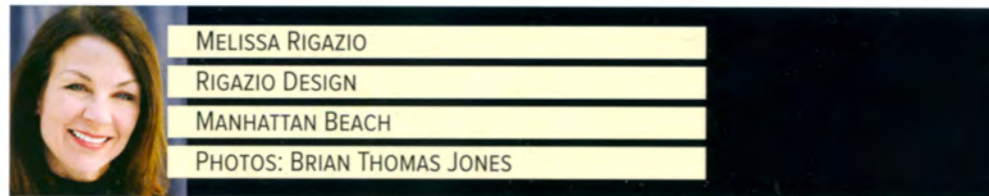


Out of sight

For these Southern California designers, ingenious storage solutions are the name of the game.

Prepare to be amazed at everything you *can't* see.

By Pamela Bunn



Melissa Rigazio is a nationally certified interior designer with a background in commercial and production design. With the expansion of her family eight years ago, flexibility was paramount, so she started her own residential

design company out of her Manhattan Beach guesthouse. Now, with her business growing rapidly and a new office space in the works, she can be picky about the projects she chooses — meaning absolutely no “McMansions.” This client was pretty easy to work

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MELISSA RIGAZIO FROM PAGE 20

with: Rigazio renovated her own kitchen.

Melissa, tell us about the house. How long have you lived here?

It's been eight years now. It's a 2,000-square-foot home with a guesthouse. When we bought it, it was a teardown, but I don't live with a teardown mentality. Coming from Chicago, my head just wasn't really there. Originally, it was a one-story built in 1949. It had been renovated and added onto, I think, four times over the years. You could definitely tell what had been done in the '70s and the '80s.

Did you add square footage to the kitchen?

No, it was already a nice, big space. We added a dining room adjacent to it, which had been a bedroom. Originally, there was a bedroom next to the kitchen and a full bath up there. Since we have great views, we changed it to an upside-down floor plan, with the kitchen, living room, dining room and powder room upstairs and the bedrooms downstairs. It's like being in a tree house. Even though we're close to neighbors, visually it's very private.

What did the kitchen look like before your redesign?

Basically, the range, refrigerator and the sink were in the same place, and the cabinets were literally a door and a shelf.

How did you go about transforming the space?

One thing I always do is completely design the interior, down to every drawer. Next to the refrigerator are two pull-out pantries, and above that is the built-in microwave. I actually have more things in the same amount of space. I still have some open space in my cabinets because even the corner cabinets open fully.

What did you do in terms of upgrades?

I'm very interested in the green movement, so when we did the kitchen we went with a tankless water heater. I also tried out a material on my countertops called PaperStone,

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Melissa Rigazio's renovated kitchen is exactly what the client ordered — down to the last detail. It wasn't too difficult in her case, since she's both the designer and the client. She manages to keep the spacious kitchen clutter-free with hidden niches that store appliances and other items that used to take up counter space.

