

A new kitchen inspired by a French manor and a movie set affirms that variety is the spice of life.

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THIS PHOTO: Arches help create an old French-manor feel in Carolyn and Phil Feldsine's brand-new kitchen. This arched pass-through to the family room lets Carolyn be part of the action while she cooks and rewards her with panoramic views of Lake Washington. OPPOSITE: Baskets in the island store bakery goods and add to the French flavor.



Architect Mark Elster and interior designer Pamela Pearce worked to form a space that boasts a European air and a variety of surfaces and finishes. Distressed ceiling beams and wrought-iron chandeliers, designed by Pearce, leave manor-home profiles overhead.



DURING A BUILDING PROJECT, CLIENTS OFTEN SHOW MAGAZINE PAGES TO DESIGNERS AND architects. Rarely do the photos include a bloody corpse sprawled across a kitchen floor.

That's the cinematic image Carolyn Feldsine shared with interior designer Pamela Pearce and architect Mark Elster as Carolyn and her husband, Phil Feldsine, planned the kitchen of their new home in Mercer Island, Washington. Carolyn had in mind an island that was off the floor but wasn't a table. "We had trouble zeroing in on how it would work," she says. "Then I saw the movie *A Perfect Murder*, and the island in that kitchen had the perfect proportions. We got a still of the movie's island using the computer, and the picture I showed Mark and Pamela had a dead body in it. It was the best shot, angled over the dead guy and toward the lower part of the island, which was about 12–18 inches off the floor."

The 1998 movie—starring Michael Douglas, Gwyneth Paltrow, and the kitchen—also inspired Carolyn's cinematic vision of a grand and sophisticated room outfitted with furniturelike cabinets, architectural detail, and time-seasoned character. Although not as spacious as the film-version kitchen, Elster's design packs in all the amenities requested by the Feldsines.

He organized the space around a 5×9-foot island that acts as the room's focal point and hardworking hub. Three large, arched niches in separate walls house cabinetry and a work area; a refrigerator and a freezer; and a large range. The arching geometry repeats near the farmhouse sink, creating a pass-through between the kitchen and family room that allows Carolyn to take in the views of Lake Washington—framed by the family room windows—while she does the dishes. "The island was the conceptual center of the kitchen in more ways than one," Elster says. "Because the room has a corner notched out for the eating area, all the arched nooks are off-center, but the island is big enough to fool the eye into thinking that everything lines up."

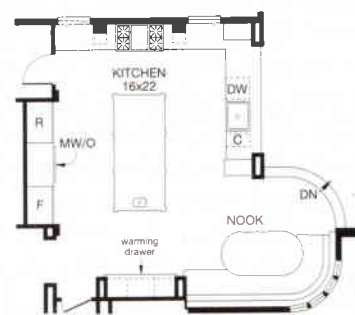
With the bones of the 16×22-foot kitchen in place, Carolyn, Pearce, and Elster layered in old-world appeal. Adverse to one-note decors—monotone or monochromatic—Carolyn and Phil love rooms that combine numerous finishes, hues, and surfaces. "The room is rich in detail," Elster notes, "which Carolyn was very interested in. Every direction you turn you see something different. Rope trim defines the panels on the island, there's chip-carving on the posts of the island and breakfast center, crackle-finished tiles, a mixture of hardware, metallic inset tiles. ... It has many layers to discover."

"I like to start with a beautiful space and then go back in and add interesting details," Carolyn says. "What we ended up with was a modern interpretation of an old French manor home."

More than just a classically handsome face, the kitchen works hard, too. It stands up to the comings and goings of the couple's children—Peter, Christopher, and Alyssa—a pair of Italian greyhounds, and the family's cats. "The kitchen had to handle the everyday knocks that our three kids and pets were going to give it," Carolyn adds. "It's set up so the kids can get their own

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—homeowner Carolyn Feldsine



stage direction

- The traditional work triangle gives way to distinct zones: food prep, cooking, serving, and cleanup.
- The refrigerator, freezer, warming drawer, island sink, and breakfast counter are out of the work core so that children can grab snacks and drinks without getting underfoot.
- With wall space limited, the island adds storage and a long counter.



One of three arched alcoves encloses the cherry-paneled refrigerator and freezer, plus the microwave and convection ovens, both in stainless steel. The rough plaster walls and a wainscoting with crackle-finish tiles provide time-textured backdrops for old-world details. Persian copper collectibles find a home atop the appliances.

breakfast, use the microwave, get a drink of water at the island. The floor, a tumbled travertine, hides dirt like you wouldn't believe—that floor is dead-on perfect." The kids can quench their thirst while staying out of the cook's way by using a purified-water dispenser at the island's vegetable sink. They can fetch their own breakfast at a counter between the eating area and dining room. A warming drawer there keeps pastries hot.

"It's beautiful, functional, and inviting," Carolyn says of the kitchen. "Everyone that walks in says it has a warm and welcoming feel. I love coming down in the morning and having views of the water. Phil really likes the French-manor feel—it's timeless. Even after 20 years, I don't think this kitchen will go out of style." **KBI**

Resources begin on page 130.

Written by Ann Wilson. Photographer: Jay Graham. Field editor: Linda Humphrey.

In the breakfast-making area, creamy brown glazes set apart upper cabinets. The countertop is covered in 18-inch travertine tiles, while the island top is a cut-to-fit travertine slab.



IN THE DETAILS

Unlike most movie magic, the special effects in this kitchen are so real that you can put your hands on them.

- 1 INVISIBLE DISHWASHER.** The cherry-paneled dishwasher drawers blend into the cabinetry scheme until needed, then pull out for efficient sink-side cleanup.
- 2 WATER AT HAND.** Carolyn Feldsine loves the copper sink and faucet for their form and their function. She uses them for cleaning salad makings, while the kids enjoy the convenience of a chilled water purifier at the same sink.
- 3 ISLAND ILLUSION.** The cabinetmakers carved diamond-shape starbursts on the island posts, emulating the patterns of Scandinavian chip carvings. Different types of cabinet hardware further the furniture illusion and enhance the room's mismatched, collected appeal.
- 4 3-D BACKSPLASH.** Two-inch metallic inset tiles boost interest on the range's backsplash, fashioned of crackle-finish 6x6-inch ceramic tiles set on the diagonal. Carolyn specified a pot-filler faucet for ease in making soup.