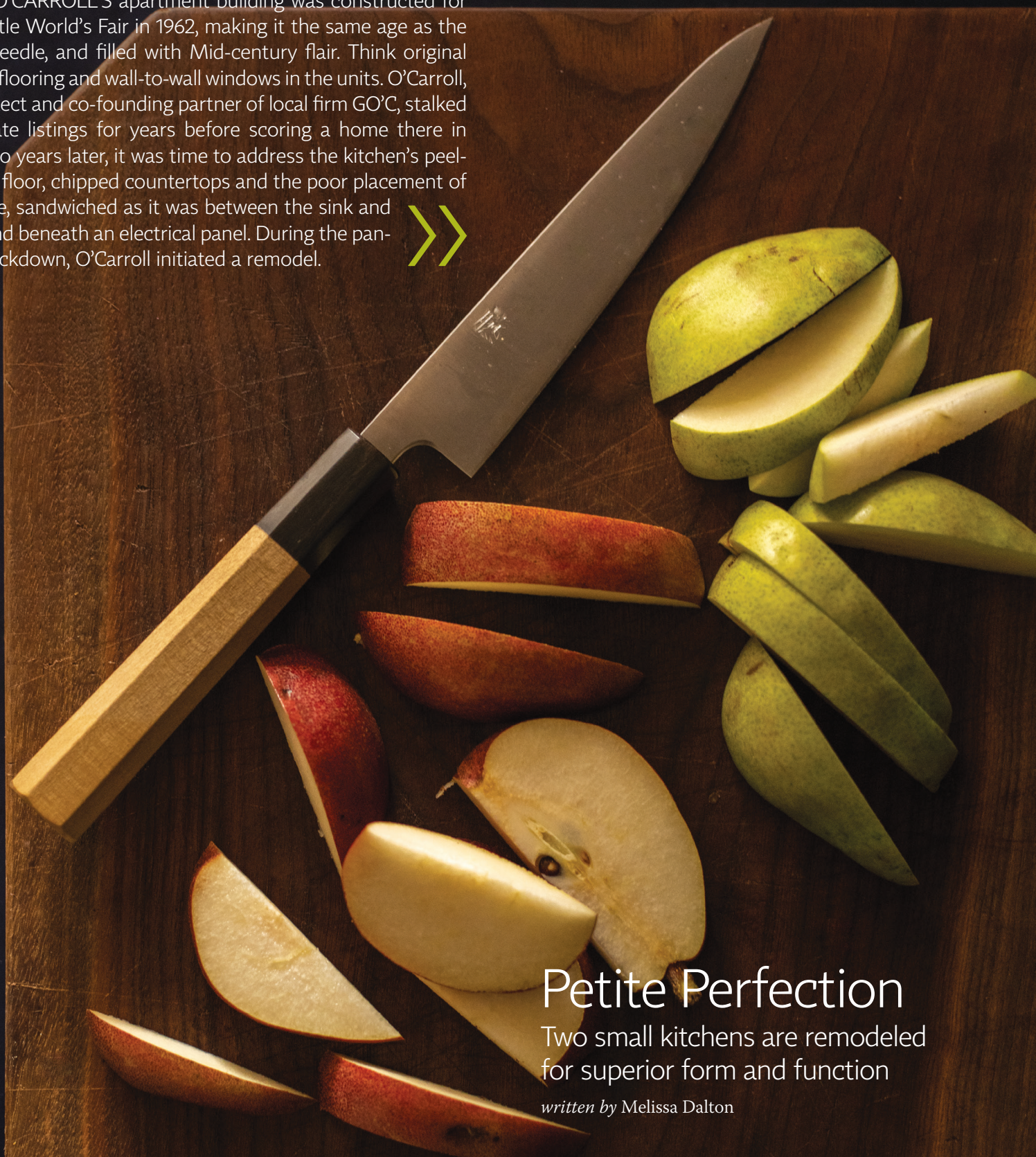


SEATTLE

A Mid-century Galley Kitchen Packs Happy Color

AIMÉE O'CARROLL'S apartment building was constructed for the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, making it the same age as the Space Needle, and filled with Mid-century flair. Think original parquet flooring and wall-to-wall windows in the units. O'Carroll, an architect and co-founding partner of local firm GO'C, stalked real estate listings for years before scoring a home there in 2018. Two years later, it was time to address the kitchen's peeling vinyl floor, chipped countertops and the poor placement of the stove, sandwiched as it was between the sink and a wall, and beneath an electrical panel. During the pandemic lockdown, O'Carroll initiated a remodel. >>



Petite Perfection

Two small kitchens are remodeled for superior form and function

written by Melissa Dalton



Photos: Kyle Johnson

ABOVE, FROM LEFT In a small Seattle kitchen, Marmoleum floors complement blue Richlite counters. A custom metal shelf fits the aesthetic and makes needed space.

