

DESIGNER KATHY ANDERSON ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE AND SUCCEEDED IN DESIGNING A MODERN HOME IN AN UPSCALE HOUSTON AREA WITH THE LOOK AND FEEL OF A 19TH-CENTURY TUSCAN FARMHOUSE.





OUT WITH THE

*New,*

IN WITH THE

**OLD!**

“Do you want the home of a vineyard owner or farmer?” asked Kathy Anderson, founder and principal designer at Eklektik Interiors, Houston, Texas. From her extensive travels to Italy, Kathy knew that there were two styles of Italian farmhouses for homeowners Matt and Natalie to choose from.

Matt and Natalie sought out Kathy’s assistance with building the “Tuscan farmhouse” dream home they had been planning for 10 years. Together, they combined the two styles (along with the modern technologies of the 21st century) and with Kathy’s expertise, designed a sprawling 8800-square-foot estate fitting for any Tuscan wine lover, while also exuding the rustic charm and intimacy of an old farmhouse.

The homeowners sought her out before the foundation was in place, which they confess was one of the best decisions they made in their 10 years of preparation. “We’re glad we got to her early,” said Matt, who was also the builder. “So many of the construction details contribute to the final look; if we hadn’t brought her in at the beginning, the house wouldn’t be the same.”

“The homeowners wanted everything to be rustic and aged,” said Kathy, “if it wasn’t old, we made it look old.” Reclaimed wood from old farmhouses, churches, and warehouses was used extensively throughout the home. The living room, for example, has two huge beams that are 200-years-old. To give light to the beams, Kathy chose an airy chandelier, which helps onlookers gauge their dominance of the beams but also appreciate their aged and attractive appeal.

Reclaimed wood can also be found in the flooring of the study and the game room. In these instances, the wood had to be hand

Text by David Kline  
Interior Design by Kathy Anderson,  
Eklektik Interiors  
Houston, Texas  
eklektikinteriors.com

Photography by Ted Krampitz, TK Images

Furniture for the living area is modern and functional without clashing with the old farmhouse look throughout the house



Candle alcoves in the stone wall enhance the mood of the dining room

scraped, custom-shaped, and installed piece-by-piece. Old wood is also used for the cornice in the master bedroom, and shelving throughout the house. “Not one piece of wood was wasted,” said Kathy, “we used everything for something.”

Just off the master bedroom is a powder room that perfectly captures the farmhouse charm with an assortment of unique treatments. The mirror was made from an old farmhouse window, and hangs over a farm sink that is also over 200-years-old. To maintain the look, Kathy chose to use open shelves instead of cabinets, while also utilizing a curtain made from an old grain sack to cover the sink’s plumbing.

A distressed look is a consistent theme throughout the house, which can further be seen in the use of concrete countertops. “The great thing about using concrete is that over time they get stress fractures which adds to the rustic look,” said Kathy.

Like the countertops, the walls were also given an aged and distressed look. Using weathered plaster and sponge painted with watercolors, each wall is subtly unique while complementing all of the others. “The painter just kept adding layers with sponges and rags until he got the look we wanted,” said Matt.

Old Chicago brick is another widely used material throughout the house. Its rustic red finish, complete with original paint on some of the sides adds an aged appeal everywhere it is used. Nowhere is it more evident than in the wine room, one of the signature areas of the home. Located off the living room, a staircase leads you to this cozy, most authentic room in the house. Four aged leather chairs surround a small round wooden table in the center of a room that is 10 feet by 12 feet. Wine racks, hand carved from reclaimed wood contribute to the authentic, Italian atmosphere. Off to one side of the room sits an old clear glass wine jar complete with wine sedi-



An arched brick pathway invites visitors down steps to a very special wine room.



The powder room features a centuries-old farm sink, a mirror made from an old farmhouse window, and a door from Portugal that is 150 years old.



Tile floors, a stonewall, an old Chicago brick canopy with reclaimed wood beams, candles and a chandelier beautifully frame the stunning tub in the master bathroom

ment still in the bottom – just the kind of detail Kathy added that encourages a relaxing conversation with friends over a glass of Chianti. She also chose to use light fixtures for this room made from wood rather than the typical iron seen more in farmhouse designs. “The house is organic wherever possible, and that includes many of the light fixtures,” explained Kathy.

