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*page 31*

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MEREDITH SPECIALS



Limestone walls bring rugged charm to this newly constructed kitchen. Framing the desert mountain view are an arched Dutch door leading to a loggia and a lovingly restored antique *bonnetiere*.



# *second* ACT

*Taking its style cues from the French countryside, a new Arizona kitchen is designed with an old one in mind.*

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THIS PHOTO: A large plaster hood caps the cooking area. The room is a mix of disparate materials, including terra-cotta tiles, weathered wood beams, a white-oak island countertop, and alder cabinetry.



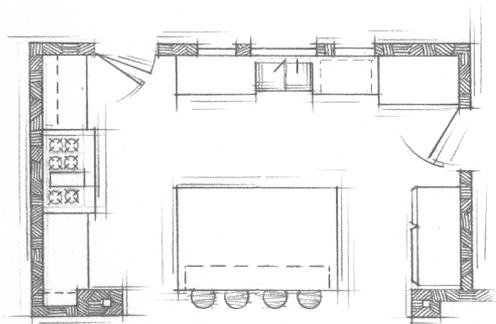
## AS A CUSTOM HOME BUILDER FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS,

Jerry Meek has helped many clients create their ideal kitchens. Usually, however, they want to start from scratch with a new space—not model it after one they were leaving behind. “I think this may have been a first for us,” says Meek, president of Desert Star Construction in Arizona. He explains that his clients loved their old home, which he and his team had also built. But with their children now older and on their own, they were ready to downsize to a more manageable space. Their previous house pulled its themes from 17th-century Europe and could have passed for an old villa in the South of France. “They wanted that same feel on a smaller scale,” Meek says, “so that defined the whole project, and it’s how we approached the kitchen.”

Indeed, says interior designer Karen Rapp, the new kitchen—like the home itself—is “just like something you’d find in Provence.” The walls, for example, are hand-chipped limestone, while the weathered wood beams spanning the 11-foot ceiling came from an aging house in Belgium. The flooring is antique terra-cotta ceiling tiles reclaimed from a home in France, and old-world details like an arched Dutch door make the room seem transported from another time. Carefully carved, dark-stained oak shelves sit on stone corbels next to a plaster hood. And in a corner stands an antique *bonnetiere* (an 18th-century French



## *the plan*



Wide walkways and easy access to outdoor living and dining spaces make this kitchen ideal for casual entertaining. The homeowners prioritized sunlight and views, choosing to forgo bulky upper cabinets along the sink wall in favor of a trio of large windows. A hardworking oak-topped island provides storage, prep space, and seating close to the cooking zone.

TOP: Jerusalem Gold limestone pavers were used for the countertops on either side of the range. Intricately carved oak shelves rest on limestone corbels. ABOVE: The island includes plenty of storage—and a white-oak countertop the homeowners took from their previous residence and had cut and finished to fit the new space. An armoire-style cabinet conceals the refrigerator.

“The kitchen is just like something you’d find in Provence.”

—KAREN RAPP, INTERIOR DESIGNER



### DESIGNER INSIGHTS: OLD-WORLD STYLE FOR TODAY

Interior designer Karen Rapp provides tips for incorporating period style in a modern kitchen.

- *Do your research:* A picture may be worth a thousand words, but it's better to actually visit the places that will serve as the inspiration for your aesthetic. "Dig into it and study it until you really get it," Rapp says.
- *Get creative:* Granite is a definitively modern kitchen surface, for example, but with the right finish (here, it's leathered and honed) it fits easily into an old-world-inspired design.
- *Strive for authenticity:* "Imagine how things were used back then," Rapp says. Cabinets, for example, will look great with a distressed finish, but perfection requires "the right dings in the right places!"

wardrobe)—a monument worthy of the desert mountain visible through the kitchen windows. "That piece is truly beautiful," says Rapp, who also worked with Meek on the clients' previous home. "When they bought it, it was in total disrepair, but a master craftsman we like to work with restored it and refinished it."

The space doesn't sacrifice function for beauty, however. That bonnetiere holds glassware and dishes, and the range, sink, and refrigerator form a perfect work triangle. Then there's the kitchen's substantial centerpiece: an island the homeowners brought with them from their previous home and had trimmed down to fit the smaller space. "It has a 2½-inch-thick butcher-block countertop," Meek says. "Like everything in there, it's meant to be used every day."

The kitchen was put to the test early on when the homeowners threw a party for everyone involved in the home's construction. "You could tell they were happy with how it turned out," Meek says. "It's just what they wanted—it feels like home."

*Resources begin on page 108.*

**ABOVE LEFT:** An arched nickel faucet contrasts with the straight lines of the leathered and honed granite sink and countertops. **ABOVE MIDDLE:** Custom-built and -stained alder drawers—complete with nicks and dings that suggest salvage from an old French estate—are held in a plaster framework. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Accessories like this antique vase lend the space its distinctive South of France feel.



THIS PHOTO: Wrought iron, resin-candle sconces (with faux-mouton shades) are mounted on the limestone walls on either side of the sink. The stone was chipped by hand for an authentic old-world look.