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Built on Tradition

BY DAVID M. BROWN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DINO TONN

This old-world kitchen celebrates the owners' passion for cooking, family, friends and tradition. "We wanted a warm, inviting, casual room," says the wife. "We wanted a room where I could be cooking and people could be around the island or in the hearth room and still be comfortable and still be together."

Designed by architect Lee Hutchison of Urban Design Associates, the adobe-inspired home uses heavy timber posts accented with hand-plastered, somewhat curvaceous walls. The kitchen ceiling is a barrel-vault design made of antique bricks, while the ceiling of the adjacent hearth room features layers of hand-shaved spruce beams framing terra-cotta tiles.

"Ceilings help define a space, open it up, and expand the experience of the owners and their guests," says Hutchison. "The ceiling treatments in this home are simply spectacular."

Below the kitchen's barrel-vault ceiling sits the centerpiece: a beautiful island and a revelation of the couple's lifestyle: welcome and frequent visits from extended family and friends. The Spanish Colonial-style island was painstakingly antiqued—from the alder cabinetry that was hand-rubbed with an oil-based, off-white paint to the mesquite butcher block, which features a European-style, hand-forged iron bracing.

The kitchen floor is reclaimed hickory that was harvested from a 100-year-old barn, then kiln dried to maintain characteristics such as its patina, knots, nail holes and saw marks. Interior designer Billi Springer of Springer & Associates, selected random widths and lengths of hickory to add to the sense of authenticity. Lastly, the flooring was hand scraped, sanded and sealed to maintain its natural beauty.

The wife's love for the old and organic directed the décor. "She wanted a very warm palette with authentic and

rustic materials, so we chose golden brown, antiqued creams, chocolate and terra-cotta tones for the surfaces," Springer says.

Fittingly, the apron-front farm sink is crafted of concrete and features a terra-cotta finish to match the warm tones of the saltillo and salt-glazed tiles

elsewhere in the kitchen. The countertop flanking the sink is French limestone, which went through an eight-step process to achieve the desired texture and aged appearance, as well as the proper sealing for a kitchen application. The limestone's creamy tones contrast beautifully with the terra-cotta sink and the room's dark woods. To add a colorful charm, Springer had a sink skirt fashioned from vintage fabric and ribbon trims. Above the kitchen window is a sturdy shelf on which the wife show-



cases some of her many collectibles. These and others throughout the home include fine pieces of Mexican, McCoy and Rockwood pottery and a tea set—all, of course, antiques.

Unlike anything else in the kitchen is the black-and-white tiled backsplash behind the cooktop. The tiles were imported from Tunisia and are between 100 and 200 years old.

"We looked at all the houses in the area before we built," the husband recalls. "And one of the reasons for this is that we didn't want our home, and our kitchen, to look like all the others."

"With the help of a great team, we've created a kitchen that's the focal point of our home—where our kids can feel comfortable, and their kids, and our friends, who all always seem to end up right here."

SOURCES: Billi Springer & Associates, interior design, (480) 994-4887; R-Net Custom Homes Inc., builder, (480) 419-9265; Urban Design Associates, architecture, (480) 905-1212, udaltd.com; cabinets, millwork and molding by Valley Woodworks, (480) 837-8503, valleywoodworks.com

