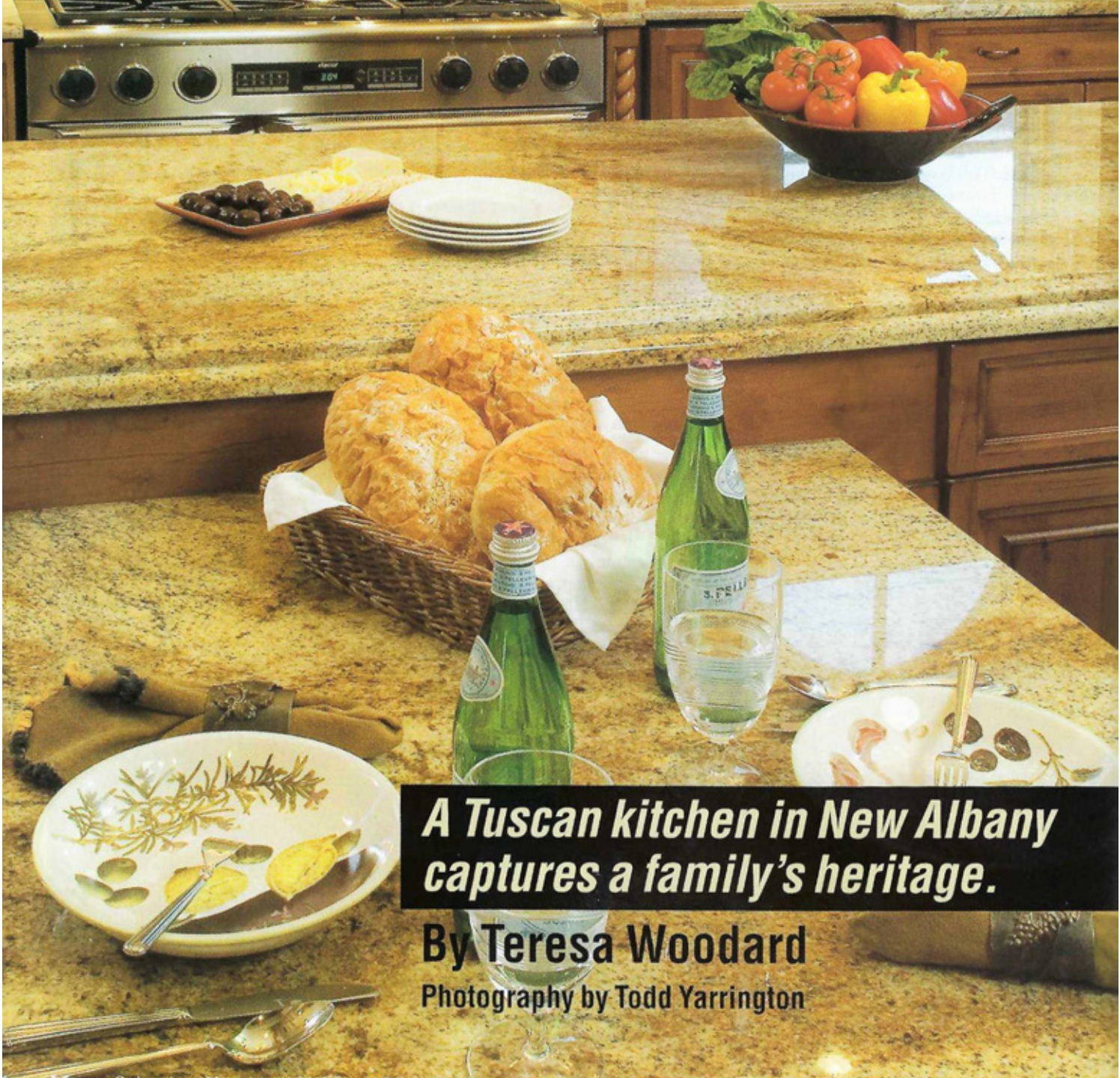


La Cucina



A Tuscan kitchen in New Albany captures a family's heritage.

