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KITCHEN

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Stage managed

"A kitchen that's designed to be a showpiece must not look like a regular kitchen. The practical details should be concealed backstage, allowing the cook to perform in the foreground, admired by the audience."

Tom Taylor, architect, Taylor Lombardo



section focus: on show







A sense of theater

Guests in this home have front row seats so they can enjoy first class entertainment from the cook in the kitchen

The way you approach cooking has a powerful influence on the design and layout of your kitchen. For those with a theatrical bent, the performance is at least as important as the final result.

The owner of this kitchen wanted a kitchen where the cooking was part of the entertainment, and a place from which guests would not feel excluded. Equally, he didn't

want them to see the mess that cooking so often generates.

When architect Tom Taylor of Taylor Lombardo designed the living spaces of this home, he saw the kitchen as a stage.

The living area is large – 70ft long, 38ft wide and 22ft high – and all the furnishings and fittings are on a similar scale. The kitchen, with its enormous chimney-style hood, dominates one end

of the room, while a second large fireplace counterbalances this at the opposite end of the living space.

To ensure all storage and messy preparation is out of sight, a second kitchen is behind the main kitchen. This backstage area includes a refrigerator, dishwasher, sink and oven, as well as most pantry and crockery storage.

The show part of the

Preceding pages: The kitchen, dining and lounge areas are all connected in this large Italian-style home. Pocket doors slide away to create a huge indoor outdoor space.

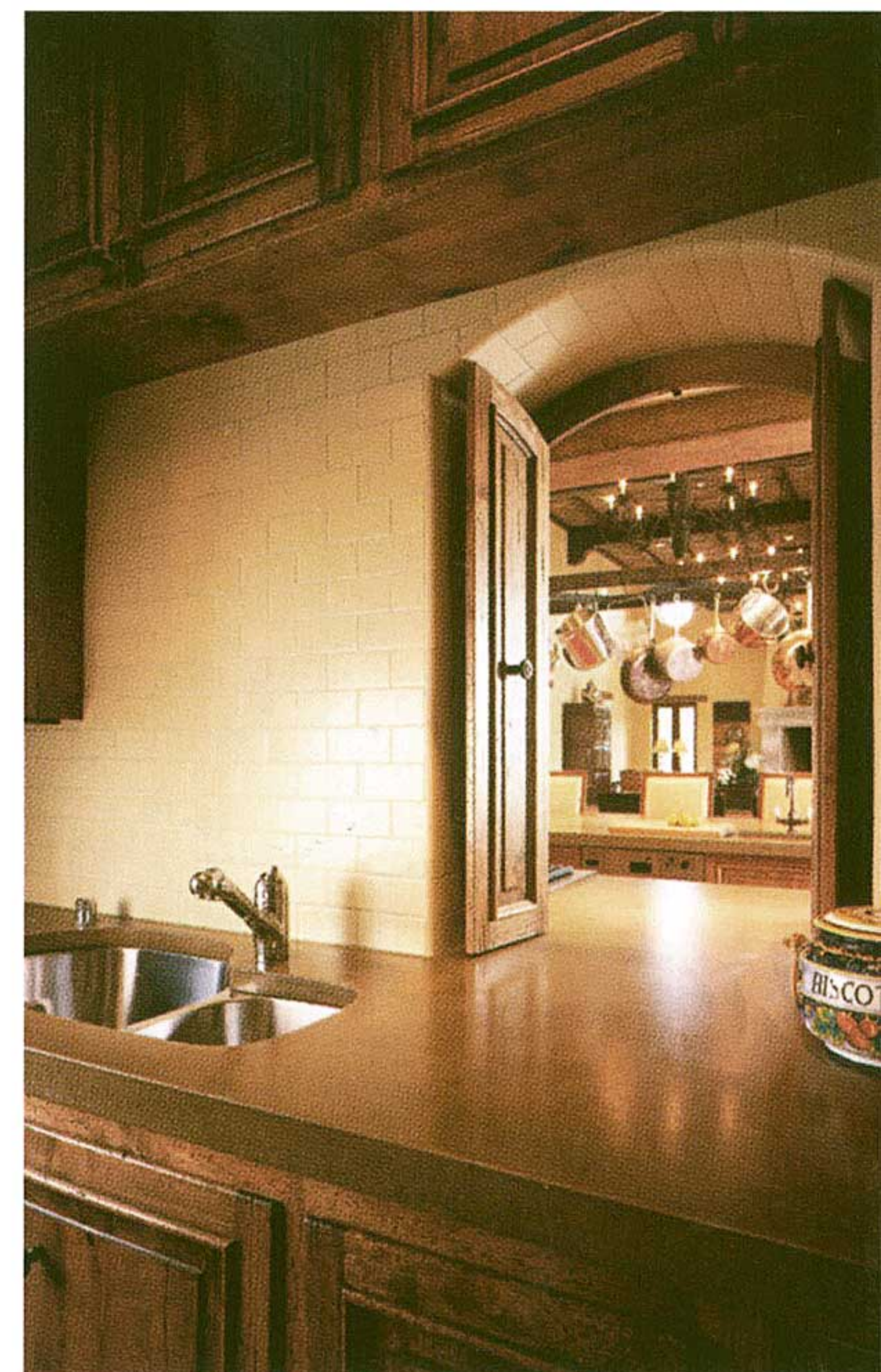
Facing page: The 22ft-high ceiling is thatched with willow branches. Light is provided by Italian chandeliers and downlights set into the ceiling.

