

It all started with a nightmare. Well two, actually.

"I had a slick Italian kitchen designed in 3-D CAD and was ready to tear out the original kitchen," says Loni Nagwani, a realtor specializing in San Jose Eichlers. "But I started having nightmares that when the contractors came to rip out the cabinets, I was nailing them back up; I realized I should rethink it."

"Every time I tried to make the layout work with the fridge and other things moved somewhere else, I'd end up putting them back where they were in the first place. It makes you realize that actually there's nothing wrong with the design, that maybe you're the problem."

Her open-plan kitchen is in a flat-roof 1958 Anshen and Allen-designed Eichler in the Fairglen neighborhood. Instead of gutting the space, Nagwani and her husband, Bharat, chose to update judiciously while keeping the original speckled brown "Zolatone" cabinets. A multicolored lacquer paint finish still used by auto body shops, Joseph Eichler specified Zolatone in some of his tracts, but it's unusual to come across an extant installation today.

The central island that holds the vintage Thermador cooktop has been raised on legs to make the surface a

Getting a Flattop

text Michelle Gringeri-Brown

photography Jim Brown

