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Best New Take on
a Childhood Favorite,
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LIKE MANY EMPTY NESTERS, Jean Franz and Robert Smith were planning the next phase of their lives. After briefly thinking about selling their charming 1938 Cape Cod in Silver Spring's Woodside Park neighborhood, they decided it made more sense to stay put. "We took our daughter apartment hunting and realized that our mortgage is less than it costs to rent a one-bedroom," Franz says. Plus, they love their neighborhood, friends and house, with its large lot, ample bedrooms and bathrooms, and plentiful closets.

The kitchen, however, needed revamping. Franz is an avid cook who enjoys entertaining, so she wanted to revitalize the well-loved, but worn-out space with an updated look and a spacious plan to accommodate the couple's extended family.

This wasn't going to be the first time Franz, 62, and Smith, 63, renovated the house. In 1989, shortly after moving in, they hired Kensington-based design/build firm MGD to enlarge and modernize the original galley kitchen. "We are both focused on the details, so Jean and I hit it off right away," says MGD President Michael Dent. "She has a great design sense and excellent taste." Over the years, the couple used the contractor for several smaller projects—finishing the basement, enclosing a porch, adding built-ins to the dining room—and he became a trusted friend.

For this renovation, which took place in 2015, Franz collaborated with MGD project architect Shawn Staples. Eliminating a wall between the kitchen and a front bedroom, formerly used as a den,



A 39-by-90-inch pine trestle table anchors the informal dining area. The custom-made table is from The Great British Pine Mine in Kensington. Oversize pendant lights from Restoration Hardware hang above, and the built-in banquette is upholstered in sturdy indoor/outdoor fabric from [Perennials](#).

increased the square footage, improved circulation, and flooded the space with natural light. The original coat closet became a powder room, and a new closet was built next to the front door.

Two-thirds of the 465-square-foot space is now used for food prep and

storage, the rest for eating and entertaining. The must-have list included counter seating, a large and informal dining table, and a sitting area with a television.

Because new, wider kitchen doorways connect the space to the rest of the first level, the visual transition to the

