



Breakfast Area

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Soon, home work is being done, and while one daughter likes to curl up on a stool against the island where morning breakfast and dairy items are prepared to do her lessons, Mom starts the dinner preparations. “We needed a good-sized kitchen because we really live in it,” tells Drorit. “We spend almost all of our time in here as a family and even when we have people over, which is almost every Friday night and Saturday lunch, we tend to congregate in the kitchen.” No wonder; the heart of the house looks homey and snug though it is in fact large enough to hold two

sinks and dishwashers as well as two separate preparation areas. “We needed a kitchen that could hold two sets of everything and more,” says Drorit, noting that her beautifully detailed cabinets hold three sets of cutlery and dishes (a fourth is in the dining room and a fifth in the pantry), as well as separate pots and pans and baking area. “Our religion really calls for a large kitchen,” she adds, “but it is all really used and must be well thought out.” For example, granite covers most counter tops in kosher kitchens because boiling hot water can easily be poured over it making

it kosher for passover. Stoves need to have timers that can be programmed to automatically switch on during the Sabbath, when religious laws legislate no work must be done. The butler’s pantry needs a sink so the traditional washing of the hands can take place on *Shabbat*. “I never thought to have anybody but Lauren and her team do the kitchen and addition,” explains Drorit, “because I knew she understood the requirements of my religion and would respect my taste.” In fact, the kitchen turned out so well, that “my friends have all copied the design,” she laughs.

The Ratzker Family: A Bit of Provence In Englewood



"We needed a good-sized kitchen because we really live in it"

It's not unusual for Drorit and Michael Ratzker to have 25 people for a Friday night *Shabbat* dinner in their expansive, yet cozy, dining room. In fact, cozy describes the whole house. Built about 100 years ago, the house has a decidedly European farmhouse-type ambience. The old-world feel of the structure attracted the couple who had lived in several European countries before settling back at home in northern New Jersey and were nostalgic for their overseas adventures. However, the house, while charming, was not really big enough for the family which grew to include four girls ranging in age from five to 13. So, having lived

in the house for a few years and gotten a strong sense for what they wanted and needed, the Ratzkers

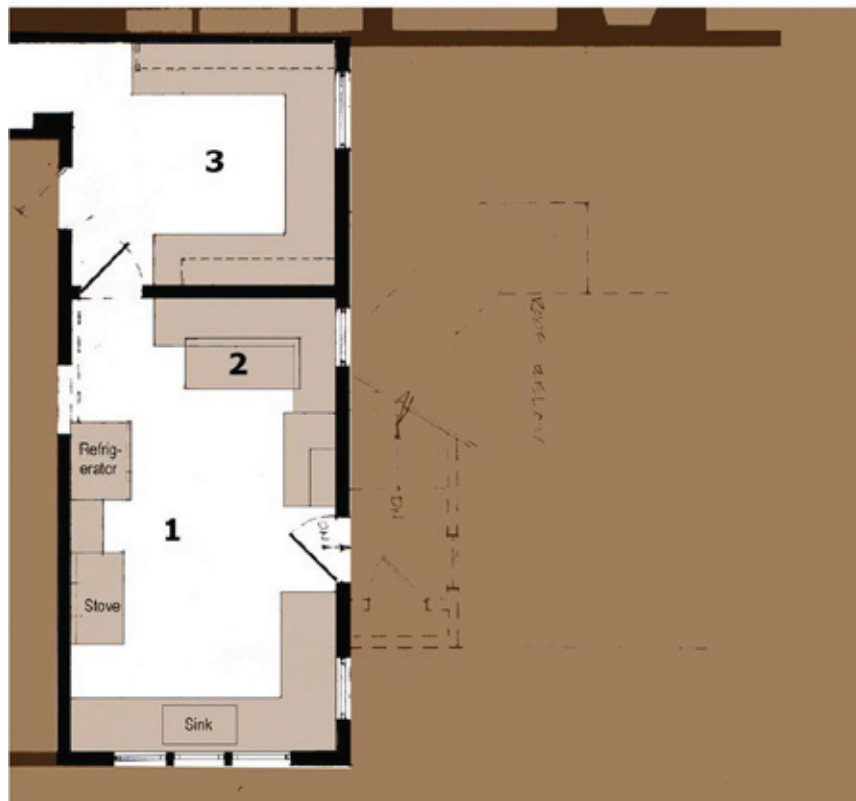
"We spend almost all of our time as a family in the kitchen, even when we have company over."

