

DESIGN & BUILD

Cook with style

By Robyn Welsh

EGG BENEDICT has never tasted so good now that the Stallard family of Torbay, Auckland, finally have the kitchen they've always wanted.

For two months, homeowner Tony Stallard whipped up this dish for his family's Sunday breakfast in a makeshift kitchenette while the new kitchen was under construction.

On completion day, Tony was on the business side of the breakfast bar where he was serving up the lightly poached eggs and Hollandaise sauce with the smile of a man — a trained pastry cook, no less — who has finally got his dream kitchen.

The kitchen, designed by Marianne Gailer of Mobile Kitchens, has been well worth the wait.

For four years, Tony and his wife Virginia tolerated the deficiencies of the old kitchen in their 1990s home while Virginia established her accountancy practice, Visual Accounting Solutions, with the support of Tony, now an account manager for Goodman Fielder.

Gailer came to Virginia as a business client. But when talk came to houses and renovations Virginia in turn became her client.

Together Tony, Virginia and Marianne acknowledged the horrors of the old kitchen, with its one-way traffic flow, a stainless steel sink that copped the glare from the sun through the non-opening north-facing window, plus a deep, intrusive bench. They talked through Tony's vision for the sink in the island bench and some clear wall space for traffic flow.

Together, they paced out the dimensions of the new floor plan for the reorientated European-influenced contemporary kitchen. It has been seamlessly integrated into their dining area and cost a little over \$40,000.

The aluminium-framed glass doors



The Stallard family now enjoy breakfast cooked in a practical, modern kitchen.



The old kitchen was impractical with poor access.



Modern design offers more choice.

of an existing cabinet became the cue for similar cupboards in the kitchen.

The wall of tobacco-coloured cabinetry alongside the double fridge has been set back a little, rather than installed flush with the adjoining wall as in the old kitchen, and that alone has added valuable space to the room.

Every bit of space was needed to achieve the ideal 1200mm gap between cabinetry and central island to optimise the oft-quoted "work triangle" that is the time- and energy-saving distance between the sink, the cook-top and the fridge.

The original glass bricks that were installed to bring natural light into the stairwell are now a pleasing focal point from the breakfast bar.

On the opposite wall, much has changed. That fixed central window pane has been replaced with a sliding window opening to a barbecue deck above a slim bench that matches the 60mm thick composite stone of the island bench.

Marianne's decision to begin the bench here and not wrap it round the

Kitchen talk

|| Kitchens and their hardware get better every year. Talk to your designer about "soft touch closures", slim drawers inside deeper drawers and double-sided pull-out pantries and corner cupboards.

|| An appliance garage (complete with roller door) can be ideal for keeping some benchtop electrical appliances tidily out of sight.

kitchen as per Tony's vision adds visual width to the kitchen space, now finished with rectangular porcelain tiles.

"They suit the rectangular shape of the room better than square tiles would have," she explains.

Virginia and Tony chose pendant lights, swapping the 150-watt bulbs

specified for four 100-watt bulbs for brilliant, but not blinding, task lighting.

"When we turn this light off and the old downlights are still on, it's almost like dusk. We didn't realise how bad the light used to be," says Tony.

Virginia couldn't help but start putting all the foodstuffs and crockery back into the new kitchen while Tony had taken the girls out swimming.

"We were going to do it together but I couldn't wait. I rearranged everything four times. It was just so exciting," she says.

She's not allowed to clutter up the place up any more either — "because the cook says so," she laughs. "It's such a beautiful, peaceful kitchen that you wouldn't want to clutter it anyway."

Tony does the food shopping and most of the cooking for Virginia and their daughters Chantal, 7, and Dominique, 5. His response to any funny looks from curious blokes? "I say 'Well, what's wrong with that? We work as a team and that's how it should be.'"

Virginia was amused that she, rather than Tony, was phoned first to sign off



The slide-out pantry.

the kitchen prior to installation. "I said 'This is his kitchen. If he doesn't like it then I won't like it.'"

For more information contact Mobile Kitchen Design Company, ph 0800 695 482 or view at www.mykitchen.co.nz