Kathy also incorporated elements that weren’t authentic Tuscan, but seamlessly fit with the theme. The expansive kitchen, for example, combines an industrial and farmhouse look into one outstanding view. It features a large island made from an old industrial counter, complete open wire vegetable baskets on the back as a nice farmhouse touch. To complement the island, Kathy custom-designed the overhead light fixture to also have the same industrial-rural feel. The Italian tile backsplash proved as a terrific backdrop to a gorgeous copper vent hood.

Kathy included an old bakery table and a couple of stools on one side of the island, a perfect place for children to sit comfortably and snack. On the wall behind the bakery table, three wooden bread paddles from France, Sweden, and Belgium contribute to the aged theme. Indeed, standing in this kitchen, it’s easy to visualize a professional chef in a busy Italian kitchen drawing fresh baked bread or pizza out of the oven.

Kathy used Shaker style custom built cabinets from Poplar, as their uneven finish help maintain the distressed wood look used throughout the house. In an alcove between the kitchen and dining room, two cabinet doors have chicken wire instead of the popular trend of glass. “That was Matt’s idea,” Natalie said, “and it worked brilliantly.”

The most dazzling and surprising appeal of the kitchen is the effect of the groin vault ceiling. Constructed from the old Chicago brick, it opens up the kitchen, adds an outstanding design feature, and ties nicely with the nearby wine room.

Accessorizing had to be just right for this project. Kathy sought out old farming tools such as wooden rakes, shovels, and scoops, which are used on the walls and in containers throughout the house. Kathy also used many other antiques such as the old wooden French bread baking boards and antique frying pans that adorn the wall of the kitchenette in the “casita” or guest room.

The doors to the master bedroom and powder room are from France and Portugal, respectively, and date back over 150 years. The front doors, on the other hand, are custom hand made monstrosities set in walls that are 18 inches thick. There are no doorknobs on them, only handles to pull the doors, which are on rollers. Steel bars slide into the floor lock them.

In addition to the rustic Italian farmhouse look, Kathy and the homeowners wanted the home to be comfortable and livable for a family with young children living in the 21st century. The furniture had to be modern without clashing with the aged look that dominates most of the house. Kathy strived for an achieved a clean and comfortable look, especially in the living room.

A practical benefit to the weathered look and tile floors is that dents and scratches are no problem. Matt gestured toward the floor and said, “I don’t feel bad if the kids ride their scooters through here.” He seemed to sum it up by saying, “We wanted something nice, but when you walk in our house, I think it feels comfortable, and the kids can actually enjoy it.”





Openness is taken to a new level with an outdoor kitchen and poolside entertaining area that blend seamlessly with the interior

Hidden among all the rustic and aged material, there is no shortage of technology in this Houston area “Tuscan farmhouse.” It is fully automated including alarms, cameras, lighting, televisions, five digital video recorders, speakers in every room, and a state-of-the-art media room that seats eight in plush leather chairs.

Upstairs is a large game room that has a kitchen, seating area, pool table, game table, and shuffleboard. It also has its own furnished deck area. Like in the rest of the house, reclaimed wood is widely used – the floors, ceiling beams, kitchen peninsula, and even picture frames. Kathy had the light over the pool table custom made from an inverted feeding trough – one of the many design decisions that works perfectly and makes the house so amazingly unique.

The house is open and unified, a look that Matt calls, “taking the inside out and the outside in,” meaning that the same brick, stone, and wood that is used inside the house is also used outside. As one stands in the living room looking outside over the huge outdoors kitchen, an entertainment area that seats over 20, and stylized swimming pool seem as if they were also a part of the inside design.

Tuscan but eclectic, it’s aged but also completely modern. It’s a showplace, a sprawling vineyard estate, but also a cozy farmhouse that’s livable and comfortable. Nothing looks out of place – quite the testimony to visionary homeowners with a dream and a designer that has “eclectic” in her company’s name. The homeowners agreed, “It wouldn’t look this perfect if it wasn’t for Kathy!” <sup>TH&L</sup>



### Designer Resources:

Hickory Chair	Miles Talbott
Lorts Mfg	E J Victor
Century	Key City
Bobo Intriguing Objects	Aden Works
Soleil de Provence	Furniture Classics
John Richard	Accent Cabinets
Blue Ocean Traders	Home Automation by
Alden Parkes	SES
Love Train Antiques	Flooring by Market
Solaria	Materials

The master bedroom features an antique cricket table as a nightstand, a Lorts bed with bedding from Restoration Hardware. The chaise lounge is from the Carol Bolton Hicks Collection.