By Teresa Woodard
Photography by Todd Yarrington



Salvaged beams and plastered walls create the look of an old-world Tuscan kitchen in the New Albany home of Larry and Christy Canini. At left, the Caninis selected a golden granite for countertops, including the 8-foot-long island.

Larry Canini didn't feel quite at home in his former Georgian-style residence on New Albany's golf course. This first-generation Italian yearned for the open, relaxed style of the country villas where he spent childhood summers in central Italy.

Today, this custom home builder and his family are enjoying a more relaxed Italian way of life in their 8,700-square-foot, Mediterranean-style home just a few hundred feet away. He and his wife, Christy, who is also Italian, built their home in the Reserve at New Albany where they live with their two children, Paulina, now 18, and Gianni, 9.

The open kitchen, central to the home's layout, effectively conveys a welcoming Italian lifestyle—one that embraces friends, family, food and festas. Larry so fondly recalls similar households of his extended family members who live in Alvito, not far from Tuscany. Working with decorator Pam Yost of Grand Design Group, the couple chose an earthy color palette

evocative of the Italian countryside, adding the region's characteristic plastered wall textures. Salvaged beams and distressed new materials were also used to create a centuries-old look.

"There's a trick to creating an old-world feel with new materials," says Larry.

The use of old and distressed materials is another trick to the instant aging of the Caninis' new home.

After building more than 500 homes in his 25-year construction career, he designed this space with help from Gary Bruck of Sullivan Bruck Architects.

The project started with old-world architectural detailing, inspired by a recent family trip to Italy. The kitchen's arched symmetrical set of east-facing windows is one imported idea. Other arches frame the space, which is adjoined by the great room on one side and a butler's pantry that leads to the dining room on the other. Larry says it was important to have the kitchen open to these living areas instead of having everyone pile into the kitchen. "This way everyone can enjoy the comforts of the great room nearby," says Larry.

Other notable architectural elements of the kitchen include soaring textured walls and a faux limestone range hood. The couple scoured magazines looking for the ideal hood shape. "We wanted more than just a big box going up the side of the wall," says Larry. The hood's shape was first formed with plywood, then Tom Jacob of Jacob Decorative Arts of Baltimore added textured plaster, ornamental moldings and corbels. The surface was then painted



to resemble limestone. Larry says he had previously admired Jacob's work at Brio and Bravo restaurants.

The use of old and distressed materials is another trick to the instant aging of the Caninis' new home. Throughout the entire first floor are knotty alder plank floors, which provide plenty of rustic imperfections. Two handhewn cedar rafters salvaged from an old barn are at the ceiling, highlighting the kitchen's creamy 12-foot ceilings. A backsplash of tumbled stone tiles contributes to the kitchen's old-world look, and a framed mosaic pattern behind the range serves as a focal point.

The Caninis' custom cabinetry also captures the feel of rural Italian villas known to compensate for the lack of

