

Through dusty tones and encaustic tile, two designers ensure a couple remember the vibrancy of their Spanish honeymoon every time they enter their kitchen.

WARM *front*

WRITER Sarah Halverson
PHOTOS Stacy Zarin Goldberg

With no room for a breakfast nook, kitchen designer Tanya Smith-Shiflett made sure the island was large enough for the whole family to gather. Painted in Farrow & Ball Downpipe, the island adds depth alongside the cream-color walls and cabinetry.



THIS PHOTO: The terra-cotta backsplash tile lent its jaunty color scheme to the rest of the kitchen. Brass-finish faucets and brass cabinet pulls add more warm tones, while the easy-to-open awning window welcomes fresh air and sunlight.



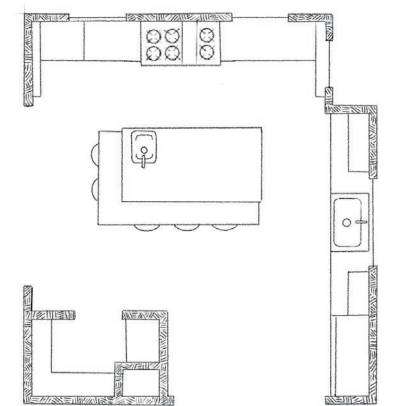
TOP: Though the kitchen boasts plenty of traditional features, one modern amenity that stands out is the 42-inch stainless-steel Thermador range, the mark of a serious cook. **ABOVE:** Just like the vent hood's trim and ceiling's beams, the pantry's barn door is derived from reclaimed wood.

THE TERRA-COTTA TILES THAT BLANKET TWO WALLS OF THIS VIRGINIA KITCHEN

made every other design choice fall into place. "That's where we started, with that terra-cotta backsplash," says Unique Kitchens & Baths designer Tanya Smith-Shiflett, who worked with interior designer Maurie Minichiello to create a novel kitchen that stayed in conversation with the whole house's renovation.

Elsewhere in the home, Windsor chairs, oatmeal-color fabrics, and natural-wood finishes foreshadow the rustic warmth of the kitchen, where the tiles—with burnt orange and light blue motifs—paved the way for creamy white cabinets, a dark blue island, and a hefty sprinkling of aged character. Wood beams, salvaged from an old farm, stretch across the ceiling and wrap around the base of the ventilation hood. For balance, Smith-Shiflett topped countertops with honed Bianco Carrara marble, an opulent detail reminiscent of a rural European manor. Equally elegant yet historic are the space's aged-brass sconces, faucets, and cabinet pulls.

The revised kitchen layout also embodies the airy floor plans of old-world kitchens. Despite the size of the furniturelike island, the homeowners can effortlessly maneuver around the space thanks to wide pathways and function-focused zones. The cooking area is separated from the cleanup zone, allowing family members to simultaneously



the plan

The designers created a hardworking island with ample seating. One side boasts a sink and a food prep work space, while an overhang on two sides can seat the whole crew. Doors and drawers, including touch-latch cabinets by the stools, keep kitchen necessities hidden but within reach.

occupy the space with enough elbow room. The island sink is near the range for easy meal prep, while the refrigerator, trash can, dishwasher, and a second sink are positioned several steps away on another wall. “If you’re cooking and the kids grab a drink from the fridge, they’re not in a traffic zone,” Smith-Shiflett says. “The family can easily be in different areas of the kitchen.”

Whether enjoying their morning coffee or preparing meals, the homeowners appreciate the finely tuned details of their new space. They can open the windows, let in a fresh breeze, and feel worlds away—perhaps as far as Spain, their honeymoon destination and inspiration for the home’s remodel.

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DESIGNER INSIGHTS: SCENE-STEALING TILE

The star of this kitchen is easy to spot, and it’s not just because it’s so striking. Here’s how designer Tanya Smith-Shiflett eliminated visual competition.

- **Complement with darker shades.** Smith-Shiflett painted the kitchen island navy to highlight the tile’s light blue details. “Many are afraid dark color will make the kitchen look smaller, but it’s actually the opposite,” the designer says. “The color adds depth and makes a kitchen look larger.”
- **Layer in wood accents.** The tile’s burnt orange design is amplified by wood tones as small as cutting boards and as big as the pantry door.
- **Leave room for white spaces.** The white of the vent hood and cabinetry flanking the range allows for the tile to really pop, Smith-Shiflett says.



ABOVE: The divided-light windows aren’t just bright and pretty—they also open for fresh air. OPPOSITE: To the left of the perimeter sink is a pullout trash can and to the right is the dishwasher, both concealed by cabinetry panels. The kids can toss scraps, rinse dishes, and load the dishwasher at the end of each meal, all within a couple of steps. Small brass sconces over each window are a traditional-style alternative to recessed fixtures.

