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MARY ANN KLESCHICK



Rowhouse kitchen welcomes friends with casual French Country charm

BY SAMANTHA MELAMED ■ PHOTOS BY DAVE GEHOSKY

Interior designer Mary Ann Kleschick, ASID, returned from a trip to Provence with plates, bowls, mugs and a vision for her Philadelphia rowhome. Though her 18th century Center City house is built in the Federal style, within its walls she created a French Country oasis, inspired by the country inns she stayed in during her travels in the South of France.

"In Provence, things don't match. Crockery is cracked and chipped," Kleschick says. "It's really homey. It's an environment with a thick patina. It's not dirty, but it's well loved. And that's how I wanted this space to be."

This aesthetic suited her lifestyle, especially in the kitchen. "I don't really cook, so the whole goal was to make a nice, comfort-

able kitchen where my friends would want to come over and cook," she explains. "I never entertain formally; it's always casual."

The kitchen she began with was far from the warm, Continental room she had in mind. She consulted Philadelphia Feng Shui expert Nick Johnson before launching the six-month renovation project. In the end, Feng Shui ideals and her own design sense were in agreement that the black linoleum flooring, the narrow doorway and the 18-inch drop into the galley kitchen needed correction. And the pipes, ducts and vents that were usurping precious cabinet space needed to hide somewhere else.

Kleschick devised an elegant solution to both problems. She put all the pipes below the flooring — a down-draft range by Jenn-

Air suited the purpose — and used original wood floorboards from a third floor bedroom to cover the pipes and bring the kitchen floor up flush with the rest of the house. After adding structural supports, she was able to widen the doorway and extend the kitchen with an island that added counter and storage space. The kitchen sink was moved from the back wall to the new island. Dinner guests may gather 'round the island and sit comfortably on chunky dark-wood Guy Chaddock barstools upholstered in plush cut velvet.

Among the daring flourishes in the kitchen décor is Stroeheim and Romann wallcovering in a yellow-flecked crimson. The wallpaper extends to cover the ceiling — a trick to make the cozy space seem larger, Kleschick explains. But its main purpose is to unite rich red walls with canary-colored cabinets: "It's joinery. It helps to tie all the pieces together."

Carefully placed lighting keeps these hues from overwhelming the space. Kleschick installed a large window with a view of her ivy-encrusted garden walls. High hats act as spotlights, while halogen beneath the cabinets contrasts the yellow paint with clean, white work light. Glass-fronted cabinets and a shimmering Kashmir Gold granite countertop reflect the room's warm glow.

The true centerpiece is above the stove, where a decorative backsplash of hand-painted tile draws attention. "You always need a focal point," Kleschick says. "That's often forgotten in the kitchen. Kitchens

Opposite: The kitchen's focal point is a decorative backsplash of hand-painted tile above the stove.

Below: Among the daring flourishes in this kitchen's décor is wallcovering in yellow-flecked crimson.