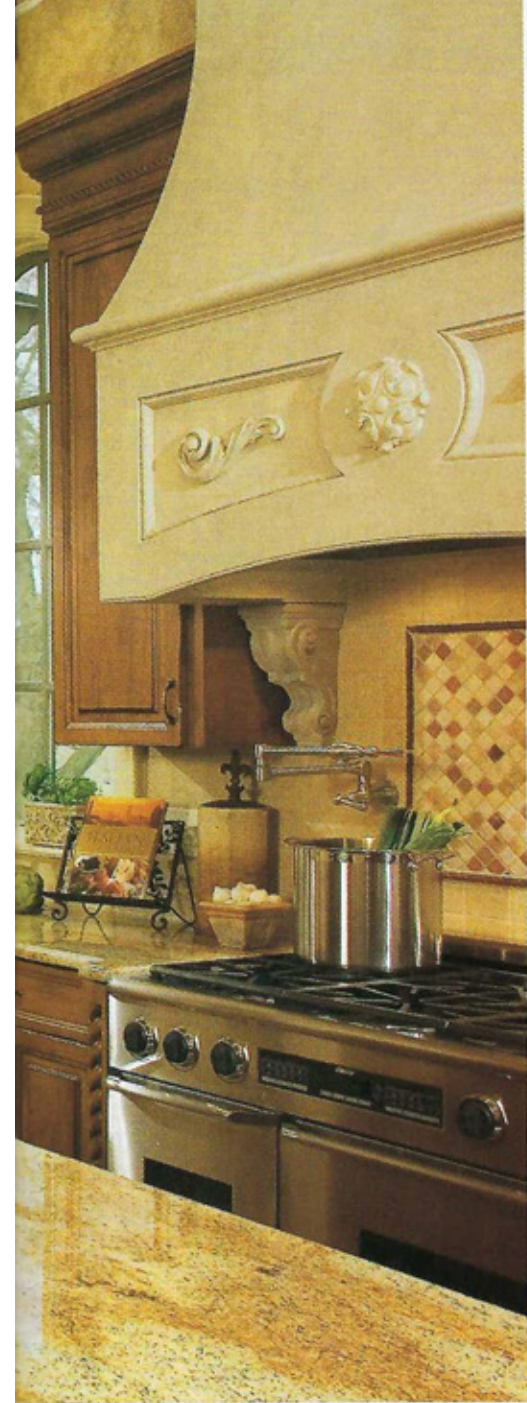
built-in kitchen storage with a collection of chests and cupboards. Along three walls, Cooley Custom

The eight-foot kitchen island was designed to allow friends and family to gather in the kitchen to cook and share meals together.

Cabinetry of Plain City created furniture-style cabinets. Lower cabinets appear to be individual pieces

as their depths vary, furniture feet were added and heavy rope molding was applied. Upper cabinets are trimmed with heavy crown and rope molding. In addition, their height is staggered and they feature open shelving to display ceramic pieces. Cabinetry is heavily distressed alder, featuring an earthy stain with a hand-rubbed glaze applied to enhance detailing.

