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Style Forward

TRAVEL BROADENS THE MIND—AND INSPIRES THE KITCHEN, AS A FRENCH-LOOK SPACE ATTESTS.

MINNESOTA BUILDER RICK HENDEL AND HIS WIFE, AMY, WANTED A SPACIOUS KITCHEN outfitted with all the latest culinary accoutrements, but they didn't want it to feel overtly modern. Looking for inspiration, they traveled, discovering their muse in France. "One thing about French design is that it's a timeless look," Rick says. "It's always been in style, and it will remain in style. It's not a look that's going to become out-of-date in five years."

Using a classic French template, the couple filled in the details, such as crown molding that tops cabinets Rick designed, for a fitted look. "The cabinets almost appear to be furniture that's been painted white," Rick says. "Also, because the cabinets go right up to the ceiling, they draw your eye up."

The eye is also drawn to carrara marble counters around the main sink and cooktop. The same stone—in tile form—covers the backsplash. "We used a light gray grout to match the gray vein in the carrara," Amy says.

An arch motif is one of the old-world design elements that Rick and Amy Hendel adopted for their new kitchen after visiting France. Modern dishwasher drawers blend into the look.



WITH TWO ISLANDS ALIGNED, COOKS AND HELPERS CAN DO PREP WORK AT ONE WHILE GUESTS GATHER AT THE OTHER. ALL CAN ENJOY THE SPACE—AND EACH OTHER’S COMPANY.



The grout is a subtle touch, like the arches that set off the main sink, the cooktop backsplash, and a pass-through to the living room. Such attention to detail extends to the windows in the eating area, where a special knife was designed specifically to create the right casing. “These details are what makes the whole kitchen come together,” Amy says. “That gives it that wow factor.”

The wow factor also applies to the two custom islands. The island closer to the living room and eating area features a cabinetry-matching base and a black granite top that is curved on one end to accommodate stools.

The other island, near the cooking zone, boasts a prep sink set into a checkerboard top made of walnut and maple, plus open storage below. “We debated whether to have one or two islands,” Amy says, “but having two islands is wonderful. It gives you one space for working and another one for entertaining.”

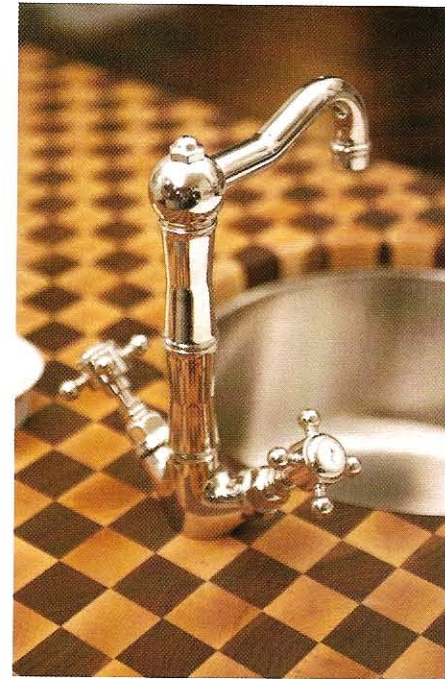
There’s more walnut on the floor, which is stained dark for old-world ambience. “Once it was installed, we burned all the edges of the floor to give it that reclaimed look,” Rick says.

The kitchen’s made-in-France feel inspires Rick and Amy to do more of what the French are famous for: cooking. The couple’s young daughter, Ava, likes to help prepare the family’s favorite dishes, such as chicken piccata and beef Stroganoff. “We really cook all the time now, which we did not do before,” Rick says. “Another big difference is we eat together as a family quite a bit more.” **KBI**

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ABOVE LEFT: The kitchen features two islands, each lit by an oversize, antique-look pendant. One island, with a cabinetry-matching base and curved black-granite top, is closer to the living room and used mainly for entertaining. The granite was honed to create more of a soapstone look, while the curved end allows knee room for people seated at the stools.

LEFT: The cooktop is built into a custom cabinetry base and flanked by carrara marble landing areas. A subway-tile backsplash surrounds an arched niche that provides convenient storage for spices and cooking oils. The arch reinforces the old-world theme.



OPENINGS TO ADJACENT SPACES, INCLUDING THE LIVING ROOM, A HEARTH AREA, AND AN EATING NOOK, SMOOTHLY BLEND MODERN FEATURES AND OLD-WORLD STYLE INTO THE REST OF THE HOME.



INTEGRATED ISLANDS

A two-island layout connects the working kitchen to an adjacent hearth area and eating nook, while a pass-through provides an opening to the living room. The smaller island is the cook's realm, while the larger one is a natural gathering spot for guests.



ABOVE LEFT: An arched pass-through to the living room often functions as a third island; its marble countertop is convenient for serving guests. Amy likes to place desserts there. The see-through cabinets above display pieces of her creamware collection. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A walnut-and-maple checkerboard top—created by gluing together 2x2-inch pieces of the woods—energizes the cooking island, where a polished-nickel faucet serves a prep sink. **LEFT:** The eating area, full of light and views, has the ambience of a French sidewalk café. An oversize lantern sets the mood at night.