

KITCHEN

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AND BATH IDEAS

Before & After

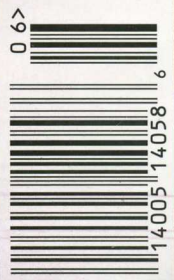
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Exquisite Expanse



This one has surprising warmth and superb detail.



Furniture-style cabinetry, old-look surfaces, and a soft color palette create warm and inviting country French character in this new kitchen, part of a Houston showhouse. The simple floor plan puts the range, main sink, and refrigerator on separate walls.

How do you create bistro ambience in a kitchen space with banquet-hall dimensions?

Accentuate warmth, character, and intimacy.



OPPOSITE: A big farmhouse sink is set before a window that reaches toward the extra-high ceiling. The sink is flanked by two camouflaged dishwashers and two easy-to-see sets of shelves for dishware.

At more than 400 square feet, this Houston showhouse kitchen could have easily turned out cold and cavernous. Instead, by taking cues from the country French exterior—slate roof, copper gutters, stucco walls, and wood shutters—the design team created European warmth and coziness.

“When people step into the home, they don’t get the sense that it’s 7,000 square feet, and that’s the intention,” architectural designer Robert Dame says.

A rustic vintage look fosters kitchen intimacy. “It’s quite a big space, and we tried to make it more like a room than a kitchen,” builder Brian Thompson says.

Accordingly, the cabinetry resembles antique furniture, including two sets of hutchlike built-ins—one with glass doors, the other with fabric and chicken wire. The dishwashers wear cabinetry-matching panels and the built-in refrigerator boasts painted armoire-style doors. The island looks like an old table. “It has huge legs and a wood top, which isn’t typical for islands,” interior decorator Kevin Spearman says.

The mostly new surfaces seem old. The island and cabinetry were crafted from knotty alder wood. “The builder of the cabinets actually chiseled out pieces of the wood to make them look aged,” Thompson says. The hickory floor was similarly seasoned: Hand-beveling the planks created a wavy, time-warped effect. A muted yet warm color scheme of gray and khaki enhances the vintage feel.

Copper, stainless steel, and slate cap a materials mix that could have overwhelmed a smaller space. “The kitchen’s so large, it can take many things happening at the same time,” Spearman says. “It’s a look of many different things, and that’s reminiscent of French country.”





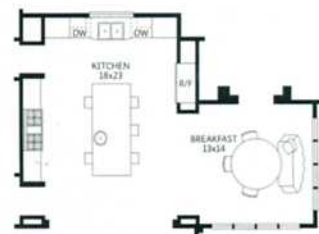
LEFT: The built-in refrigerator's hand-painted panels give it the look of an armoire. Though made of new materials, the island has the appeal of an antique table. Its small sink, storage space, and work surface equip it for modern lifestyles. BELOW LEFT: Stools that tuck neatly underneath make the island as handy for eating as it is for prepping. The doorway on the left leads to the pantry, mudroom, and garage. OPPOSITE: The hood was inspired by the home's copper gutters and adds to a rustic mix of surfaces. The quilted-stainless-steel backsplash is a patterned version of today's sleek finish, while the fabric-and-chicken-wire door inserts are a country French twist.

The kitchen's large size enables it to absorb a wide-ranging mix of materials that might have overwhelmed a smaller space.



ROOM TO ROOM

The layout maximizes gathering space by placing the range and refrigerator in niches and leaving the kitchen open to the adjacent family room and eating area. Doorways at either end of the range wall connect to service areas.



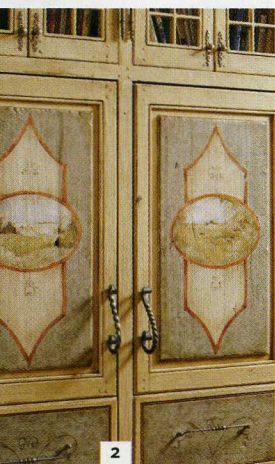


New Age

Attention to detail helps a new space mature quickly.



1
A vintage-style faucet balances the modern ease of the island prep sink.



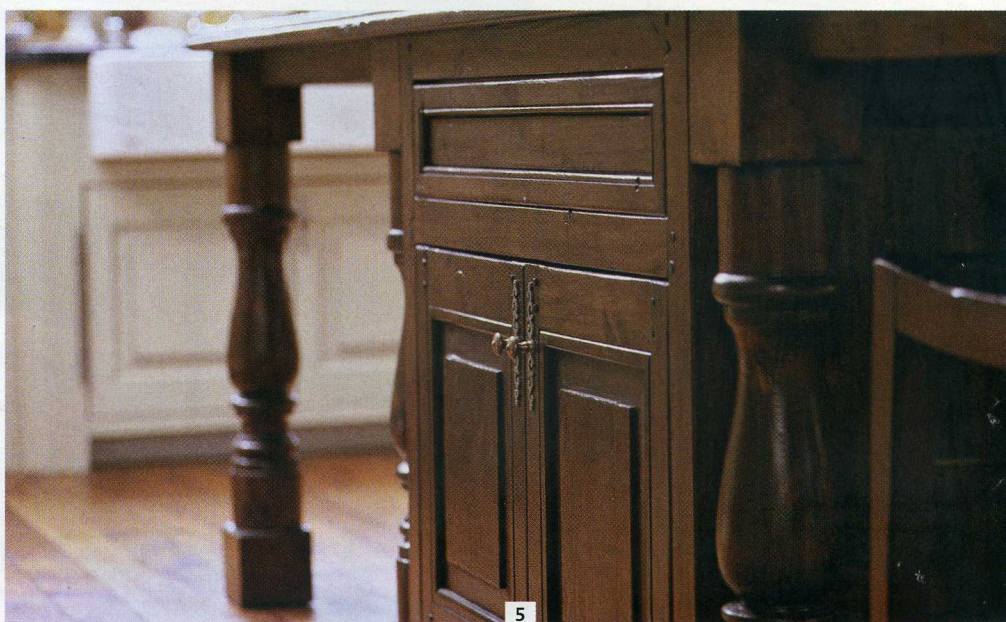
2
Artist Mary Case enhanced the antique look of the refrigerator door panels by painting rural scenes.



3
The scrollwork and distressed finish of the refrigerator handles convey age and permanence.



4
The eating area occupies its own alcove and feels like a renovated porch, as if it were added on or closed in years after the house was built. A lower ceiling also helps visually separate the eating area from the kitchen proper.



5
The island base wears chips and nicks made in the wood to simulate aging.



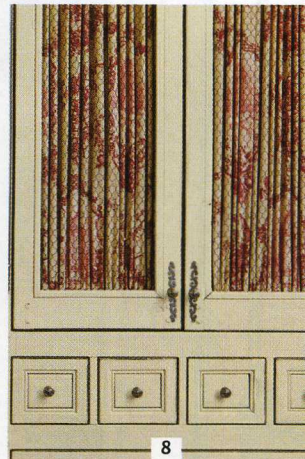
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6

A view across the island highlights the wide-ranging mix of surfaces that accounts for much of the room's character.

7

Bamboo chairs in the eating area add another layer to the materials palette and suit the space's outdoorsy feel.



8

8

The pairing of toile fabric and chicken wire in these cabinet doors epitomizes the two sides of country French style: prim and primitive.



9

9

The greenish gray of the painted perimeter cabinetry is part of a muted color scheme that suggests natural fading over time.



10

10

In the eating area, the kitchen's hickory floor gives way to rugged stone tiles. The change delineates boundaries and complements the eating area's proximity to the outdoors. **KBI**

