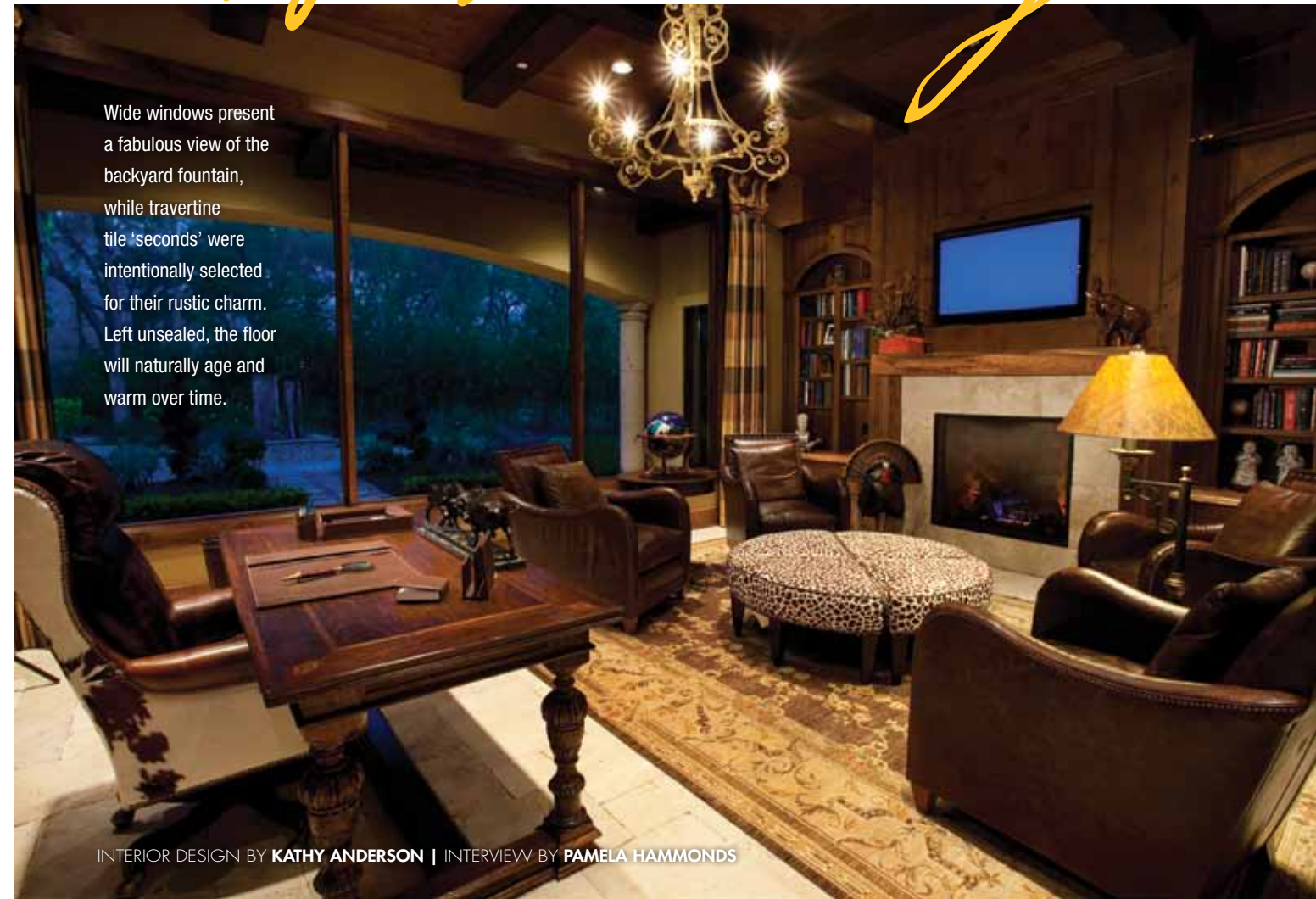


CREATING IMPACT—

Naturally!

Wide windows present a fabulous view of the backyard fountain, while travertine tile 'seconds' were intentionally selected for their rustic charm. Left unsealed, the floor will naturally age and warm over time.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY **KATHY ANDERSON** | INTERVIEW BY **PAMELA HAMMONDS**

Sometimes empty nest means downsizing to adjust to fewer occupants in the home. For one Houston couple, this freeing stage in their lives presented an opportunity to build their dream home—one where they'd eagerly welcome their children home for visits while providing ample room to entertain old friends.

