


# Classically New



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 THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES TO BE AN interior designer in Houston and be a part of our community's growth, welcoming many new families to the Houston area. This article describes a project we recently completed for one of those new families relocating to the Houston community. I entered this wonderful project in the – 2013 Ferguson/Kohler/Thermador Design Competition. This kitchen remodel was the winning project for “The Best of the Best” – Interior Design / “Let Off Some Steam” – Kitchen or Bath Steam Designs, 1st Place / “Chill Out with Thermador” – Refrigeration Options, 1st Place / “Over The Top” – Out of the Box Ideas, 2nd Place.

There are so many beautiful older homes in Houston with different types of architecture and the beautiful yards, established gardens, and stately trees that surround them. These homes have a certain charm and ‘je ne sais quoi’ that one just cannot quite duplicate in a newly constructed home. Perhaps it is the history of the home and the ‘vibe’ that comes with times past, but it is a joy to work on one of these great older homes with great ‘bones’. Add to that, a super realtor, Kellie Geitner with Martha Turner Sotheby’s, who helped a young family find the perfect location and neighborhood, even if the house did need some updating and some thinking ‘outside the box’.

Relocating to Houston from California, the couple called Eklektik Interiors for a design consultation to discuss the possibilities for this home. They were used to tall ceilings and open floor plans, not smaller rooms and low ceilings. This home was a



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**Plumbing Fixtures and Appliances**

Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery  
ferguson.com

**Remodel Construction**

Flores Construction Co.  
Jorge Flores  
713-550-6600

**Cabinets**

Accent Cabinets  
accentcabinets.com

**Backsplash Tile**

Architectural Design Resources  
adrhouston.com

**Flooring Tile**

Daltile  
daltile.com

**Light Fixture**

Restoration Hardware  
restorationhardware.com

**Quartz Countertops**

Arizona Tile  
arizonatile.com

**Audio/Security**

SES Design Group  
sesdesigngroup.com



complete departure from what they had lived in previously, but they fell in love with the stately facade of this beautiful older home that looked like something on a plantation, with its tall exterior columns and large pediment.

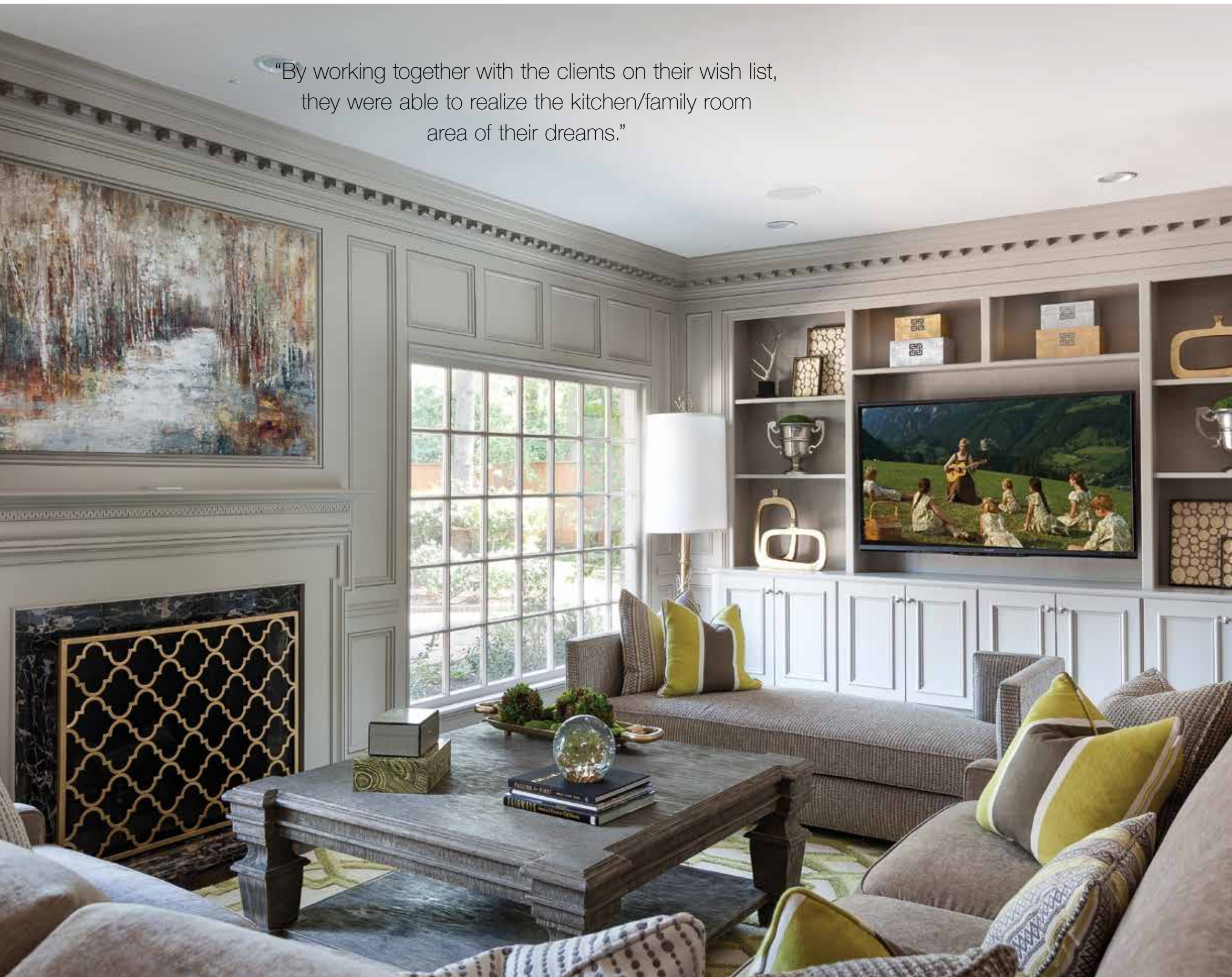
The home had a tremendous presence that needed to be considered when creating a design concept. The goal was to maintain the traditional nature of the exterior. Beautiful molding, block paneling, wood floors, and great millwork prevailed throughout the interior; however, the color of the stain needed to be addressed. Over the years it had become quite orange, dating the home, so incorporating current finishes in our design was an obvious must. Painting was definitely the answer for the walls, ceiling, and millwork. The wood floors were in great shape but just the wrong color; those would be refinished to a deep rich walnut. The client did not want cream tones but still wanted the home to be warm and inviting. Staying with a traditional feel, the main wood trim throughout the home would be lighter with contrasting walls. Steam (AF-15 from Benjamin Moore), a ‘white’ with just enough pigment in it to make it fresh, not harsh and not cream, was the perfect white, and it looks great with warm or cool tones. The color palette would be warm grays and taupe, creating a great foundation upon which to build.

