware, inspired by Kukulkan (a Mayan serpent deity), was designed by Nussbaumer and made by Addison Weeks. Floor and wall tiles: The Tile Shop. Under-counter refrigerator: Thermador.

This doorway—bejeweled with Emtek’s octagonal knob—leads to a secret lair. Flip the page to see it.
Nussbaumer created this Art Deco delight in a room with 18-foot-high ceilings. “Surrounding it with fractured geometric Silestone by Cosentino was so fun,” she says.

The farmhouse sink gets an uptown upgrade in this stainless steel version from Elkay, thanks to a Champagne-hued apron front. Refrigerators: Thermador.


Here’s How Nussbaumer Ensured Major Drama

MIXED FLOOR TILES To stretch her supply of Lorraine and Marta 2 patterns from Lili Cement Tile for the Art Kitchen floor, Nussbaumer wove in simple red Terracotta 5000 tiles for a custom design.

STATEMENT TRIMS Plain molding—who needs it? Surrounding the doorways of the Main Kitchen with The Tile Shop’s dark-red Rosso Marquina turned them into otherworldly portals.

WALL MURALS Presiding over the food and drinks are Mayan deities (a Francisco Moreno creation made with Benjamin Moore paints in the Main Kitchen) and The Jungle Book’s Mowgli (by Paul Montgomery in the Cocktail Bar).

PATTERNED CABINETRY Nussbaumer had an auto-body shop wrap the Art Kitchen’s Ikea cabinets in her own red-and-blue ikat.

JEWEL-LIKE HARDWARE The accents are everywhere: See Emtek’s gleaming gilt drawer pulls and faceted, octagonal handle on the porcelain pantry door.