Above: The fireplace doubles as a barbecue. A huge ventilation unit covers it and a double cooktop.



Architect: Tom Taylor, Leta Sterner, Taylor Lombardo Architects, AIA (San Francisco and Napa, CA)
Interior designer: Jerrine Barrett
Main contractor: Jim Murphy Associates
Cabinets: Alder, stained and lacquered
Countertops: Concrete from Sonoma Cast Stone
Exterior windows and doors: Albertini (Verona, Italy)
Interior windows and doors: Craftsmen in Wood
Lighting design: Hawtof Associates
Lighting control system: Litetouch
Faucets: Dornbracht; Waterworks
Oven, cooktop: Thermador
Dishwasher: Miele
Custom sink: Diamond Spas
Tile supplier: Country Floors
Tile designer: Jerrine Barrett
Field tiles: Renaissance with D'oro Antico finish
Decorative center tiles: Renaissance Cosimo Decos with D'oro Antico finish
Border tiles: Renaissance Urbino Border with D'oro Antico finish

Photography by Tim Maloney



kitchen includes two cooktops and a fireplace that doubles as a barbecue. Beneath the 16ft by 5ft island are a refrigerator for milk and other frequently used foods, and a wine chiller. Guests are invited to gather at the island, where they can sit and watch the cook, or help with preparations.

"Materials throughout the house and in the kitchen were chosen for their functionality

as well as looks," says Taylor.

"The owner considers function is as important as style, so all surfaces are durable and easy to clean."

Concrete countertops were chosen for the simplicity of their appearance and for their homogenous color.

"The island is very large, and the subdued, uniform color ensures it isn't the main focus of the space," says Taylor.

The owner was also keen that the interior should weave together his various interests. A favorite antique piece made from nutty alder wood inspired the kitchen cabinetry's finish, and a love of things Italian prompted many design details. Travels through the South Pacific and Mexico introduced the idea of a ceiling made from thatched willow branches.

Facing page: Task lighting for the island countertop is concealed in the hanging pot rack. The Italian tiles behind the cooktops are in the same warm yellow as the walls.

Above left: A servery hatch connects the show kitchen with the main working area. A pocket door can be closed to conceal it entirely.

Above: Most of the storage is in the back kitchen, so the show kitchen out the front does not appear cluttered.