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KITCHEN ALCHEMY

STEP INTO THE KITCHEN OF THIS La Jolla home and the first thing you may notice are the words hanging on a wall: "This is Where The Magic Happens." The sign was already there when designer Dianne Harsch of Studio Emphasis began creating for her client "a more functional and modern kitchen." But Harsch proceeded to make some magic of her own happen, transforming "an old kitchen that didn't work" into a showplace, and she did it utilizing existing space.

"Kitchen design is greatly reliant on space planning," says Harsch. "There's always a way to help improve the space."

She addressed her client's problem in part by removing an angled wall that restricted usable area for the kitchen. In the bargain, removing the wall allowed the kitchen to flow more seamlessly

into the family room and a patio.

White lacquer cabinetry mingled with a wood veneer laminate, along with a bright-orange backsplash (a "punch of color," Harsch calls it) behind the sink, prompted judge Tony Garcia to hail Harsch's use of "bold color" as "refreshing and inspiring. The modern and timeless objective set out by the designer was met and exceeded with a blend of cool and warm materials."

Adds judge Jennifer Guerin: "The orange should inspire others to put a little more color into their kitchen palette. The use of recycled material such as the countertops mixed with mid-century stools makes my heart go pitter-patter."

The words on the wall are truer than ever. This kitchen is magical. ♦

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Above: Designer Dianne Harsch demonstrated what just a touch of color will do for a kitchen with her use of a bright-orange backsplash behind the sink.

Left: This La Jolla kitchen's contemporary look is enhanced by a carefully conceived employment of white lacquer cabinetry and a wood veneer laminate.

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