

form loves

Bonds of collecting inspire a couple to wed French country style and family function in their new kitchen.



function



OPPOSITE: Debbio and Greg Gambee turned a dark, confining kitchen into a bright, open space full of French country style. THIS PHOTO: The kitchen offers the couple many places to display their collectibles.



SOMETHING OLD AND SOMETHING BLUE INSPIRED the new kitchen in Debbie and Greg Gambie's 50-year-old home—antiques and delft pottery. The couple's goal was the marriage of old-world charm and new-world efficiency, plus space to show off the dishware, silver, and pewter they collect. "We just went from what we collected to a look that would accommodate it," Debbie says.

For an inviting space that could withstand heavy use by their three tween-to-teen children, the Gambies chose an airy French country look with sunny yellow walls, a matte-finish limestone floor, and polished-granite countertops. "The kids love the kitchen because it's cozy, bright, and functional," Debbie says. Their favorite after-school spot: the barstools across from the fireplace, with their homework strewn across the top of the island.

To make way for this blissful scene, the Gambies had to annul their dark, old kitchen. As part of a larger overhaul of their Portland, Oregon, home, they knocked out walls on either side of the fireplace to open the kitchen to the family room and converted a breezeway into a mudroom off the pantry area. "The flow between the kitchen and the rest of the house is more open," architect James Hagerman says. "It's more reflective of today's living."



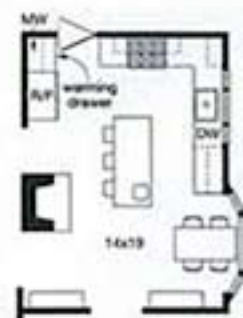
THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The range anchors a hearth area that features a mantel-like ledge. The range, refrigerator, microwave oven, and warming drawer cluster near a door to the dining room to shorten the serving route. The island base differs from the other cabinets, as if added later.



A sunny bay is perfect for casual dining. An old table found on eBay fits the rustic look, while toile curtains spread the French flavor.

Two hutchlike built-ins flank a doorway to the mudroom and garage. Unlike the perimeter cabinets, these units match the yellow of the walls, with blue accents creating a classic French country color scheme.





Removing walls that once flanked the fireplace opened the kitchen to the family room. An island anchors the layout with work space, seating, and a prep sink. Appliances are grouped near a door to the dining room.



IN THE DETAILS

Patterns give a new room character lines.

1 The Gambees took out wall sections on either side of an existing two-sided fireplace. The earthy brick works with the kitchen's new style. **2** The richly veined granite chosen for the countertops contains striking blue and purple streaks consistent with the French country look. **3** Why did the Gambees cross chicken wire with checked fabric? To get a distinctive door treatment for their two hutchlike built-in cabinets. **4** The doors of this display cabinet were outfitted with special wavy glass panels to replicate a vintage style. **5** Baskets weave another layer of texture into the kitchen fabric and provide good conditions for certain produce.



Debbie wanted that modern function, but in a space that looked as if it had evolved over time, not arrived direct from the factory. "I wanted a kitchen that had a used, rustic feeling to it," she says. Three elements—vintage-white cabinets, jasmine-yellow pantry units, and a country-pine island—served as starting points. The materials mix makes the kitchen both elegant and homey, kitchen designer Erin Davis says. Glossy granite contrasts with matte-finish limestone; the pine island warms more formal cabinets; and the work triangle teams a stainless-steel range with an old-fashioned porcelain apron sink and a refrigerator clad in cabinetry-matching panels and wrought-iron handles.

The beauty of the kitchen also extends to the details: a niche behind the stove, a backsplash of 3x6-inch subway tiles, cabinets with exposed hinges for a vintage cupboard

look, and semicustom cabinet bases topped with custom crown molding. Two hutches add country flair, thanks to chicken wire formed to fit inside the doors.

Like real-life marriages, this coupling of beauty and practicality is tested when relatives visit. At Thanksgiving, in keeping with an old Gambia tradition, more than 20 members of Greg's family gather here for dinner. Now, though, there are two new twists: a fresh look for the venue and a fresh face at the range—Greg. "Now he cooks once or twice a week," Debbie says. "He never did that before."

What would a wedding be without a surprise or two? **KMB**

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