In order to achieve their goals of creating a warm space that paid homage to their heritage and travels, they enlisted the help of Kathy Anderson, principle designer and owner of Eklektik Interiors. Kathy worked with the homeowners as the house was being built, incorporating their desires to use natural products and outdoor elements to create a warm environment. >>

The dining room and kitchen flow seamlessly together to encourage long, leisurely meals, punctuated by good food and conversation. The homeowners needed a place for their large family and friends to congregate, so an 11-foot table fit the bill. Paying homage to their Louisiana roots, fleurs-de-lis were carved into the tabletop alongside inlaid antique church door hinges. Incorporating banquettes (also with inlaid antique hinges) as well as chairs keeps the area comfortable and uncluttered.



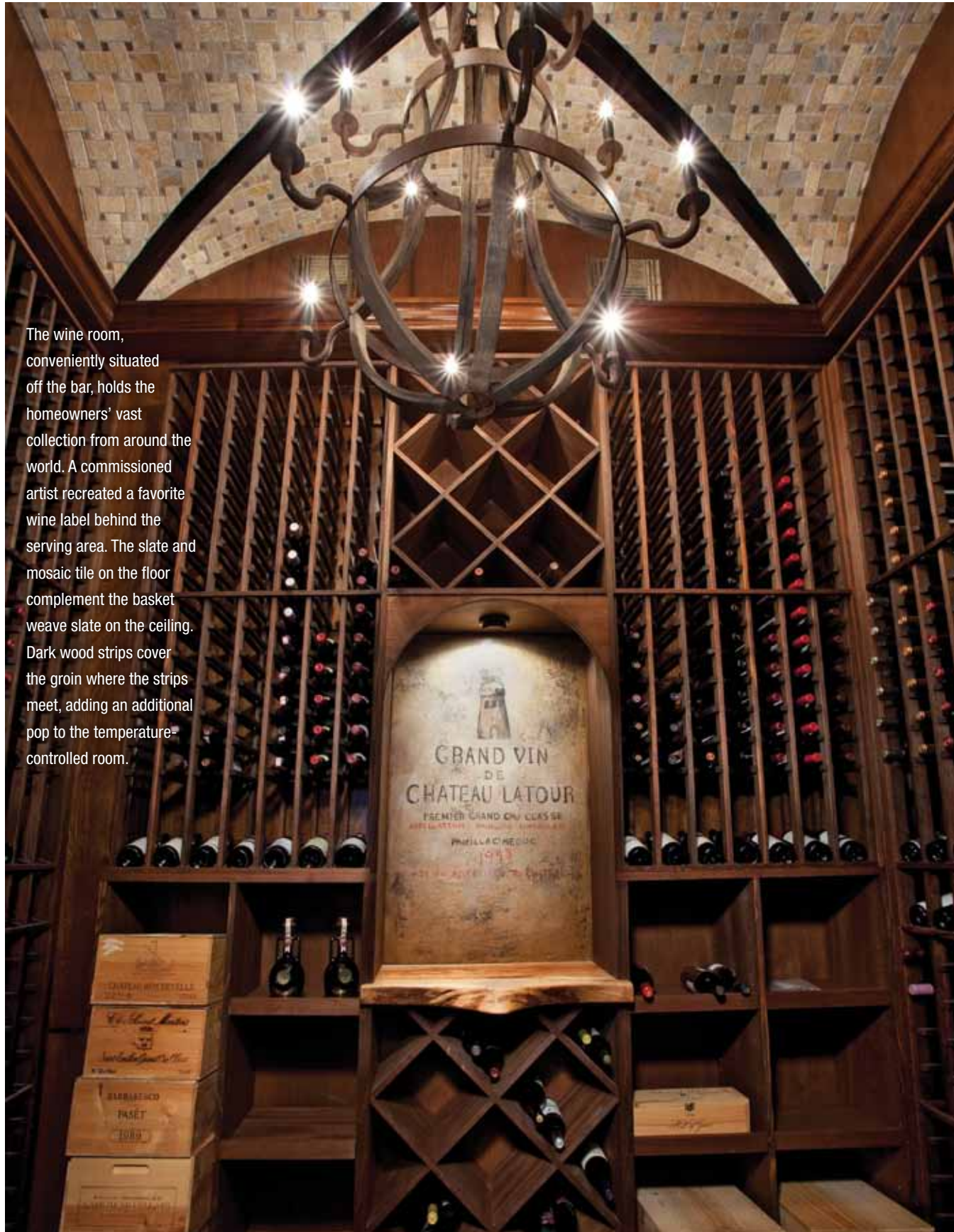
Living Magazine: What parameters did the homeowners give you in designing this home?