turned to Lauren Ostrow for help with their planned expansion. The sizeable add-on included a new kitchen, breakfast room, office for the lady of the house ("my command center," as she calls it); butler's pantry, powder room, and

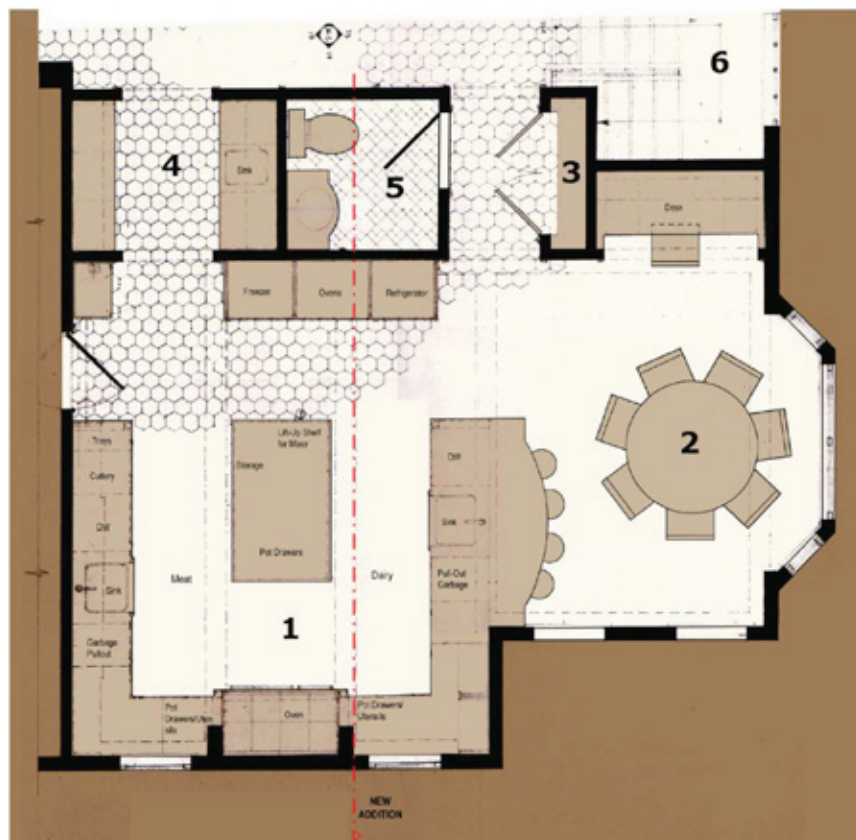
a new back stair that led to the backyard. The request: make the expansive kitchen feel like it was in Provence, France and be sure it fit in with the rest of the house. No problem, replied the designer, who added beams, (built to look old) to the low-height kitchen and filled it with lots of custom, dark walnut cabinets, terra cotta tiles and country French fabrics to create the desired ambience.

The warmth, however, comes also from the family. When the girls come home from school, they hang in the kitchen, munching home-made snacks while lounging around the table.

Before:



- 1 Kitchen
- 2 Breakfast Area
- 3 Pantry



- 1 Kitchen
- 2 Breakfast Area
- 3 Food Pantry
- 4 Butler's Pantry
- 5 Bath
- 6 Staircase to backyard

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 ASSOCIATE DESIGNERS MINDY MILER, RICHARD ROSENBLOOM
 WRITTEN BY SANDY BASS
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 GRAPHICS BY TAL GELLER

TESTIMONIAL LETTER

It has been a pleasure working with Lauren Ostrow Interior Design, Inc. The designers have managed to maintain the integrity of my house while modernizing and making it more comfortable. Despite having tackled different areas of the house over a period of time, they have always adhered to their vision of what the house in its entirety, once completed, should look like. They have incorporated architectural elements which have enhanced the design and decor. To their credit, they have always been mindful of my family's needs, while ensuring an aesthetically appealing result.

Drorit and Michael Ratzker

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