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THIS PHOTO The refrigerator and freezer are hidden behind cabinetry designed to look like a large armoire in this country French-inspired kitchen. Contrasting cream-colored cabinets set off the prep island. **OPPOSITE** A hammered-bronze sink set into the island's walnut top brings rustic texture to the work zone.



welcome . patina

A mix of materials and finishes brings old-world charm to a once-boring builder kitchen.

Field Editor Jessica Brinkert Holtam Photographer Werner Segarra

TEXTURAL TREATS ABOUND IN THIS PARADISE VALLEY, ARIZONA, KITCHEN:

Travertine tile graces the floor, a walnut top highlights the island, and a cast-stone hood adds old-world appeal above the range. The space feels as if it's been slowly decorated over time—as all good country French-inspired kitchens do. In reality, the cooking space is a relatively new space that was once a dark and depressing builder kitchen filled with wood, wood, and more wood.

The amazing transformation comes courtesy of Los Angeles-based interior designer Jennifer Dyer. It's not often that designers get carte blanche to make over a space, but the homeowner in this case willingly handed over the reins. "He told me to treat the kitchen like it was mine—to do what I would do if I were going to live in the house," Dyer says.

She envisioned a light, airy room that would be a warm and inviting space to gather with friends and family. To accomplish that, her first task was to paint and glaze the stained knotty-alder cabinets, covering the too-dark wood with a blue-green paint and a smoky gray glaze. "In all my designs, I try to incorporate painted cabinetry," Dyer says. "It's a more custom look and much more interesting to me than brown tones."

Next, she replaced a wood range hood with a new cast-stone model that sets the room's old-world tone—country French with a bit of Mediterranean thrown in. With its classic curves and textural surface, the hood now serves as a stunning focal point for the cooking zone, instead of blending into the background. "It just changed the whole kitchen," Dyer says.

She also ripped out an awkward elevated sitting area that once accommodated two desks and replaced it with an inviting banquette that serves as a seamless continuation of the kitchen's style. Turquoise armchairs (a lucky junk-store find) mix with an upholstered bench to create a welcoming dining area. "I love using actual, real furniture in a kitchen," Dyer says. "You need to have something that's a little more comfortable and inviting than hard kitchen chairs."

Filled with tantalizing textures and contrasting finishes, the cooking zone is now a more comfortable space where imperfections—a chip here, or a scratch there—will only add to the beauty over time. It doesn't look brand-new—and that's a good thing. "This kitchen has personality now," Dyer says.

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Painted and glazed cabinets lighten a once-drab space with soft color. Travertine floor tiles add pleasing texture underfoot.



ABOVE LEFT A second island holds the main sink and dishwasher as well as a bar-height counter for snacks and casual meals. Pewter knobs and an oil-rubbed bronze faucet showcase the room's mix of finishes.

ABOVE A cast-stone range hood stands out from surrounding cabinetry and gives the room a distinctive focal point. A pot-filler faucet and pro-style range provide up-to-date function. **LEFT** A metal bread box—a flea market find—contributes to the kitchen's collected-over-time appeal. Cabinets extend to the ceiling for maximum storage space.

OPPOSITE The new dining area helps soften the kitchen's hard edges, thanks to a cozy upholstered bench designed to look like a settee. A stone base adds heft to the table.