



Old-World Hospitality

A variety of materials gives this classic European design eclectic appeal.

BY ANN MATESI, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The massive center island that dominates the kitchen in this upscale model home north of Tampa is reminiscent of the traditional family table found in classic European kitchens of the past, says builder Jay Fechtel.

The inspiration for this elegantly appointed space's design came from

his time spent living in Italy. "I actually took the concept of the working table from the kitchen of the home that I had stayed in," the Tampa-based builder says.

Nancy Braamse, a certified kitchen and bath designer, worked closely with The Fechtel Company to mirror the house's "influenced by time"

A walk-in pantry to the right of the island is designed to resemble an antique armoire and has Gothic trim detailing on its cabinet doors.

theme. The materials and finishes used throughout the kitchen are intentionally mismatched, she says. "The home is actually fully of unique but comple-



With its dual sinks, built-in dishwasher, warming drawer and counter seating area, the kitchen island serves as the hub of activity in this custom-inspired space.

mentary accents.”

Those include old world-influenced design elements that range from Gothic to Moorish to Tuscan details, including textured wall finishes, distinctive doorway openings and chiseled-edge, wide-plank flooring.

The challenge was to give the space a charming, eclectic appeal without making it appear cluttered or distracting to the eye. To accomplish this, Braamse suggests builders:

- Select finishes for the cabinetry in the same color tone or family
- Vary the door styles slightly for different elements of the cabinets

so that they appear to be individual pieces of furniture

- Finish floors in a slightly darker or lighter color than the cabinets
- Use the color of the backsplash and countertops to tie the elements together

“The trend today is for the kitchen to have a large, multi-function island,” says interior designer Natalie Sorrentino, who worked with Fechtel to create a cohesive design theme for this project. “Kitchen islands not only provide necessary work and storage space,” she says, “but they also promote conversation between a cook and



The secondary staircase leads to the second-floor bedrooms and a large children’s playroom above the garage.



A Gothic arch accents the doorway that provides access to the home’s rear hallway and wine room.

his or her guests. This is where it all happens because this is the spot where people just naturally congregate.”

Although the kitchen is elegantly appointed enough to function as an



An arch between the family room and kitchen provides a visual link between these key entertaining areas while reinforcing each room's character and function. Corner windows in the family room create a cheerful spot for a casual dining nook.

Kitchen Contributes to Healthy Living

Although this home was the first of builder Jay Fechtel's projects to earn the American Lung Association's Health House certification, many of the program's design, material and construction requirements have been incorporated into his homes all along, he says.

"I really love the science, as well as the artistry, of building a home," Fechtel says. "I see a home as a functional sculpture that should provide a healthy living environment for its owners. People spend so much time in their homes today – even working there. I was intrigued by the Health House concept and, as I learned more about it, I discovered that much of the technology that we were already using also provided health benefits. We were probably doing about 80 percent of these things already."

That includes selecting materials and building products that are

less toxic and more environmentally friendly; using energy-efficient, sealed combustion appliances and high-efficiency air filtration systems and giving strict attention to controlling the humidity levels inside a house to inhibit mold growth.

"I believe that we have a cultural and social responsibility to conserve our resources where we can," Fechtel says. "It takes less energy and money, and is better for us to operate an efficiently-designed home. It also increases that home's better-perceived value to the buyer. This is a case of where the sum of the parts is actually greater than each one considered separately."

The kitchen features special venting to eliminate buildup of radon gas, plywood rather than particle board construction materials, reclaimed flooring, and water-based paints and urethane finishes.

extension of the home's entertaining space, it is not designed to be the focal point of the main floor, Fechtel says. "In fact, this home's floor plan is arranged so that the kitchen is not immediately visible as you enter the adjoining family room."

Fechtel used an archway to define the transition between the kitchen and family room without restricting the visual connection and traffic flow between the two spaces.

At its opposite end, the kitchen features a convenient connection to a rear hallway, which includes separate laundry, powder and mudrooms; a wine room; access to a four-car garage; and a second staircase to the home's second floor.

The home was sold after its completion in August 2005. **CB**

Contributing editor Ann Matesi is a graduate of Marquette University's College of Journalism and has more than 20 years of production and writing experience for the residential construction publishing industry.

SPEC-BUILT LUXURY MODEL HOME

Style of Home: Mediterranean Revival

Location: Odessa, Fla.

Total Square Footage: 6,144 square feet

Design-Build/Co-Developer/Land Planner: The Fechtel Company, Tampa, Fla.

Interior Design: Soco Interiors, Winter Park, Fla.

Major Products Used: APPLIANCES: Sub-Zero, ASKO, Wolf CUSTOM CABINETRY: Olde World Cabinetry, Largo, Fla. COUNTERTOPS: Granite DOORS: Long's Millwork (custom) PLUMBING FIXTURES: Franke, Kohler, Rohl WINDOWS: Hurd Windows and Doors, Town & Country

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