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KITCHEN

AND BATH IDEAS

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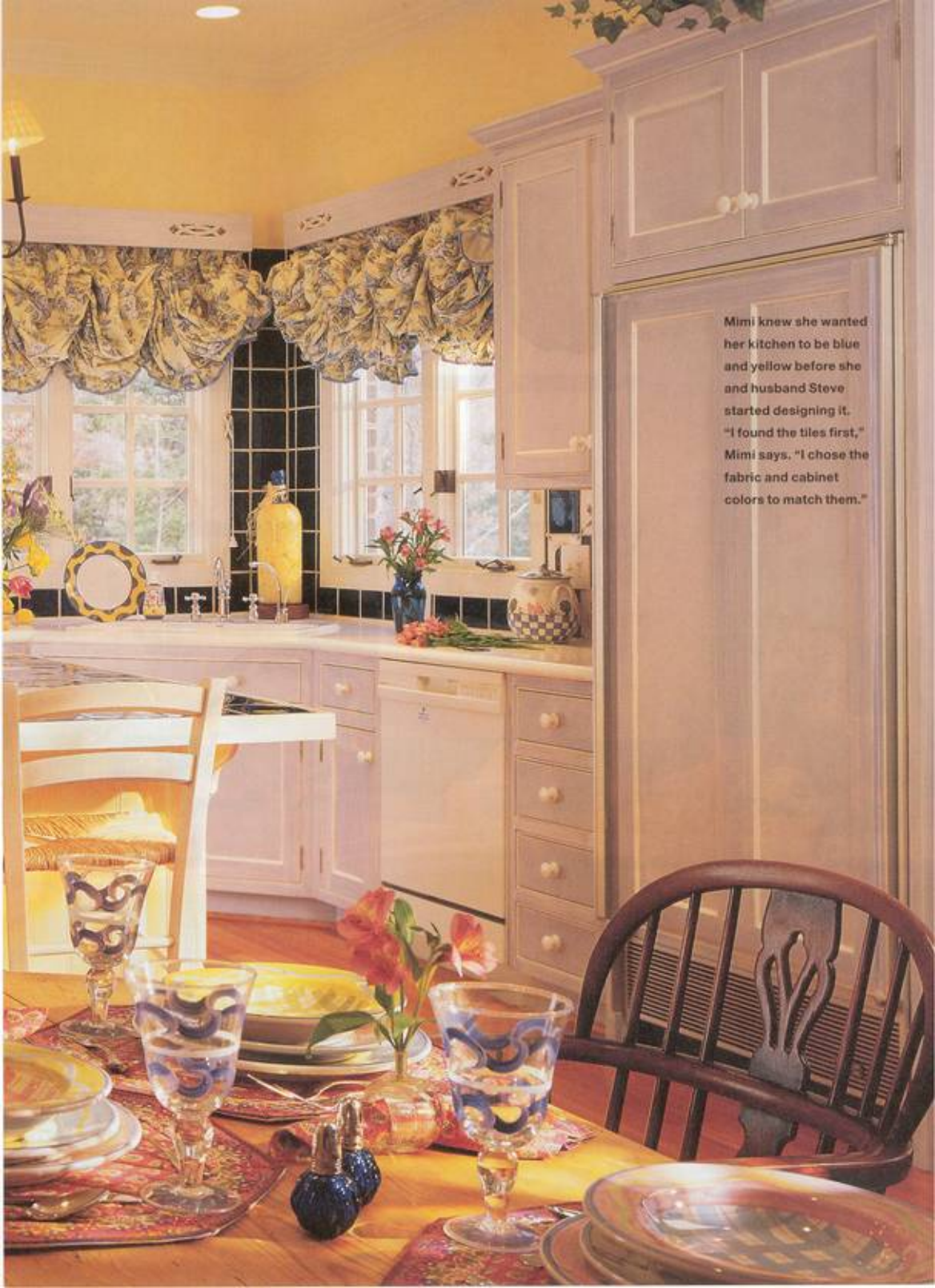




Mimi Kirstein had definite ideas about what she wanted for her new kitchen, and she wouldn't give an inch. "I wanted it to be hardworking and easy to care for," she says. And ...

“as pretty as a picture.”





Mimi knew she wanted her kitchen to be blue and yellow before she and husband Steve started designing it. "I found the tiles first," Mimi says. "I chose the fabric and cabinet colors to match them."





After ordering this colorful tile (left), Mimi worried about it for a month. "I kept thinking I ordered too colorful of tile. I should have gone with something neutral," she says. "But when it all came together, I was happy I took the risk. It adds such life to the room."

As president of BOWA Builders' Maryland and Washington, D.C., division, Steve Kirstein has worked with hundreds of clients. But one kitchen project stands out from the rest.

"I designed this kitchen for one of the most demanding clients I've ever worked with," Steve says with a smile. That client is his wife, Mimi.

"I was pretty inflexible," Mimi says, laughing, "but I ended up with nearly everything I wanted. I never listened when they [Steve and his building crew] said I couldn't have what I wanted. I just waited for them to figure out how to make it work."

