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WARM WELCOME

Interior designer Paula Daher turns her Back Bay kitchen into a bespoke entertaining space.

BY ALENE BOURANOVA

HAVING AN EMPTY NEST doesn't mean you have to have an empty house. So says interior designer Paula Daher, who transformed her condo's underwhelming kitchen into a welcoming space for hosting family and friends. "[My husband and I] entertain a fair bit," she says. "He's an amazing cook and loves to unwind by cooking—he'll be making dinner and say, 'Who can we invite?'"

There was nothing *wrong*

with the original kitchen, Daher says, but it didn't match her aesthetic, nor did it suit the come-on-in atmosphere she and her husband wanted. To accommodate their entertaining needs, Daher, a seasoned kitchen designer with three grown children, aimed for relaxed elegance and high functionality. That meant replacing the Shaker-style oak models, installing a backsplash and countertops

of brushed Calacatta Vagli marble, and designing a deeper island. A new glass-doored pantry offers plenty of storage, while open shelves above the counter provide easy access to bowls and plates. "My husband loves that he can just grab things as he's cooking," Daher says.

Daher custom-designed almost everything in the kitchen, including her favorite piece: the flared stove hood, which features

unlacquered brass trim inspired by a '40s-era buffet she once spotted while traveling. She upgraded the rest of the appliances, too, adding a six-burner Thermador cooktop, two Wolf ovens, and a Sub-Zero wine fridge.

"It really functions and flows so well," Daher says of her new space. "As we entertain these days, no one's very formal or fussy. Everybody just hangs out in the kitchen, and we have plenty of room to do that!"