

Better Homes and Gardens® Special Interest Publications®

COUNTRY KITCHEN

IDEAS

Spring/Summer 1998

Display until August 4

pretty
and practical
kitchen accessories

selecting the right
computer for
your kitchen

country *from*
coast to coast

Tour 10 of the best kitchens
America has to offer

Affordable collectibles • Designing with tile

U.S. \$4.50





Even with a generous expanse of glass, the climate in this California kitchen was cold and cloudy. Here's how smart remodeling changed the forecast to ...

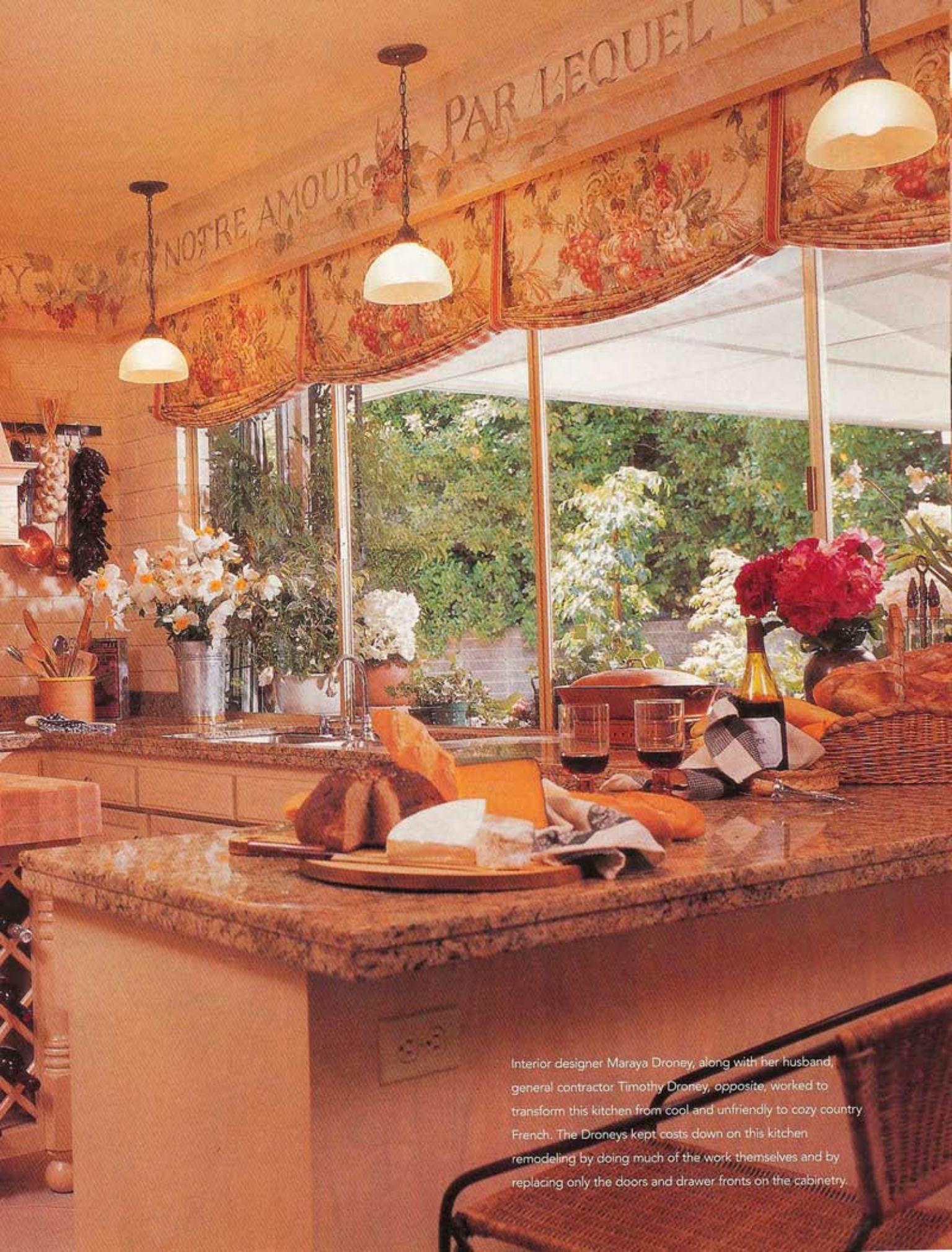
a sunny day in provence

You wouldn't expect to experience much of a cold front in Ventura, California, but that's what greeted anyone entering the kitchen in this 1960s ranch.

