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Reclaiming History: A Country Kitchen

Lois Kennedy, CKD, Portfolio Kitchens, Vienna, Virginia
Photography by Lydia Cutter

The Fairfax County home that Richard and Jane Braun purchased in late 2004 came with its own slice of history: a pre-Revolutionary War log cabin that, legend has it, was part of an estate owned by the family of one of Martha Washington's daughters.

Previous owners of the five-acre property painstakingly restored the cabin, and used it as a guesthouse. So when the Brauns moved into the main house (which is around 20 years old) and started a major kitchen renovation, they took inspiration from the log cabin. The idea was to design a rustic country kitchen using details in synch with those found in an 18th-century home. They turned to Lois Kennedy not only to help them plan a functional kitchen, but to create an ambiance evocative of their property's historic past.

The overall plan enlarged the kitchen, bumping it out toward the backyard and the log cabin. The new space accommodates a large bi-level island, a professional-grade stove with dual ovens, a separate third oven, two sinks plus a wet bar. The layout works well whether the homeowners are having a quick breakfast, a family meal or a party for 50. The new kitchen also opens to the spacious family room, an ideal setup for entertaining.

From floor to ceiling, the finishes Kennedy and her clients selected exude a worn, rustic patina. Ceramic floor tiles resemble aged terra cotta. Reclaimed solid wood beams line the beadboard ceiling.

Kennedy used antique brick around the stove to suggest an old-fashioned hearth with chimney. Reclaimed barn wood on



Cherry
cabinetry
encloses the
refrigerator.



A TV hides
behind barn
wood doors.

"I TRY TO MAKE EACH KITCHEN...
ONE OF A KIND AND GIVE IT
THAT TIMELESS QUALITY,

ROOTED IN HISTORY, THAT'S NOT GOING
TO FADE AWAY OR GO OUT OF STYLE NEXT YEAR."

—LOIS KENNEDY

a cabinet above the stove conceals a television. The same wood fronts the cabinetry beneath the hammered copper sink.

A variety of cabinet and countertop finishes creates visual interest. On the central island, distressed concrete tops rustic barn wood shelves, while the adjacent cabinetry is topped with honed granite. Around the main kitchen sink, a deeper, olive green granite was used.

There are also three types of cabinetry in the space: Cherry that Kennedy had distressed and cracked, antiqued golden cabinets and knotty butternut wood cabinets with leaded glass doors in the bar area.

Jane Braun's home office just off the kitchen is her "control central," says Kennedy. "She wanted a little desk area that was out of sight but just off the kitchen." A cupboard with beadboard doors in Williamsburg green carries the country feel into her space, which leads to a full pantry.

The Brauns are thrilled with the end results of their renovation. "It's wonderful when you have people who aren't afraid of having some personality and want to give a signature character to a space," says Kennedy.



The sinks are
hammered copper.