While the room was a small galley clocking about 64 square feet, O'Carroll didn't want to knock out walls and enlarge it, which would disrupt the rest of the apartment's flow. "The kitchen works nicely, even though it's small, and I like the separation of spaces," said O'Carroll, who instead saw the small footprint as a welcome challenge. "I decided to see what I could do with what was there, but try to make it function a lot better."

First up, relocating the range to the opposite wall. But that had its own constraints, stemming from the building's construction. "You never know what you're going to find in the walls," said O'Carroll. "It turns out mine are made of mesh and mortar. There's no framing, and they're only about two-and-a-half inches thick." To address this, the contractor had to fur out the wall to add new electrical, essentially shaving two more inches off the counter depth around the stove. "Every inch counts," said O'Carroll. "But it makes such a difference to move that range that it was totally worth it."

Now, the new layout gives O'Carroll more counter on either side of the induction cooktop, as well as to the side of the sink on the opposite wall. A tall, counter-depth refrigerator saves more space, and isn't an eyesore. (There's a nearby pantry for additional storage.)

For finishes, O'Carroll eschewed tile, so as not to have the visual clutter of grout lines in the small footprint. She instead

opted for color blocking with single surfaces to add interest. Now, rich indigo-colored Marmoleum flooring syncs with deep blue Richlite counters and backsplash, while customized Reform cabinets with linoleum fronts offer a fun, contrasting green. The finishing details are, of course, small, but much like the kitchen itself, effective. They include integrated outlet covers in the backsplash and a bespoke metal shelf and rail. "It's really handy," said O'Carroll. "There's a spot for everything."

SPOKANE

A Cottage Kitchen Both Useful and Beautiful

There is a famous quote from 1880 British textile designer William Morris that reads: "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." For interior designer Emily Mejia of Emily Anne Interior Design, that attitude pretty much summed up her clients' approach to the recent kitchen remodel in their 1947 cottage on South Hill in Spokane. "They really value simplicity," said Mejia. "They didn't want extravagance, but beauty in the utility of all of it."

To that end, Mejia started the design process by keeping the major fixtures essentially in place to save on budget costs, and just nudging the sink to make room for the refrigerator on the same wall. "We were



A fun twist on design is blue Richlite countertops paired with green-colored cabinets with linoleum fronts.

“[The homeowners] really value simplicity. They didn’t want extravagance, but beauty in the utility of all of it.”

— Emily Mejia, interior designer



This Spokane kitchen radiates beauty and utility with a dark and handsome offset.



A small eating area gets lavish daylight and has a window bench for coffee and reading.

restricted not only by room size, but also by the location of items,” said Mejia. Choosing smaller appliances, like a single dishwasher drawer and counter-depth refrigerator, saved more space in the layout, while adding a panel to the front of the dishwasher and surrounding the refrigerator with cabinets seamlessly integrates them.

Beauty and utility come together in many of the finishes, from the suite of white oak custom cabinetry by local carpenter Old Hat Workshop, to the porcelain-that-looks-like-limestone flooring and quartz counters. Other design moves make the room feel bigger, like carrying the cabinets up to the ceiling for additional storage capacity, adding a built-in bench at the window for the dining table and painting out the walls in a deep grayish-green color from Benjamin Moore. “I always feel like dark colors can really make a space feel bigger, even though that’s contrary to popular thought,” said Mejia. (The homeowners certainly love it, calling the color a cross between “moody library and tranquil forest.”)

While the design brief meant Mejia couldn’t place the sink under the window, such constraints ultimately proved creative ground. Mejia joined a fluted sink with a quartz-and-beadboard backsplash, creating a wall of open shelving that displays the family’s collections. These include personal heirlooms, like candlesticks from a Ukrainian great-grandmother, and handmade ceramics bought in Montana, all of which get used daily. “I think all of these details could get lost in a big kitchen,” said Mejia. “There’s just something about the size that makes it work.”

Photos: Patrick Martinez