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Pam Brinkman's lush bougainvillea vines frame the view of the courtyard that sits just off the newly rebuilt kitchen.

BLENDING TRADITIONS

BY MEG RATKA SPARWATH PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON JENSEN
PRODUCED BY BARBARA MUNDALL

In this Arizona kitchen and courtyard, English cottage style melds with classic Southwestern design, creating a cheerful hub for a close-knit family.





BETTER BY DESIGN >> from Z1

When Pam and Andy Brinkman purchased their 1960s house in Paradise Valley, Arizona, they were happy enough with it—until they found that the pipes drilled into the thick adobe brick had begun leaking. In addition, the brick—used to build desert houses back when they were mostly winter homes—was so energy inefficient that the family felt as if they were baking in a pizza oven on hot days. With the faulty pipes rendering the house unlivable (the family endured six months without heat or warm water), the Brinkmans, faced with tearing it down and rebuilding, leased a nearby house to live in during the two-year project.

The task was daunting, but the couple managed to find a positive side: As long as they had to rebuild, they thought, why not relocate the kitchen to a more convenient spot? In the original >> on Z4

Pam, daughters Traci (at right in photo, *left*) and Tara (at left in photo), and golden retriever Abbey relax on the courtyard patio. The kitchen has two sets of French doors; one leads to the pool area (*below*), the other to the patio.





BETTER BY DESIGN >> from Z3

layout, an awkwardly placed den blocked the kitchen from an outdoor patio and pool, where the family—including teenage daughters Traci and Tara—spends much of its time. The Brinkmans and their architects, George Christensen and Jon Poetzl, eliminated the den, reconfiguring it into a roomy U-shape kitchen with easy access to the outdoors.

Pam, a seasoned remodeler, knew just what she wanted for the kitchen: a comfortable, family-friendly space that captured both local design characteristics and the English cottage look she adores. “I wanted to be respectful of Southwest traditions while making it feel like home to our family,” she explains. She chose classic Southwestern saltillo tiles for the kitchen floor, adding her own twist by turning them shiny-side-down

and laying them in a brick pattern that flows onto the outdoor patio. A distressed finish on the custom doors and windows adds to the weathered desert appearance. Pam carefully planned the placement of the windows so each frames lovely views of neighboring Camelback and Mummy mountains, the pool, and the courtyard.

Stucco exterior walls are far more energy efficient than the old brick; new interior walls are hand-plastered. Though Pam admits it can be hard to find someone skilled at hand-plastering, she deems it worth the >> on Z6

Although the kitchen contains elements from the past, it also boasts plenty of modern conveniences. Two sinks, two work triangles, four dishwasher drawers, a spacious cleanup area, and heat lamps make cooking a pleasure.



BETTER BY DESIGN >> from Z4

trouble. “It has a beautiful earthy look, and it smelled like rising dough when it was drying.” The effect is that of an English cottage, enhanced by teak countertops like those Pam had admired in a friend’s English home. To make the kitchen feel comfortable for the family, Pam reproduced some aspects of the kitchen from their previous home in Illinois. Cabinets and walls are painted cream, keeping the space bright. A wall sconce and a shed-antler chandelier that the Brinkmans have had for years fit right in with the new space; Pam also displays her collections of blue-and-white Spode and antique blue-and-white transferware.

To the Brinkmans, though, comfort means more than simply familiar objects; it’s also about spending time together. To that end, Pam incorporated another classic Southwestern element: a curved stucco banco, or built-in bench. “The girls settle into the cushions with laptops and do their homework and visit with me,” she says. Nearby are an adobe-style fireplace, a TV, and a pair of easy chairs, where Andy likes to relax.

The renovation had its share of stresses, but the rewards were worth it when the Brinkmans finally got to move back in. “I have an incredible view from all three sides of the kitchen,” Pam says. “We can see the sun rise and set.” Even more important, the kitchen provides a space where family and friends can enjoy each other’s company—just as Pam envisioned. ♪

RESOURCES >> Z34

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The wood ceiling beams (top), which are characteristic of homes in the Southwest region, are original to the house. For the breakfast area, Pam and interior designer Sydney Dye chose refined blue and white fabrics (left) to contrast with the rustic saltillo tile and woodwork.