White-stained cabinets were yellow with age, as were the old Formica countertops and linoleum floors. Surprisingly, a series of unadorned countertop-to-ceiling windows along the sink did little to brighten the space. "It was bringing in cold, dim northern light," interior designer Maraya Droney recalls. "A patio covering made it even darker." Exposed concrete-block walls, painted stark white, only added to the chilly atmosphere.

"The doors and drawer fronts on the cabinets really dated the kitchen," continues Droney, who with her





Interior designer Maraya Droney, along with her husband, general contractor Timothy Droney, opposite, worked to transform this kitchen from cool and unfriendly to cozy country French. The Droneys kept costs down on this kitchen remodeling by doing much of the work themselves and by replacing only the doors and drawer fronts on the cabinetry.



with timeless, traditional styling. To help blur the transitions between the old and new elements, existing cabinet face frames were stripped to bare wood, and all surfaces were finished with faux-wood graining.

Complementing the cabinet color, the white concrete walls received a warmer coat of putty-color paint.

To bring in more country French flavor, Droney designed a large exhaust hood above the cooktop fashioned from tongue-and-groove boards and crown molding.

Granite, in a warm, earthy tone, forms the luxurious countertop surface as well as backsplashes with diamond-shape marble insets for added interest.

On the floor, glazed Italian pavers offer the look of limestone, but at a much lower cost. "I used 16-by-16-inch tiles to make the space look larger and more custom," Droney says.

To soften the look of the big windows, Droney added a fabric valance.

"Some designers wanted to put in mullions to make the

Bunches of dried herbs add more country French character to this new exhaust hood above.

Raspberry and copper colors from the window fabric are repeated in the decorative painting on the soffit right. Marble insets give more style to the granite backsplashes. Faux-granite paint helps switchplate covers blend in.

a sunny day in provence

husband, general contractor Timothy Droney, accepted the challenge to give the kitchen a more welcoming attitude. "The house was already a French design," she says. "I wanted to update and emphasize that look and make the kitchen a lot warmer."

To begin, Droney improved function by adding an island that features wine storage in one end and glass-front storage bins in the opposite end. A hefty hard-maple butcher-block top and newel posts at each corner give the island a period furniture appearance. "The island helps make it a more defined work space," Droney explains. "Plus, you have more places to work, so when you have company, people can congregate and help out."

Next, outdated doors and drawer fronts on existing cabinets were traded for ones



Rather than break up the view right with mullions, Droney depended on fabric in warm colors and a vintage print to add a warm French look. An extra strip of granite added to the bottom edge of the countertop creates the illusion of a double-thick slab.

windows more French," Droney says, "but I liked the unobscured view and decided to rely on light but warm fabric colors."

Pendent light fixtures line up across the front of the windows to further brighten the area.