Kathy Anderson: Although I've worked with them before, this was their first time to build a home. They wanted a dressy yet rustic feel to the house, so we incorporated many natural, organic features. For example, we used reclaimed wood posts to support the kitchen island's granite countertop. The carved posts, originally from Indonesia, once supported the roof of a house and were quite tall. The custom, three-drain copper sink is amazing—55 inches wide but spectacular.

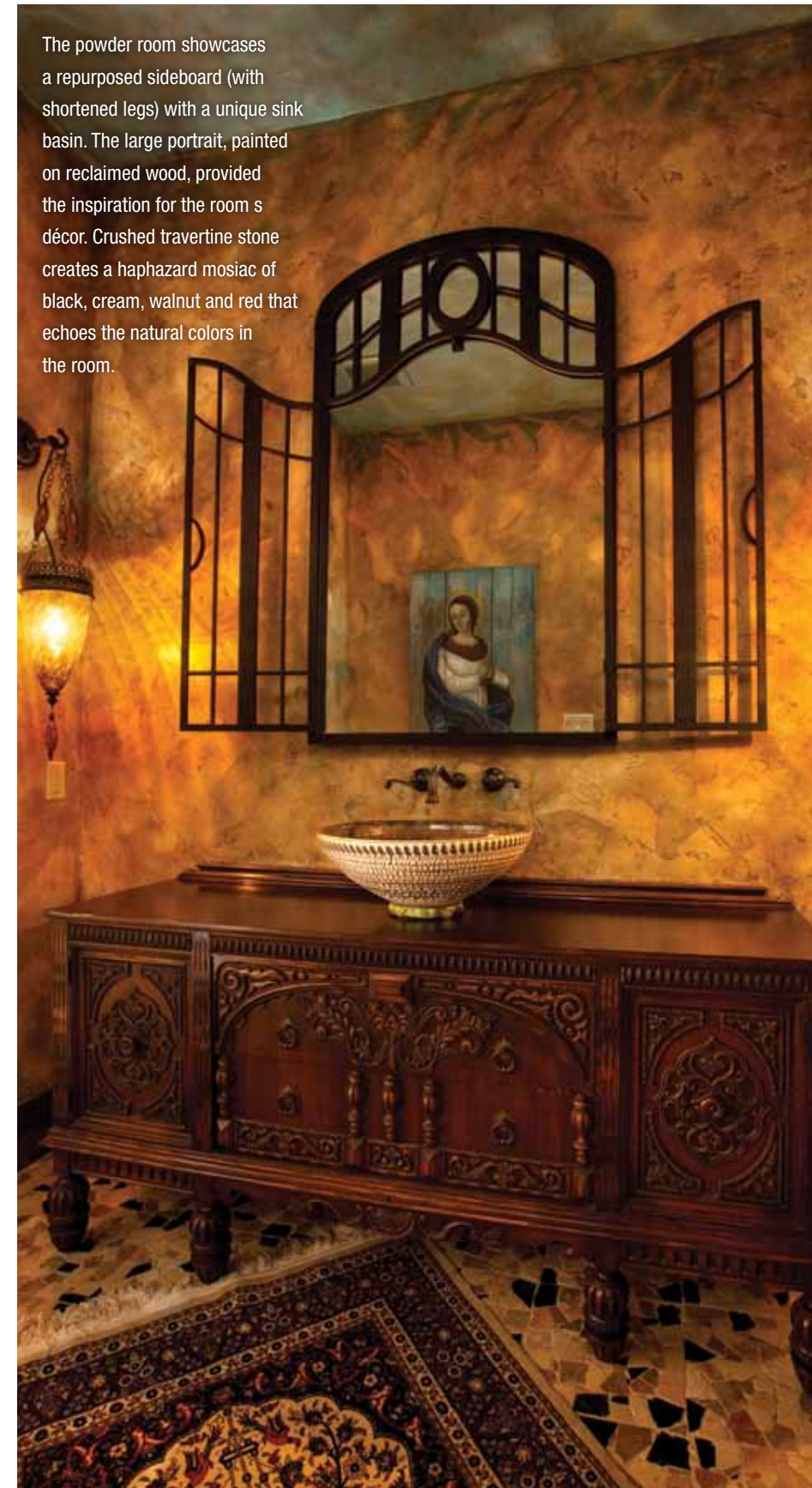
Also in the kitchen, the range hood was made from a large slab of wood, and the cabinets are knotty alder. Natural stone on the floor—in both the kitchen and dining area—provide continuity but the brick archway separates the rooms and mesquite strips between the stone in the dining area help define the space.

