

Beautiful KITCHENS & BATHS

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YOUR
KITCHEN**

**30
MOST
INNOVATIVE
PRODUCTS OF
THE YEAR**
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INKS & FAUCETS WORTH THE SPLURGE p. 10

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BHG SPECIALS

THIS PHOTO: The large island offers ample seating and prep space. "When we have parties, the entire group can mingle in the kitchen without feeling crowded," homeowner Melissa Bourgeois says. OPPOSITE: Handmade tiles from Rookwood Pottery create a backsplash reminiscent of a country tablecloth. The Cincinnati-based company has been making pottery since 1880.



*In feeling and in
function, a new
country-style kitchen
captures the spirit
of a beloved family
farmhouse.*



MEMORY LANE

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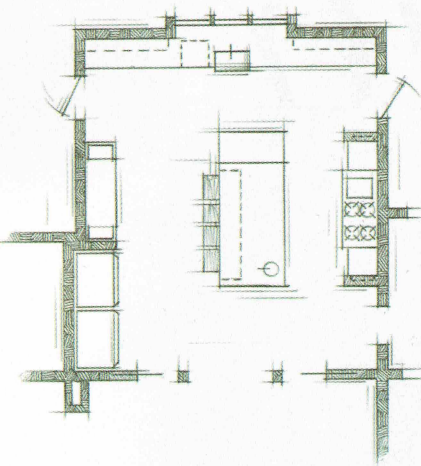
FORMELISSA BOURGEOIS, STEPPING OUT HER KITCHEN DOOR INTO HER YARD

is like stepping step back in time to summers at her grandmother's farmhouse in Kansas. It's not the lace curtains or the cheerful wallpaper—though she delights in those nostalgic accents—but rather the experience of coming and going with ease that fills her heart with joy. “When we were at the farmhouse, we would walk outside to get the eggs and come back in. Go out to the fruit trees in the backyard and come back in,” she says. “That connection to the outside is one of the things I really love about my kitchen.”

But that connection to childhood memories almost didn't happen. The kitchen started out in the center of the new house that Melissa and her husband, Mark, were building in a planned community in Tennessee. It soon became clear that a landlocked kitchen didn't suit Melissa's passion for preparing and preserving homegrown vegetables and herbs. So, in consultation with Melissa and Nashville kitchen designer Eric Ross, architect Scott Wilson swapped the locations of the kitchen and an adjacent breakfast room. The breakfast room shifted to the interior as a more formal dining room, and the kitchen moved to the back of the house, where it has three exterior walls. A Dutch door on one side leads to a covered porch, and one across from it leads to the raised beds where Melissa grows summer squash, okra, tomatoes, peppers, and a variety of herbs.

“By moving the kitchen, we were off to the races,” Ross says. He took the design from there, cozying up the large space

the plan



The new kitchen takes advantage of its near-the-exterior location with a comfy window seat, a sink window that overlooks the view, and matching Dutch doors—which lead to a small porch and gardens on one side and a covered porch with a grill and dining area on another. The AGA stove is nestled in an alcove alongside an opening to a drying room and pantry. The center island is large enough for a crowd, and a pass-through to the dining room—flanked by pocket doors—comes in handy for entertaining.





"It's an idealized version of country," designer Eric Ross says of Mark and Melissa Bourgeois' Tennessee kitchen, which combines nostalgic touches with refined elements such as hand-printed wallpaper and handmade tiles.



FAR LEFT: The farmhouse sink overlooks the backyard and common area beyond, which includes a walking path and a creek. The rubbed-bronze finish on the faucet is different from the cabinet pulls, but that's intentional. "I don't like all those finishes to match, because then it feels programmed," Ross says. **LEFT:** For the perimeter countertops, Uba Tuba granite with a leathery finish resembles soapstone without the maintenance. Arched brackets linking the upper and lower cabinets recall a homey freestanding hutch.

with a brick wall, a stone chimney, and flooring reclaimed from a tobacco barn. He tucked Melissa's AGA range into an alcove reminiscent of a hearth and expanded Mark's suggestion of a side window into a window seat painted apple green. That cheerful hue repeats in the patterned wallpaper that frames the window seat and in the geometric handmade tiles that line the stove alcove. "Melissa's key requirement was that it make her happy," Ross says of the kitchen. "So I became jubilant in my finishes and the way I expressed 'country.'"

The result works like a country kitchen, too. A cased opening beside the stove alcove leads to a drying room, where Melissa hangs fresh herbs and stores books. A small desk with a supply of note cards provides a quiet spot for penning a few lines to a friend. A steel door leads to a concrete-reinforced pantry that doubles as a storm shelter. "Best place to have a storm shelter is where the food is stored, right?" Melissa says. The space is outfitted with butcher-block counters, open shelves, and a custom rack for long-term produce storage built by one of Melissa's friends.

At the end of the island, a 30-inch-high, marble-topped cabinet is just the right height for Melissa, who is 5 feet 2 inches, and her 5-year-old granddaughter to roll out dough and cut cookies together. It's memory-making come full circle.

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DESIGNER INSIGHTS: LESSONS IN SCALE

In many new homes, large rooms and high ceilings rob interiors of intimacy. Here are some moves designer Eric Ross used to cozy up Mark and Melissa Bourgeois' lofty kitchen.

- **For fixtures, think big.** "Scale is very important," Ross says, particularly when it comes to lighting. The size is important visually as well as functionally—tiny fixtures high in the ceiling would not provide the kind of light needed to warm a room of this size.
- **Make some noise.** The varied textures of brick, stone, and wood in the Bourgeois' kitchen, along with the colors and patterns in the wallpaper, tile, and trim, create "visual noise" that advances into the room, making it feel interesting and intimate.
- **Scale down the walls.** High ceilings are dramatic, but tall walls can be intimidating. Ross used a band of molding to visually lower the kitchen's 10-foot walls to make the space feel cozy as well as spacious.
- **Create spaces within the space.** In this couple's kitchen, both the stove alcove and the window seat offer a comforting sense of enclosure. They downsize the kitchen in a practical way, too—the lower ceiling of the stove surround makes it easier for Melissa to reach the vent hood.



THIS PHOTO: A classic AGA range fills an arched alcove reminiscent of a fireplace. Handmade backsplash tiles showcase spring-fresh colors inspired by Melissa's gardens.