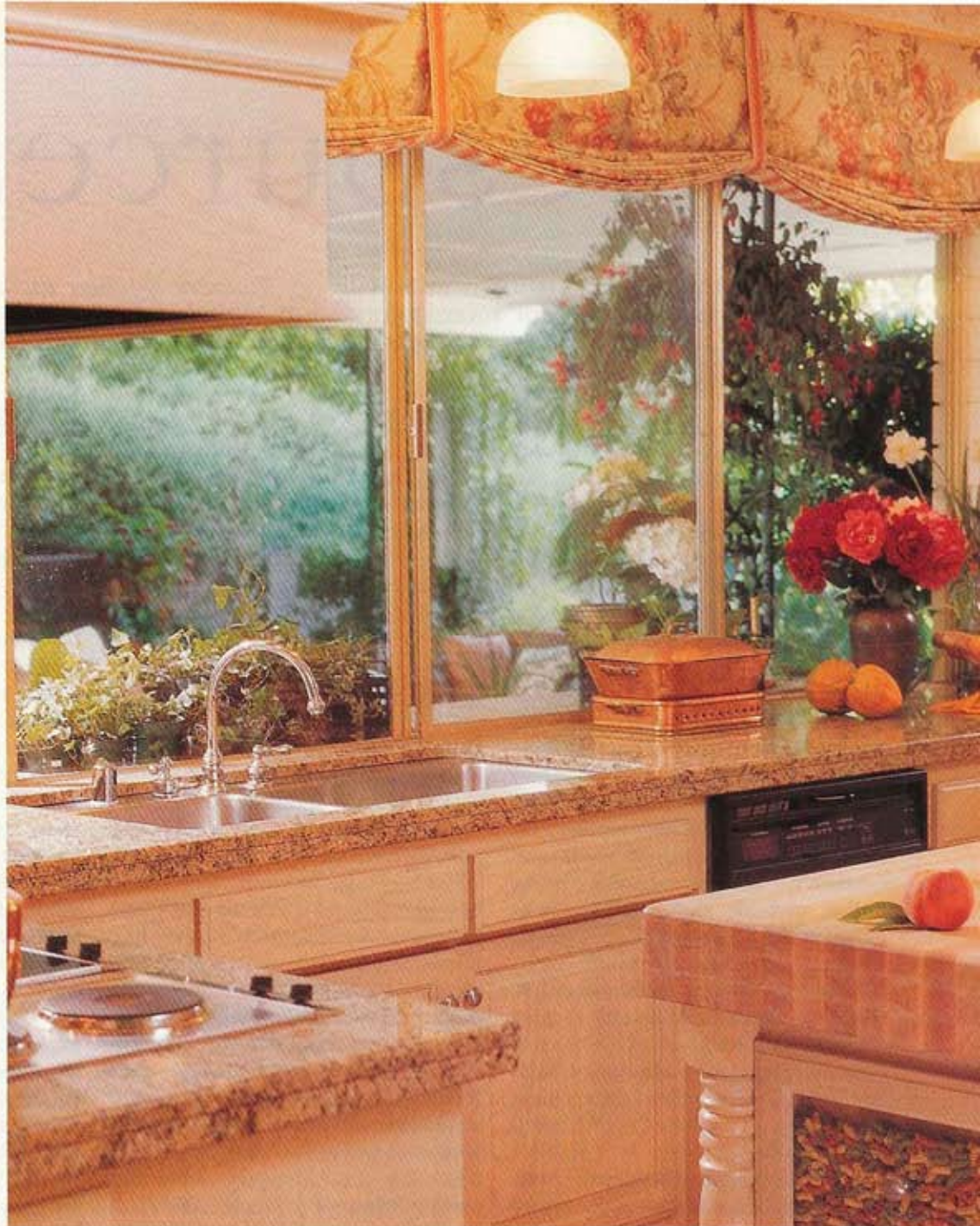
Above the windows, the soffit once extended 2 feet into the room, but was reduced to 6 inches deep. For a softer look, hand-painted designs and a sentimental French poem were added. Translated, it reads:

*From the seed, the flower
From the flower, beauty
From beauty, the heart
And from the heart
comes love,
From which we begin
And never, never cease.*

Now the kitchen is truly warm and inviting, just as Droney had imagined it could be. "I could definitely live with this kitchen," she says. □

For purchasing and design information, see Resources beginning on page 104.

Photographer: Tommy Miyasaki/
deGennaro Associates. Designer:
Maraya Droney. Location: Ventura
County Symphony League Design
House. Field editor: Joan Dektar.



how this kitchen works

- Adding an island defines the kitchen work core, adds wine and bin storage, and provides another landing spot for items taken from the refrigerator.
- A second sink outside the work core offers a workstation for anyone helping the cook.
- When the homeowners are entertaining, the second sink and adjoining countertop serve as a beverage center, keeping guests out of the cook's way.
- Granite countertops look luxurious while providing a durable, long-lasting surface.
- On the floor, Italian pavers stand up to wear and tear while offering the expensive look of limestone for much less.

