

# San Antonio

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## Kitchens: Heart of the House

Function may be one of the most important design elements of a kitchen, but in these four rooms, personality and style elevate them to gathering spaces

BY KATHLEEN PETTY



## Statement Maker

The owner of this high-rise home knew exactly what she didn't want when it came to the center countertop slab in her kitchen: something basic. With her directive, architect Tobin Smith and his team searched for options that featured blue—a rarely occurring color in nature—and landed on a Blue Louise quartzite slab that serves as the focal point of the open space. “Many people see a connection to water, but I see sky,” Smith says. “Perfect for a penthouse.” The cabinets, ceiling and wall are a continuation of the great room, where white walls and a pleated ceiling design allow daylight to “paint the surfaces with lights and shadows.” The owner travels frequently for work and wanted all the basic amenities, plus a built-in coffee system, but didn't require an area outfitted for elaborate cooking. “All the critical pieces of a kitchen are there without being obvious,”

Smith says. “But the island is designed to sing!” Turn the page for three more innovative kitchen designs.



## Reclaimed Space

Homeowners Christina Reck and Michael Guerra love to entertain, but the cramped kitchen in their 1928 Government Hill home didn't leave much space for elaborate cooking, let alone for guests. With the help of architect Elizabeth Haynes and contractor Bryan Burns (Reck's brother-in-law), they transformed the space. A wall was knocked out to expand the kitchen into an old hallway and French doors were installed where there was once just a small window. The original pine floors provided inspiration for the island and floating shelves, which Burns created out of reclaimed wood and fabricated steel. Guerra, who loves to cook, selected the double oven with range stove top. An old fireplace was removed from the kitchen and its bricks salvaged to create a backsplash. A built-in desk and shelves along the sidewall were refinished to match the island and a stainless steel countertop added. “It really fits the time period of the house and the clients' lifestyle,” Haynes says.





## South Texas Hacienda

Even in new builds, Michael G. Imber Architects aim to incorporate history. When clients asked for a hunting lodge reminiscent of South Texas' Old Spanish Colonial style, the firm crafted a home that is beautiful *and* practical by relying on classic styles with modern touches. "We like to have a deep understanding of history and precedent and the DNA of architecture," says Michael G. Imber. The retreat, known as Rancho Dos Vidas, includes masonry walls colored to match the sand on the property, which is about 50 miles southwest of San Antonio. Old Spanish kitchens utilized basic materials, Imber says, so the masonry is complemented in the lodge's kitchen with a vaulted reclaimed longleaf

pine ceiling. Imber and his clients traveled to Mexico to find handmade tiles and had windows built to look like antique frames they'd seen there. Light fixtures are kept minimal, with one hidden amid the hanging pots over the center counter. Instead of a marble or granite slab on top of cabinets, the counter was built out of tile and the cabinets constructed to fit inside. Brown and black stains were layered onto the concrete floor and the stove built into an area that would have been a cooking station in a traditional hacienda. The tall Spanish windows overlook a courtyard with fountains, truly setting the desired atmosphere.



## Industrial Chic

The kitchen in this home at The Canyons at Scenic Loop may not look like Hotel Emma, but designer Lori Caldwell says the boutique hotel was her inspiration. “I softened the look but used metals and brass and faucets that are reminiscent of its industrial feel,” she says. Caldwell, who owns Lori Caldwell Designs, created a timeless look that’s still on trend by mixing metals, like the muted brass fixtures and darker metal oven hood and light fixtures. The backsplash is handmade glazed tile and is meant to be the focal point, providing color inspiration for the metals and island. Painted blue-green, the island is topped with marble and accented with cabinets below. “So often you lose the space underneath the bar,” Caldwell says. “White kitchens have been all the rage for four or five years, so I wanted to take it a little farther and make it a little more modern.”

PHOTOS: HIGH-RISE: MARK MENJIVAR; RECLAIMED: TWIST TOURS; SOUTH TEXAS: HESTER + HARDAWAY; INDUSTRIAL: MATTHEW NIEMANN PHOTOGRAPHY

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