



OLD WORLD, NEW LOOK

A designer draws from European sources to create this comfy kitchen

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Designer Rob Stepp describes this kitchen's style as "Tuscany comes to The Greenbrier." It's apt for a space designed to handle casual entertaining in the forested heart of West Virginia. Long known as a historic resort, The Greenbrier is also home to a community of custom residences.

The kitchen that Stepp's Huntington, West Virginia-based firm, Creative Kitchens Incorporated, has created is perfect for family and neighborhood gatherings. Like the classic Italian country kitchens that inspired it, the look is characterized by the rich tones of the cherry cabinetry and the architectural motif

Ornamental but not ornate, the cabinets establish a quiet elegance in the room. An arch appears at the range hood and the window valance, a detail that softens the kitchen's hard angles.





ABOVE: Paneling the bottom-mount refrigerator allows the stainless range to brighten the intimate room.

ABOVE RIGHT: A drawer-style microwave not only conserves counter space, it is also safer and neater to use than swinging-door model ovens.

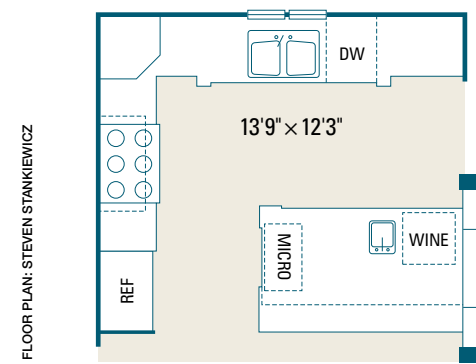


ABOVE: A hands-free convenience co-opted from the doctor's office, foot pedals control the flow of the faucet.

LEFT: Every important feature of this compact kitchen is intelligently placed, so that movement is efficient and storage is maximized.

of a keystone arch—"reminiscent of an Italian villa," the designer says. Those handsome arches are repeated throughout the space: topping the pass-through between the kitchen and gathering room, cresting the valance at the sink window, even on the paneling behind the bar. The cabinets' distressed finish—highlighting the natural joint cracks, worm holes and edge-wear of the wood—is in keeping with the

rustic character of the kitchen. Madura Gold granite counters bring additional warmth (and durability) to the picture. While this kitchen's appearance exudes old-world ambience, it is thoroughly modern in its conveniences. "The appliances and fixtures were planned with the belief that the cook should have all the luxuries of a master chef," Stepp says. Even though this home is designed for weekend and vacation use, the



A slew of contemporary conveniences are concealed behind the traditional styling and timeless materials of this classic kitchen.



designer adds, people who have top-notch kitchens at home do not want to sacrifice such comforts at their getaway spots. With an eye to that level of expectation, the dual-fuel range fitted with a griddle easily handles weekend morning pancakes, while its ample oven can hold a couple of crowd-pleasing roasts. For quicker, more casual snacking, there's an easy-access microwave drawer right at the end of the peninsula.

Wanting the space to feel homey, while still incorporating the latest technology, Stepp chose the refrigerator's configuration—bottom-mounted freezer drawers—with the

intent of giving it a farmhouse armoire look. Similarly, he sheathed the range's ultra-quiet blower behind a wooden hood that coordinates with the cabinetry. More functional features include a pot filler faucet at the range, a pedal-operated faucet at the main sink and a wine cooler and additional prep sink located in the peninsula/breakfast bar.

All of these amenities, in conjunction with an expertly planned work flow, make it very easy for the cook to enjoy mingling with guests while taking in the mountain stream views right outside the window. Best of all, for this experience there's no airfare to Italy required!

design points

ALL WITHIN REACH

No matter how chic or costly it may be, a kitchen's ultimate success turns on its convenience. The room must be sensibly sized (meaning suited for either one or multiple users), with an optimal balance of storage, work space and appliances that are more than eye-candy. This kitchen maximizes counter area and puts awkward angles to

good use with its appliance garage set on a 45-degree angle (below left). It makes the most of a limited work area while eliminating clutter. It may be permissible to install an electrical outlet inside the garage; check your local building code. Once solely found in restaurants, the pot-filler (below) has become a staple of home kitchens, cutting the round-trip trudge to the sink-and-back in half. ♦



Tall, solid walls are not a prerequisite for a successful kitchen. This room gains tremendous spatial flexibility from a pass-through on one side and a feature-packed peninsula on another.