



THE KITCHEN WELL DONE

DESIGNERS COOK UP HIGH-STYLE ROOMS THAT
COMBINE ELEGANCE AND FUNCTIONALITY.

"**LOTS OF KITCHENS TODAY** are cookie-cutter convenient but monotonous and predictable," says interior designer Robin Pelissier, who took a refreshingly atypical tack in designing the kitchen at the Boston Junior League showhouse. A tour de force of aesthetics, individuality, and function, the reworked space is the epitome of style, yet it looks like it truly belongs in the 1805 Commandant's House (the oldest structure at the Charleston Navy Yard, where the showhouse took place).

"As soon as I saw the old kitchen, I knew it offered a design opportunity I'd always wanted," says Pelissier, who lived in Manhattan before marriage brought her back to her home turf in New England. "I'd always loved those old Upper East Side apartment kitchens—big rooms with high ceilings. They reeked of luxury, comfort, and gracious living."

Pelissier's challenge was to combine that nostalgic sense of indulgence with everyday convenience and usefulness. She did it by designing tall upper cabinets that stop well short of ceiling height. She specified stainless-steel appliances, brick-shaped tile for the backsplash, 16-inch-square porcelain tiles in slate gray and cream for the floor, and a central island that looks like a piece of

BY PAMELA J. WILSON AND
ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK





furniture. She hung not one but two chandeliers and even found room for an 18th-century Georgian secretary and a comfortable upholstered chair. "Since the kitchen now is really the heartbeat of the home, it's nice to bring in creature comforts," she says. "So much entertaining starts and often ends here. It only makes sense to ornament the room you spend so much time in."

One of Pelissier's most inspired ideas for this makeover was incorporating the six-burner range into the room by designing what she calls "a mantelpiece surround" for the industrial-size unit. The new configuration culminates on either side in half-round counters topped with honed granite and skirted to the floor for softness. The high mantel, backed by the same brick-shaped tile used for the backsplash, converts the stove wall into a hearth.

Not being "a fruit-wallpaper or vegetable-print-fabric kind of girl," Pelissier covered the walls above the chair rail in a pearlized bronze-colored wallpaper, textured to look like paper that has been crumpled and then applied. Below the chair rail (which also serves as a display shelf), the walls were painted a chamois color, then decouped with photocopies of the fabric used on the upholstered window cornices.

In another bit of design legerdemain, Pelissier transformed a radiator from an eyesore into a focal point by commissioning an artist to paint a chinoiserie-style wood panel that camouflages the offending piece. The same artist painted chinoiserie canvas insets that were applied to panels on the adjoining back door. Placed above the concealed radiator are open shelves for storage and display of a TV and stereo, cookbooks, wine, and Cantonware.



**Junior League of Boston
Decorators' Showhouse
Boston, Massachusetts**

Interior Designer: Robin Pelissier
Photographer: Eric Roth

**For more information, see
the Buying Guide on page 144.**

