



To successfully create a space that is at the same time antique and modern, to do so with a most wonderful collaboration of professionals, and to provide the finest in modern day conveniences concealed in a historically derived Spanish environment: this was the task set before Debbie Baxter of Baxter Design Group.

By SHARLA BELL

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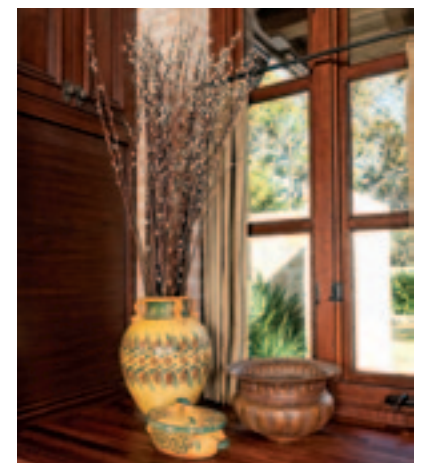


This San Antonio kitchen, designed by Baxter Design Group, takes its inspiration from the Extremadura region of Spain, “where weather is extreme and humans spend much of their time inside, sheltered from the elements.” Having lived and traveled in Spain for several years, Baxter had many concept photos, which helped her, the homeowners and Christi Palmer of Palmer Todd choose elements that brought authentic Spanish styling into the kitchen.

Given the strong architecture of the space, including reclaimed, repurposed wood in the flooring and ceiling, Baxter chose a pale plaster finish for the walls and island base in order to keep the space both lighter and balanced. With the homeowner, she also

selected important touches of painted tile in hues of blue and gold, adding them “sparingly, like in Central and Northern Spain, behind the stove and in the island base, helping to offset the many wood surfaces in the space.”

Upon entering, one does immediately notice the extraordinary variety of wood surfaces that come alive in this kitchen. From the truly custom finish of the cabinets to the gorgeous antique wall cabinet, the ruddy and warm tones invite and welcome. The stunning countertops are made of Iroko wood, a species from the Teak family that grows naturally in Africa and Asia and will darken with time and sun. Palmer Todd collaborated with Baxter, meticulously choosing the perfect countertops and cabinetry. “To





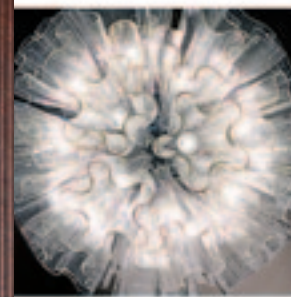
help the cabinetry wood appear as if it were old, we integrated rough planing to break the grain of the wood and added a custom sheen,” Palmer explains. But while the cabinets might look antique, they carefully disguise the modern kitchen technology, including Silentia hinges and Blumotion self-closing drawer guides. According to Baxter, Palmer was able “to duplicate the carvings and styles [of the Extremadura region of Spain] while still providing a workable, luxurious, modern cabinet and storage system.” Palmer adds, “The Spanish details can be seen in the custom, hand-tooled panels applied to the refrigerator which allow them to be completely concealed and appear to be a large furniture piece on the wall.” Palmer notes it is this careful integration of Old World and modern day function that makes the kitchen such a success.

It is the attention to detail that sets this kitchen apart. For example, the island countertop is a beautiful, terracotta-hued piece of limestone. It has a brushed antique finish and provides the perfect contrast to the wood, which sets the island apart as a dining area. The large antique wall cabinet, which Baxter had found for the homeowners in their previous home, is filled with a wonderful, vibrant ongoing collection of pottery and collectibles. Baxter says that this piece and its contents truly set the personality of the space. Because the ceilings are high with a darker wood, and the natural light is filtered due to the abundance of trees on the property, Baxter collaborated with a lighting designer, the electrician, and the architect, Roy Braswell, to develop a lighting plan that would allow the homeowners to cook and entertain in a well-lit, totally functional kitchen. They used carefully placed low voltage monopoints, Xenon under cabinet lights, LED’s on the tops of the upper cabinets, and custom-made iron pendant lights for both historical merit and ambient light. “Even the cabinet hardware, found in Argentina, is historically correct and massively important in the context — it reads like Elizabeth Locke jewelry on each door and drawer,” says Baxter. “It was a designer’s dream to find such a perfect line of product to provide the last critical detail to a near perfect space.”

Baxter and Palmer have much to be proud of in their collaboration. As Baxter explained, “It was a long time coming — my whole career — to achieve this space.” ♦

RESOURCES

- Baxter Design Group** Designer
210.828.4696 www.baxterdesigngroup.com
- Roy Braswell** Architect
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- Mauze Construction Corp.** Contractor
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