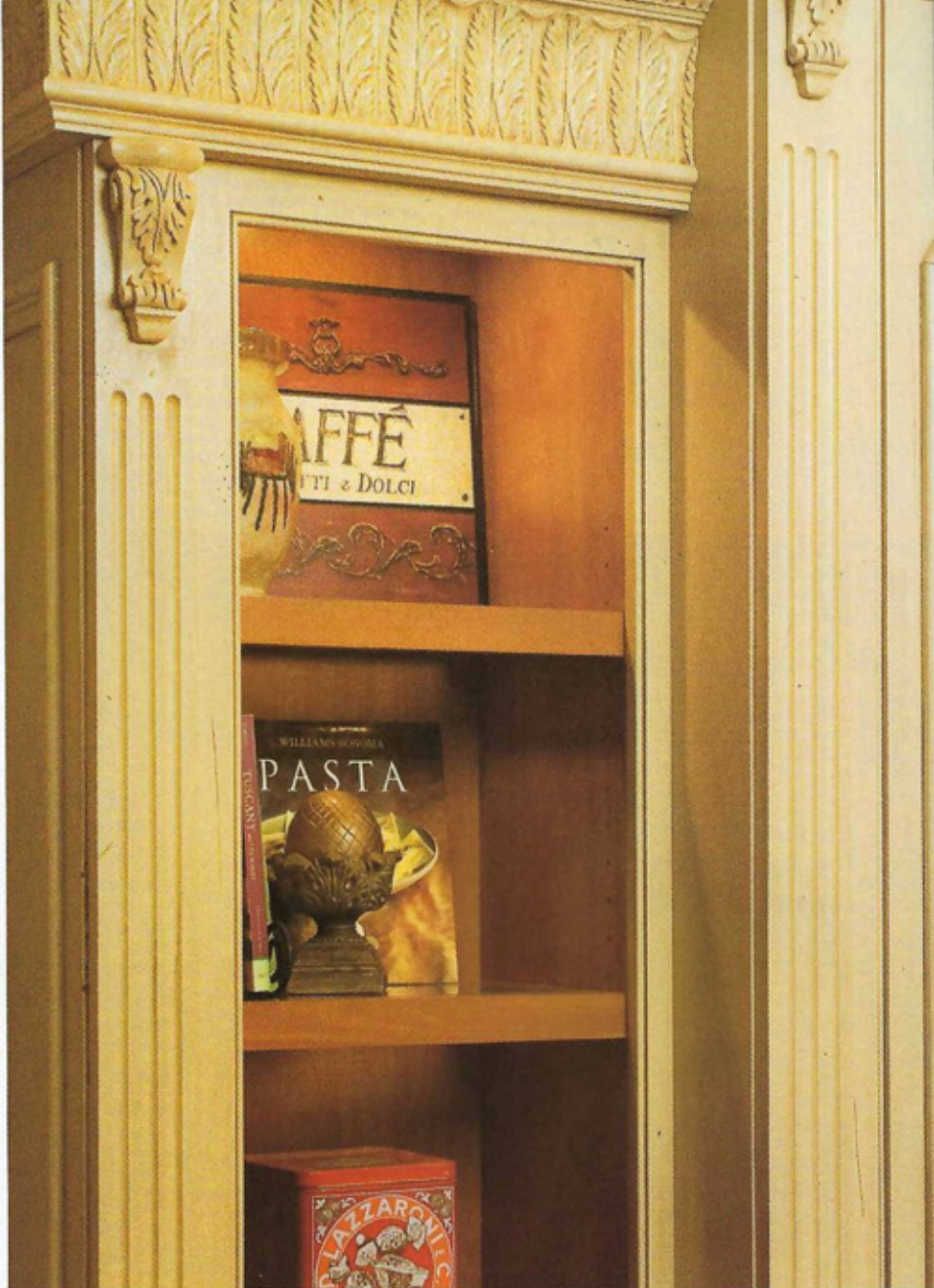
The eight-foot kitchen island, also trimmed with raised panels of knotty alder, was designed to allow friends and family to gather in the kitchen to cook and share meals together. Here, Christy specifically requested a large work space. She says her previous kitchen island was divided by a sink, so work space was limited to only three feet on



each side. In this kitchen, the main sink was moved to an exterior wall with a window view and a second, smaller vegetable sink was placed below the other window.

A 42-by-50-inch extension was added to the island to create an informal eating area. Christy said the family frequently uses the dining room, so an intimate eating area was all that was needed for the kitchen.

For the countertops, the couple chose a golden granite with lots of variation in color and graining found at Modlich Stoneworks. Along the far wall, an oversized European storage cabinet looks as if it's been there forever. Stan Cooley says the piece was designed to replicate a family heirloom that was worn and refinished as it



Exquisite detail in each of the cabinets was designed to replicate family heirlooms that have been worn and refinished. Wide moldings at the top of each cabinet lend an old-world effect. The backsplash features tumbled stone tiles and a framed mosaic.

passed from generation to generation. The elegant reproduction is classically constructed with cupboards, center drawers, open shelving and heavy ornamental molding.

Hidden appliances

For Christy, who calls the kitchen her office and enjoys cooking every day, the kitchen's function is just as important as its form. One of the biggest design challenges here was strategically placing the premium appliances within the limited wall space without giving up valued storage space or aesthetics.

To accomplish this, the 48-inch KitchenAid refrigerator, dual KitchenAid dishwashers and Dacor warming drawer were all covered with wooden panels to blend in with the

surrounding cabinetry. A Sharp microwave drawer oven and a Dacor beverage center were tucked into the island. Nearby, the six-burner Dacor range features double ovens. A flat-screen TV is mounted on an arm to extend or recess it into the wall.

Dual wrought-iron chandeliers with bead detail hang above the island and the rustic iron finish is repeated in the cabinetry's hardware and decorative accessories. Indeed, it seems the Caninis have been successful designing a kitchen that fits the vision they have of kitchens in Italian villas that accommodate large families and plenty of friends. ■

Teresa Woodard is a freelance writer.