As with most remodels, work usually begins in the kitchen and/or the master bath. This home was no exception. The kitchen felt closed-in with 8’ dropped ceilings that housed fluorescent lighting, outdated appliances, and stained cabinets that did not function. The doorways were short, and rooms seemed confining with the low ceilings and stained walls. The new owners wanted a kitchen with an island where their two young children could sit, cabinets with drawers rather than doors, and new appliances with all the bells and whistles. They preferred the kitchen be open to the family room and breakfast area and have better lighting, they favored an overall classic, simpler, brighter feeling to the home.

By working together with the clients on their wish list, they were able to realize the kitchen/family room area of their dreams. Stripping the kitchen to the studs, raising the ceiling of the kitchen to the height of the breakfast area ceiling, opening the wall between the kitchen and family room, raising the height of doorways, and moving the powder room resulted in a



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larger kitchen area. A fabulous wine room, housing a 14' table and enough storage for the most serious of wine collectors, is located just outside the kitchen. Adding a doorway off the kitchen allowed the beautiful tasting room which was previously hidden, to be seen, and it provided a better flow for the entertaining the family loves to do.

Appliances, plumbing fixtures, and cabinets are the 'core' of the kitchen. The client wanted stainless steel fronts on all appliances to give the space a more modern feel and avoid the heavy look of cabinet fronts. With the guidance of the seasoned professionals at Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery, numerous manufacturers were considered before selecting the Thermador package which includes the 'one of a kind' Pro Range 48" convection/steam oven and matching stainless steel Pro Vent hood with their unique steam oven and warming drawer feature. This choice impressed and pleased the homeowners; adding the flanking stainless steel column refrigerator/freezers allowed a sleek flushed installation inside the cabinets and plenty of refrigeration for this growing family. (Since the completion of the project, twins will be making an appearance soon!) Stackable microwave and convection oven complete the cooking/baking needs. Thermador's super quiet dishwasher was important due to the open concept of the kitchen/family room. Chrome plumbing fixtures were selected for the island and secondary sink at the bar that can be used as an additional prep area.

Frameless cabinetry up to the ceiling was designed to provide as much storage as possible and make the ceiling look taller. A gray stain with a glaze was chosen to give a painted look, while providing the durability of a stain. The finish allows the grain of the wood to be seen without the typical stained appearance. Stained wood can be more forgiving than painted and holds up better over time. All of the base cabinetry was designed with only drawers, as they are easier to access and provide less wasted space. Using full extension and soft close glides on each of the dovetail constructed drawers and adding a custom designed pantry cabinet gave more than ample storage. Glass front cabinets were used in the bar area to maintain a light appearance and display attractive crystal.

Lighting is an important aspect of a kitchen as well as other spaces, and layering lighting with under counter illumination throughout helps for task work, while using smaller





4” cans makes for a cleaner look on the ceiling. No decorative lighting was selected in the kitchen to compliment the uncluttered look; however, in the adjoining breakfast area, a great open stainless steel orb was used to give the space some impact without being overwhelming. The large scale of this light fixture created drama with just the right amount of bling. Sometimes less is more!

When it came to choosing the finishes for the walls, backsplash, countertops and floors we stayed true to our initial concept. Lightening the walls and using a darker stain on the wood trim helped to make the beautiful cabinetry and backsplash take center stage. Walls and ceilings were painted the same color as the wood trim throughout the rest of the house, and the wood trim became the same color as the block paneling in the adjoining family room, making the entire area cohesive. The backsplash was the crowning effect. It took a while to find just the right one, but it was worth the wait! The backsplash marries the entire color scheme throughout the entire home, off white, soft gray, and taupe. The beautiful custom tile with its two dimensional façade gave just the right amount of color and pattern without competing for its place in this timeless classic, modern, traditional kitchen.

It is an exciting time for countertops. Quartz provides a great look with a lot of durability. It doesn't scratch, burn, or stain, and it is anti-microbial. From the many colors and patterns from which to choose, a solid taupe to compliment the cabinets and pull the color from the backsplash was selected. To give a slightly heavier look, the quartz was mitered with a 2.5” thick top.

Last, but not least, the perfect floor was needed. A beautiful cross cut 12 x 24 limestone in a soft gray/taupe was selected and laid in a modified herringbone pattern with minimal grout lines. This pattern gave just the right amount of movement to ground the space and be very forgiving for the most active area of the home. It blended beautifully with the newly refinished floors in the adjacent rooms.

Taking this classic, traditional home to a new timeless transitional look only increased its charm and character for the family who is now creating new memories and adding their history to this wonderful home. ■