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Meredith Specials

Balancing Act

Creating a highly efficient kitchen that would be as inviting to a busy family as to a flurry of caterers was the challenge facing the team at Bellacasa Design Associates when it took on a Houston showhouse kitchen. “We wanted to give this kitchen a very sophisticated and understated appeal, but not in a stark or sterile sense,” says Kevin Spearman, owner of Bellacasa. “People want to

gather and cook in a kitchen that feels livable, not a characterless laboratory.”

Balance was the key to making the workhorse space welcoming, and the designers artfully combined warm and cool elements with old and new. Intriguing in combination and contrast are the smooth, stainless-steel appliances and sink; the textured, green slate floor; reclaimed ceiling beams; and lower cabinets of dark walnut-stained wood.

Similar to restaurant layouts, open

BELOW: A two-island design breaks the long space into zones: The area with lower cabinets provides storage, and the other provides a spot for visitors.

RIGHT: The kitchen includes room for elegant dining at one end and casual seating at the marble-top table.









RIGHT: The efficient cooking area includes a commercial-style range, a microwave oven, and a freestanding refrigerator.

LEFT: A wall of built-ins houses china and glassware. The varied heights and depths of the cabinets create the look of unfitted furniture.



shelving flanks the range to allow cooks to reach plates with ease and to create a more sophisticated, loftlike look. While the range wall has a modern style, the opposite wall is traditional. Here a spacious hutch, featuring a combination of wire-grille and glass-pane doors, mimics the look of a fine antique and showcases the homeowners' glassware and pottery. The varied depths and heights of the cabinetry result in an unfitted-furniture look. A marble-top island and a counter-height table on casters add character while breaking the long and narrow space into zones. The utilitarian food-prep area has cabinets

underneath. Space below the other table is open to accommodate up to six upholstered stools. The marble-top table is perfect for baking and serving, as well as visiting with the chef.

The kitchen's versatility continues beyond the cooking and prep areas, extending to a rustic-style dining table and chairs located at one end. A two-sided, limestone fireplace nearby provides warmth and definition to the dining area. Spearman has succeeded in designing a kitchen that seamlessly blends old and new, cool and warm. **DK**

RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 158.