

# KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

Kitchen by SUZANNE TUCKER

## WOODSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Colors taken straight out of the Provencal landscape make this kitchen feel like a country house in France.

Interview by  
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Photographs by  
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Integrally colored plaster walls and a distressed finish on the tongue-and-groove cabinetry add patina to this new kitchen. Beauharnais limestone was used for the countertop, backsplash, and floor. Richard Mulligan's Mama Bear chairs with cushions in Pineapple Plaid from Marvic Textiles. Range by Thermador.



**CHRISTINE PITTEL:** *Sage green, terra-cotta, mustard yellow—what inspired these colors?*

**SUZANNE TUCKER:** This is an old stone house, just south of San Francisco, that was built 100 years ago as a winery. It felt very much like the south of France, so I pulled in all those Provençal colors. We basically gutted the building and brought in everything you see, including the reclaimed oak beams, to give it a farmhouse feel. The kitchen cabinets are new but meant to look old, with seeded glass in the doors and about six layers of paint, all worn back, to give it that nice aged quality.

**What's on the countertops?**

Beauharnais limestone. I wanted to keep it simple and clean.

**But limestone is so porous.**

I know, I know, but it's a marvelous material, and I like the lightness it gives to this kitchen. It's also subtle. No strong veining, like marble, and it doesn't have that speckled consistency you get with granite. It's quieter, softer. We sealed it three times, but if you're very precious about your countertops, don't use it. It's going to get spots, and you need to know that up front. I used more limestone on the floor, and that just gets scrubbed and waxed.

**I see you switched to wood on top of the island.**

Butcher block, for practical reasons, because the clients really wanted to be able to work on that. They don't cut directly on it—for chopping, I recommend a cutting board—but they do everything else. I've got butcher block in my own kitchen, and every six months I wash it down with a mild soap, let it dry, and then spray it with a solution of four parts water to one part white vinegar. Let that sit for a few minutes to sterilize the wood, then wipe it off. Once it's dry again, I give it a good coating of light food-grade mineral oil, with a few drops of orange oil added. Let that soak in, and it will

condition the wood and keep it a good, rich color.

**What kind of storage do you have in the island?**

Open shelves on the side opposite the stove, for pots and pans or whatever. We debated having a pot rack, but this kitchen didn't need any more visual clutter. There's a wine rack on the other side, and in the middle, recycling bins and a trash compactor under the prep sink. And the sink has a flat bottom, so you can set down a wineglass without it toppling over. A round-bottomed sink is just not practical in a kitchen.

**What's the story behind the two separate sinks under the window?**

Some clients find it convenient to have one sink for stacking dirty dishes and another for rinsing, with a garbage disposal.

**When you sit at the island, you feel part of the action. Where did you find those great chairs?**

Richard Mulligan in L.A. makes them, in various sizes and with any kind of finish—absolutely perfect or so battered it feels as if you've had them for 50 years. The woven rush adds more texture, and they're very comfortable, with a slight curve in the back to fit your shoulders. I've got the same chairs at the dining table and people will sit for hours.

**A lot of built-in warmth comes with that collection of majolica.**

**How did you show it off?**

With any collection, always, always cluster it together for more impact. The platters are propped on an 18th-century French buffet, and then I hung these whimsical wooden shelves right above and set out the pitchers, which are shaped like all kinds of animals. This kitchen is not about the latest technology. It's all about charm, and I could be a little more playful with the colors because it's a weekend house. You walk in on Friday night and feel as if you've gone to Provence. And you didn't even have to get on a plane. >>

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ABOVE: Two separate stainless-steel sinks by Franke allow you to pile dirty dishes in one while you're washing vegetables in the other. Domo faucet by KWC. Dishwasher by Bosch. "I'm partial to Bosch," says Suzanne Tucker. "Their dishwashers use a minimal amount of water and they're very quiet." The classic French spiraled iron knobs are from Golden Lion

hardware. Two antique Palissy-ware plates hang on the wall. ABOVE RIGHT: It's easy to set an interesting table when there's so much great majolica to work with. The client's collection is grouped on an 18th-century French buffet and a three-tiered French Hanging Shelf by Niermann Weeks, which just happened to be painted in the kitchen's colors. >>



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ABOVE: Just beyond the island is a cozy dining area. Green-painted cabinets on either side of the kitchen are 42 inches high and provide more storage, while also functioning as a room divider. Wineglasses by Wedel. ABOVE RIGHT: Tucker found a pair of rusty iron

antique rooster lanterns and then designed the crosspiece to connect them. The green door masks a Sub-Zero refrigerator.

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Cabinetry by Peninsula Custom Homes: 650-574-0241.  
French Hanging Shelf by Niermann Weeks through Nancy Corzine: 310-652-4859.  
Range by Thermador: 800-735-4328.  
Sinks by Franke: 800-626-5771.  
Faucets by KWC: 678-334-2121.  
Hardware from the Golden Lion: 310-827-6600.