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# 'A Wonderful Space'

Philadelphia sports-radio icon **Rhea Hughes** turns to **Colonial Marble & Granite** to tackle a kitchen renovation she describes as "like a work of art."

**W**hen she's not on the air as a personality for the beloved SportsRadio 94WIP Morning Show, Rhea Hughes loves spending time at home. Her TV is usually tuned to an Eagles, Flyers, Phillies, Sixers, or Union game. If not, she's likely to have a home-renovation show from the DIY Network on in the background, scouting for her next big idea.

Hughes has spent the past seven years fixing up a fire-damaged home in South Philadelphia's Girard Estates neighborhood.

As anyone who has ever tackled a home renovation on their own knows, the process can seem arduous and never-ending. When it came time for the kitchen, however, she had the help of her brother, her 12-year-old son who wants to be an architect, and a few close friends.

She also had the invaluable guidance and expertise of an organization Hughes knows quite well: Colonial Marble & Granite.

"Although it was 25 years old, the kitchen was functional, so it was the last

room to work on," says Hughes. "I am a spokesperson for Colonial on the radio and knew right away that's who I wanted to use when it was time for the countertops, flooring, and backsplash."

Hughes made an appointment to visit Colonial's King of Prussia showroom. Like many homeowners, she was positively overwhelmed at the array of choices available. The design experts at Colonial quickly got down to business and helped her narrow down the options.

“They asked me, ‘How do you use the kitchen?’” she recalls. “I said, ‘I cook every single day, and I’m a baker, too.’ I also drink red wine, so we didn’t want to choose anything that could stain, like marble, but I knew I wanted something white. They recommended quartz. What’s so great about Colonial is that you can come to them with some ideas and colors, and they are the experts at what goes together and what works.”

Hughes had always known that she wanted a black-and-white diamond tile floor, which would become an instant focal point of the kitchen. In fact, that flooring would go all the way into the sunroom to open up the space. With such a bold choice taking up so much surface area, she realized her other material selections would have to complement the floor. Hughes initially picked a kitchen backsplash that could potentially compete with the floor pattern, but Stella Evangelopoulos, Colonial’s designer, had her back.

“Stella pointed me toward a white subway tile and some gray grout, which worked brilliantly together allows the floor to really stand out,” Hughes says. “The process was a lot less overwhelming with her help.”

While Hughes had left that meeting feeling that she had picked out the right countertop, she later worried that it might be too gray. Because Colonial had not templated the project yet, Hughes popped into Colonial’s South Philadelphia location to have another look. She says the fact that Colonial has so many locations made the process simple and convenient.

Looking at a few more samples, Hughes found just the countertop she wanted—white quartz with gray veining that, when cut and installed, would cascade down the side like a waterfall. When it came time for the installation, Hughes says that the experience was just as seamless.



***I spend so much time just staring at this kitchen now because it just makes me so happy.”***

—Rhea Hughes,  
South Philadelphia resident and  
Colonial Marble & Granite client

“It was like artistry watching them cut and install the pieces,” Hughes remembers. “I picked a herringbone pattern, which is not easy at all, but they were so impressive to watch. I actually pulled up a chair and watched how it all came together. What I love about Colonial is that they not only have amazing products, but they do a great job in-

stalling them, too. It’s like a work of art.”

On summer Fridays, 94WIP broadcasted live from the Borgata in Atlantic City, and Hughes would typically stay down for the whole weekend. The project was due to wrap up over a summer weekend, when she would normally be down the Jersey Shore. She trusted Colonial to finish the job even with her not there.

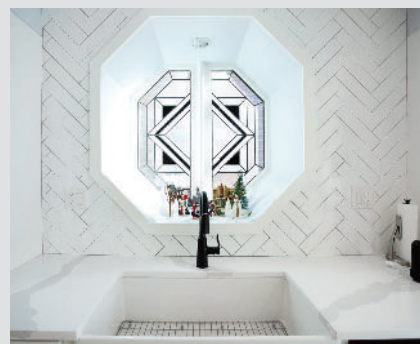
“I left them a key and had absolutely no worries trusting not only my kitchen but my house to them when I had to go,” she says. “Being able to really trust a company that you’re working with says a lot. And I remember being blown away when I got home. It was everything that I wanted.”

Today, Hughes sits in the kitchen every day, admiring the finished product.

“It is a beautiful, calming, and serene space to spend time in,” she says. “I’ll be hosting my first holiday party here [this winter] and my friends keep joking if we’ll ever go to their houses again because I always want to be here.”

Hughes says she has put a lot of “sweat equity” into her home that she has helped transform with her own two hands. While much of the work was incredibly challenging, she says working with a partner such as Colonial Marble & Granite eased the burden.

“Without a doubt, I can say it was the easiest part of the whole project,” she says. “They made every step of the process smooth, and I just got to sit back and watch it come together. I spend so much time just staring at this kitchen now because it just makes me so happy. It’s a wonderful space to spend time in.” ■



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