

# Cook's Comfort

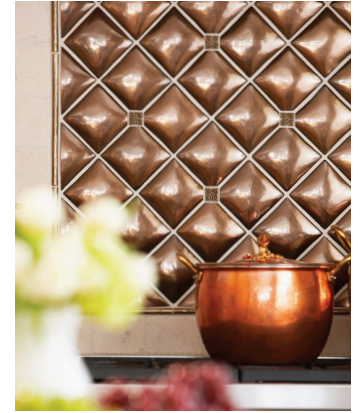
Easy-access storage and raised counters make this kitchen both elegant and accommodating.

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**This Photo:** To make the room inviting, interior designer João Stefanon balanced the ornate cabinetry with more casual, earthy elements that mirror nature. Denim-blue wallpaper with a floral design reflects the landscape outside and complements the embellishments above the range.  
**Opposite:** Stefanon chose warm-tone marble for the island top because it looks like wood.





**B**ack problems meant one of interior designer João Stefanon's clients could no longer function in her home, so she and her husband had to move. But the couple didn't leave everything behind.

"Their previous home was built in the 1980s, and the clients loved it so much that they used its floor plan as a model to create their new home," Stefanon says. The challenge in the kitchen, measuring just 255 square feet, was to create the sophisticated look the couple wanted while incorporating as much easily accessible storage as possible.

Stefanon tackled the practical side of the job first. To ease back strain for the wife, who loves to cook, Stefanon raised the countertops from the standard 36 inches to a more comfortable 38 inches and located dishwasher drawers on either side of the island sink while instead of stacking them. This minimizes bending and stretching.

Function also dictated the selection and placement of drawers. Stefanon avoided lazy Susan shelves next to the range, opting instead for two extra-deep drawers atop one another to keep pots and pans within easy reach.

State-of-the-art appliances form a three-zone layout so multiple people can work simultaneously. Two refrigerators sit across from each other at one end of the kitchen, one near the pantry. The range is adjacent to the sink so moving pots back and forth is quick. Cleanup can be relegated to the

**Left:** Although this kitchen has elaborate details, such as thick moldings, carvings, and corbels, the color, texture, and materials keep the feel light and airy.

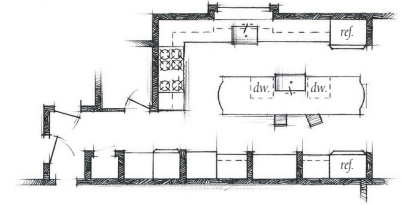
**Above:** Pillowed metallic tiles create a three-dimensional effect above the range, drawing the eye upward. The simple quiltlike pattern on the backsplash infuses the kitchen with toned-down elegance that complements the ornate embellishments.





**DESIGNER PICKS**  
**Backsplash tile:** Ann Sacks; 800/278-8453; [annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com)  
**Countertops:** Olympia Marble & Granite; 781/455-0199; [olympiamarble.com](http://olympiamarble.com)  
**Sinks:** Stone Forest; 888/682-2987; [stoneforest.com](http://stoneforest.com)  
**Faucets:** Grohe America; 800/201-3407; [groheamerica.com](http://groheamerica.com)  
**Wallcovering:** Jane Churchill through Cowtan & Tout; 212/647-6900; [cowtan.com](http://cowtan.com)

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island where, along with the pair of dishwasher drawers, there's a second sink.

Stefanon next focused on design. The look for the entire home was classic Renaissance with a touch of country French, so the designer selected ornately detailed, distressed cabinetry to complement the aesthetic. The buttery hue on wood elements combines with a few glass fronts to mitigate the detailing and oversize scale, keeping the look light, airy, and fresh.

Ornate carving on the two stone apron-front sinks adds an unexpected twist on the classic farmhouse style, while distressed wood flooring and bronze accents reinforce the rustic elements of the design. "Textural details add interest and move the eye through the space," Stefanon says.

Balancing all this texture is the smooth expanse of the island. "The marble countertop grounds the room," Stefanon says. "Its color and grain mimic a wood counter. Laying the slab with its grain across the width of the room creates the sense of a wider space and keeps the kitchen from looking too long, like a bowling alley." The curves and double-ogee edge add architectural interest, while the subtle shine reflects the formal crystal pendant lights overhead.

Putting comfort on par with style, Stefanon was able to create a true cook's kitchen—one that works hard without looking as though it breaks a sweat. "We had to go through the plans with a fine-tooth comb to make sure the details all worked together functionally," he says. "We really wanted it to feel like a comfortable but upscale kitchen."

**Opposite:** Abundant natural light flows from the oversize window looking out on a beautifully landscaped side yard. A loose-weave linen Roman shade adds a soft touch, and its denim-blue ties echo the color of the wallpaper.

**Above Left:** Fluted columns flanking the arched pantry pull out to reveal top-to-bottom storage. Pantry pulls shaped like twigs add whimsical contrast to the formal hardware elsewhere in the room. Carved corbels frame an almost-sculptural antique stool.

**Left:** The homeowners loved the plate rack in their previous house, so one was factored into their new kitchen.

