

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2018

# House Beautiful

## Joy AT HOME!

THE  
PERFECT  
HOLIDAY  
KITCHEN  
& GIFTS:  
FROM FAB  
TO FREE

CHARLOTTE MOSS GARDEN INSPIRATIONS

BEAUTY AT HOME AERIN LAUDER

VALENTINO AT THE EMPEROR'S TABLE AGGOLINE

## KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

**K**itchen designer Alison Pickart hails from a long line of engineers—her great-grandfather founded the model-railroad company Walthers—so it's no surprise that every millimeter of her renovated double-height kitchen, in a 1932 cottage in Ross, California, is as charming and carefully plotted as a train set. "Every area around our farmhouse table has a purpose," Pickart says. As a parent and frequent party giver, she created "stations" so that nearly every family member can partake in the prep work. In this house, there's no such thing as too many cooks in the kitchen. "It gets beat up and keeps on ticking," she says. —*Kathryn O'Shea-Evans*

### 1. HARD-WEARING

"I love Carrara marble for the way it wears over time," Pickart says. "Any imperfections that may develop become an element that gives soul to the house." Bonus: Its cool surface is ideal for rolling out cookie dough during the holidays.

### 2. DOUBLE DUTY

On an ordinary day, this built-in desk functions as a homework space for the designer's two children. But come party time, it transforms into an easy-to-access buffet station, piled high with everything from caramels and truffles to cosmos.



Pickart (top left) preps for a holiday gathering with her family and friends. Gingerbread houses, Williams Sonoma.



This kitchen has a zone for every task: cooking, cleaning, kids' projects. It even transforms into a disco for parties!

**3. FARMHOUSE SINK**  
Pickart chose the Shaws sink by Rohl because it's spacious enough for cutting long-stemmed flowers or prepping for a large dinner party. "It helps facilitate cooking on a mass scale—legumes can be soaking while pasta is draining and crabs are being cracked," she says.

**4. HIDDEN HELP**  
"Miele has the most gentle dishwasher for cleaning crystal stemware, which is why in a Pickart kitchen, you'll always find two!" The 24-inch integrated dishwasher sits to the left of the main sink, while the drawers on the right house everyday dishes, with wooden pegboards to hold them all steady. "Storing dishes in drawers makes it easier for kids to set the table or pour a bowl of cereal," she says.

**5. ACTIVITY STATION**  
Pickart's "Power Corner," between the sink and the stove, is where she packs to-go meals for the day or stacks replenishments for a party buffet. "I always keep dry goods like breads and crackers super-handly, as well as tapenades, so even when the caterers leave, things look as fresh as when the party started," she says.

**6. CHEF-READY**  
Wolf's six-burner range, with a griddle and two ovens, is worthy of a restaurant—and perfect for hosting a crowd. "For brunch, I'll cook pancakes on top and keep them warm in the small oven while cooking a quiche in the larger one," Pickart says.

**7. MOVABLE FEAST**  
The Boulangerie Counter Table from RH, Restoration Hardware, acts as an island, providing a hangout space during the week (it's normally fitted with comfy club-chair stools) that can easily turn into a buffet for parties—or be removed altogether. Every New >>



# THE ESSENTIALS

## KITCHEN OF THE MONTH



Cosmopolitans are a family favorite during the holidays. Pickart adds frozen cranberries to keep each sip cool.



9



A holiday dessert station features a cake from Williams Sonoma.



10

Year's Eve, the Pickarts turn the area into a dance floor and drop balloons from the second-story balcony as the clock strikes midnight. "Having the kids pump up the balloons keeps them quiet for hours!" Pickart says.

**8. CLASSIC FLOORING**  
"Growing up, I always admired traditional black-and-white checkerboard

floors—to my young mind, they were fancy," says Pickart. "This tumbled, antique-gray Carrara marble softens the room and gets more beautiful with every step."

**9. ALFRESCO FIRE**  
The family uses their Blue Ridge cobblestone fireplace to extend parties outdoors most of the year. Pickart chose black fire-

brick in a herringbone pattern for the firebox. "It's going to turn black anyway!"

**10. TOAST TO STYLE**  
Pickart's husband's grandfather restored this 1930 Ford Blind Back Fordor Model A in 1969, and it's still going strong, complete with the original "ahh-rooga!" horn. For a merry holiday look, it wears a wreath of princess pine.