Mimi collected pictures of 25 kitchens from various magazines

Steve dislikes clip-in window muntins and points out that these kitchen windows left feature true divided lights. "Details like this and the special molding treatments and trimwork make a kitchen unique and special," Steve says.



and showed the ideas and elements she wanted to duplicate to Steve and the BOWA cabinet designers. "I love that hand-painted custom look of British-made cabinets," Mimi says. "But I knew we couldn't afford to put them in this kitchen."

Instead, she had BOWA cabinetmakers build similar-looking cabinets for her new kitchen, adding custom storage features to meet the needs of this family of five.

"Mimi had a very specific list of 'must-haves,'" Steve says. "Her

"Steve kept saying that with this high quality of a kitchen, we might want to use granite on the countertops," Mimi recalls. "But I said no. We wouldn't be able to use this colorful tile along with a patterned granite. It's the tile that really makes a statement in this kitchen."





Apothecary drawers, left, were a priority item for Mimi. "You see these in old English kitchens," she says. "I wanted to replicate that look." To avoid sacrificing interior drawer space, cabinetmakers put plexiglass dividers into the drawers to seal in the grain.

A custom doweling system gave Mimi the plate racks she wanted below. The cabinets have beaded-board interiors.

list included everything from professional appliances to apothecary drawers and an appliance garage. While she focused on all the details, I worked on the total concept to ensure everything would work together smoothly."

Four-foot-wide walkways between the island and the surrounding counters allow Mimi and Steve to work back-to-back, if necessary. "I can open my oven door and lean over to put something in and still have room for a kid behind me," Mimi says. "That's a sign of a truly functional kitchen."

Commercial-size appliances give Steve and Mimi room to cook and store food for a crowd. "With our family, we need to store at least three gallons of milk and three gallons of apple juice in the refrigerator at a time," Mimi says. "So I knew I needed a big one."

To accommodate family entertaining, Mimi requested two wall ovens in addition to the two that are a part of her professional range. "We never have less than 28 people for any family event," Mimi says. "Having all four ovens



going enables me to time everything to be done at once."

A second sink in the island takes the pressure off the main corner sink, but Mimi's one regret is that she installed only one dishwasher. "With as much entertaining as we do, we sometimes run the dishwasher twice a day. Having two would have been more convenient," she says.

Durable antique heart pine covers the floors. "We were building a new house, but I wanted an old feel to it," Mimi says. It was also a look she had seen in an old English kitchen. "And with three small children,

- Roomy aisles enable cooks and kids to work together in this kitchen.
- With four ovens, Mimi can cook for a crowd without having to rewarm foods.
- A big walk-in pantry allows the Kirsteins to buy in bulk and store it all close to the work area.
- Mimi and Steve chose to separate the refrigerator and freezer to avoid a large expanse of cabinetry along one wall.
- Two sinks take the pressure off the main cleanup area and enable more

than one cook to prepare a meal.

- The sitting area provides a comfortable spot for guests to land while conversing with the cook.



we needed a floor that would take wear and tear and still look good." French tiles, impervious to hot pots and pans, cover the island top and backsplashes. White solid-surfacing covers the remaining countertops.

"I love that tile," Mimi says. "I chose it before the fabric or cabinets. I knew from the start that I wanted yellows and blues. Everything works within that color scheme."

Warm yellow walls complement the cool serenity of the pale blue hand-painted cabinets. Yellow beaded board backs the glass-front cabinets, creating a warm backdrop for Steve and Mimi's decorative plates and pitchers.

Cornice boards, painted to match the blue cabinetry, cross the tops of both kitchen windows and add a finishing touch to the yellow-and-blue floral balloon shades.

Mimi and Steve are very proud of their collaborative kitchen. "It is absolutely the center of the house," Mimi says. "It is the room that everyone gravitates toward." □

For purchasing and designer information, refer to the Buying Guide beginning on page 118.

Photographer: Ross Chapple. Builder: Steve Kirstein, BOWA Builders, Inc. Field editor: Eileen Deymier. Written by Amber Dawn Barz.



Because the Kirsteins have three young children, the eating area left was designed so that a high chair can be pulled up to the table. Used for crystal storage, the butler's pantry connects this area to the formal dining room.

A photograph of a bright, cozy kitchen seating area. A large window on the left is dressed with yellow curtains featuring a blue floral pattern, held up by a white valance. A dark metal chandelier with grapevine accents hangs from the ceiling. In the foreground, a white wicker chair with a woven seat and backrest is positioned near the window. To its right, a matching wicker sofa is adorned with a vibrant red floral patterned pillow. A large green fern and a basket of red flowers are placed between the chair and sofa. A small white wicker table holds a red pitcher and a glass. In the immediate foreground, a blurred tray with a white cup and saucer is visible. The walls are painted a warm yellow color.

Mimi loves the kitchen's seating area. "It allows people to be with me while I cook, without them having to stand at the island," Mimi says. "They can be comfortable, and I can still be a part of the party."