LM: I noticed few window treatments in the home.

KA: The views in this house are so spectacular, many of the windows I left alone. Sometimes, I think windows should just be backdrops and not focal points of a room. This was certainly the case in this home. Their beautiful backyard has a pool and fountains; the den windows look out onto the covered loggia. The large windows, left unadorned, really allow the outdoors to become a part of the interior of the home. However, the large buffalo plaid fabric selected for the den drapes helps soften the wood elements. >>



The wine room, conveniently situated off the bar, holds the homeowners' vast collection from around the world. A commissioned artist recreated a favorite wine label behind the serving area. The slate and mosaic tile on the floor complement the basket weave slate on the ceiling. Dark wood strips cover the groin where the strips meet, adding an additional pop to the temperature-controlled room.



The powder room showcases a repurposed sideboard (with shortened legs) with a unique sink basin. The large portrait, painted on reclaimed wood, provided the inspiration for the room's décor. Crushed travertine stone creates a haphazard mosaic of black, cream, walnut and red that echoes the natural colors in the room.

LM: The lighting does make a huge impact—particularly the chandelier in the den.

KA: I think lighting is where a lot of people miss the boat because they tend to underscale. The right lighting creates the ambiance of the room. It's a smart house—the lighting, security and sound systems are in one place so they can control it all and that makes a big difference.

But selection is also huge. We chose two fixtures for over the dining room table, to balance the length of it. In the bar area, we wanted a heavy, dungeon-y feel so we mounted a long torch light. More indirect lighting is used in the powder room featuring hand-blown Italian glass. I love using indirect lighting but overhead fixtures work well if they're selected properly. >>

LM: I'm so impressed with how warm and 'aged' this house feels, even though it is new.

KA: Key to achieving that was incorporating as many organic elements into the design as possible. From the reclaimed wood beams in the den ceiling to the slabs of wood used in the bar countertop, the den mantle and countertops, the wine room's serving area and even artwork that was painted on old wood, we used natural materials throughout the home. And many surfaces are simply sealed with oil to allow for a more natural finish.

Using old wine barrels as chairs and having the carved oak desk in the den fashioned after a church altar table carries that mindset even into the selection of the furniture. Plus the lighting helps keep every room warm. >>



A wide cut through the length of the tree creates a unique bar top with the natural edge intact. Oil seals the wood and allows it to remain completely natural. The custom-painted mural behind the bar pays homage to the homeowners' love of Italy. The bar stools are made from wine barrels—complete with a center bung hole.



The master bath features a show-stopping copper leaf ceiling (hand-applied by the homeowners' sister-in-law) and rainforest café marble-accented tub. Deep maroon glass tile on the tub surround keeps the room grounded in simple elegance. Tiles on the shower wall (behind the tub) graduate from 4x4 to 6x6 then 12x12 to create movement and interest in the oversized space. Arched windows are trimmed out with the same small mosaic tile as the floor.

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Key to achieving an aged feel in a new home was incorporating as many organic elements into the design as possible.

LM: How important was input from the homeowners in the design?

KA: The wife was very involved in the process—very hands-on and so helpful. This fulfilled a lifelong dream for them. While they love to entertain, they're really not formal people and didn't want a lot of maintenance. That's why the distressed finishes work so well here. It's quite livable. 