

Crowd Pleaser

A SPACIOUS KITCHEN AND GREAT ROOM ARE HOLIDAY HEADQUARTERS FOR A BUSY FAMILY OF FIVE

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER STRAUBE



Gooey frosting, sticky gumdrops, and rows of unadorned gingerbread houses signal the holidays at the Texas home of Bay and Paula Miltenberger. The couple's three sons, Bryce, 11, Bo, 6½, and Brady, 5—along with the boys' friends and their parents—cluster around large tables temporarily set up between the kitchen and great room for a gingerbread-house decorating party. The 14-foot-high Christmas tree (up since the

day after Thanksgiving) reigns in the great room, and Christmas music is barely audible over the excited chatter. "This is a great house for entertaining," Paula says.

With its beamed and barrel-arched ceiling, the kitchen opens to the 24x37-foot great room and an adjoining breakfast room. "Because the kitchen didn't have an outside wall, we wanted to open it up as much as possible and grab views and light from the other rooms," says architect Richard ►



Details

Distressed arched beams and trusses reflect the French country style of the house. Large-scale furnishings and blocky granite-topped cabinets provide needed visual weight to the rooms.

A two-level island allows for seating at one end, so guests and family members can chat with the cook. The raised island also shields the great room's views of dirty dishes.

A limestone fireplace and overmantel anchor the great room, with ceilings that soar to 25 feet. Designer John Phifer Marris brought in a mason to create the overmantel and carve more details into the existing fireplace surround.

Drummond Davis, who designed the house for a previous owner.

After the Miltenbergers purchased the home, they worked with Dallas designer John Phifer Marris to make it their own, warming the large spaces with rich color and texture. "The great room, kitchen, and breakfast room flow together, and these rooms are where the family lives," Marris says. Active living, too, with three young boys and a labradoodle who has the run of the house. "There is an elegance and grandness about the house, so the rooms are traditional but not stiff and formal," notes the designer. "Fabrics and finishes are all very child-friendly."

The neutral colors of the lightly glazed cabinets and cream granite countertops freed Marris to play with deep hues. "Paula is a pretty blonde, and she likes oranges and reds—colors that complement her coloring," he says, explaining that people often gravitate toward colors they wear.

The French country architecture of the house plus the size and scale of the rooms dictated color choices as well. "The great >

Kitchen and great room Rich colors in the great room are repeated in the kitchen rugs and on jars on top of the cabinets. **Breakfast room** Paula Miltenberger with (from left) Bryce, Brady, and Bo. **Preceding page** An opening above the main sink looks into the breakfast room.





room is a large space with those wonderful beams, so we needed to introduce warmth and comfort," Marrs explains. Orange-reds, golds, and muddled greens do the trick. "There also is a lot of pattern, which warms up the room," he adds. In keeping with the distressed beams, walls were painted and then glazed to create the look of old plaster.

To embellish the kitchen's focal-point range, a crest was painted on the hood. "We didn't have a family crest, so we used symbols that meant something to us to create our own," says Paula. One symbol depicts a castle in Miltenberg, Germany, the town to which the family traces its roots. ➤



Great room Two sofas in a durable mohair velvet face off in front of the fireplace.

Breakfast room The cozy settee has a striped Dogwood Fabrics back and a seat covered in an easy-care Kravet leather.

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KITCHENS

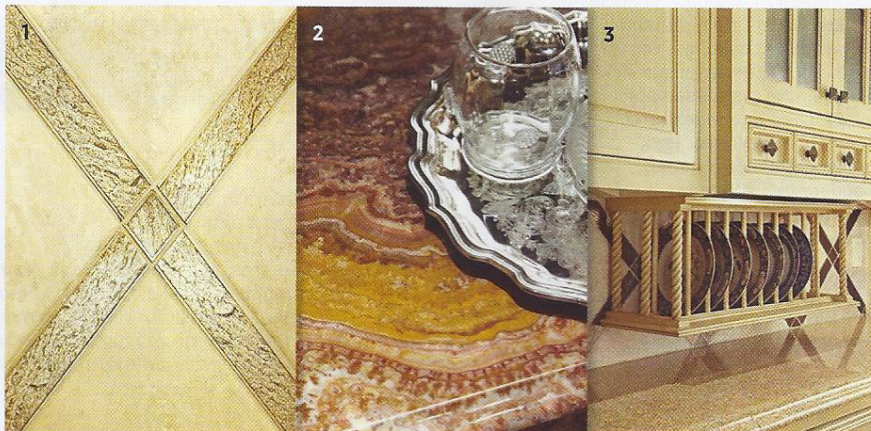


Details

1. Buttery colors on walls and cabinets create a golden glow. Cream backsplash tiles are accented with bronze-hued linear tiles that echo the color of the ceiling beams. The tile's metallic qualities add a hint of shimmer.

2. A richly patterned burnt-orange onyx was installed on countertops and the backsplash in a bar next to the kitchen. "The onyx is so beautiful and the pattern so active that it's almost like a piece of art," Marrs says.

3. Custom cabinets have furniture detailing, such as paneled doors, crown molding, bead trim, curved feet for base supports, and a plate rack with spiral-turned posts.



A crest was painted on the hood above the Wolf range. "We wanted something that would read well from the great room," says Marrs. Cream- and bronze-colored tiles create a striking lattice effect on the backsplash. "The materials in the kitchen are simple and timeless," the designer adds.

A bay window in the breakfast room called for a banquette, and Marrs designed a settee with a leather seat and fabric back. "The leather makes it easy to scoot across," he says. An oval table with a heavy base has the proper heft for the space. "The finish is distressed too," he notes, "so the more it gets banged up, the better it looks."

It gets plenty of use, says Paula. "It's a cozy place to have a family dinner." ■

Architect: Richard Drummond Davis

Interior designer: John Phifer Marrs

For more information, see sources on page 140