

Pecan Pie Cake: Rated Tops in Our Test Kitchens

# Southern Living®

OCTOBER 1998

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# (home) Economy

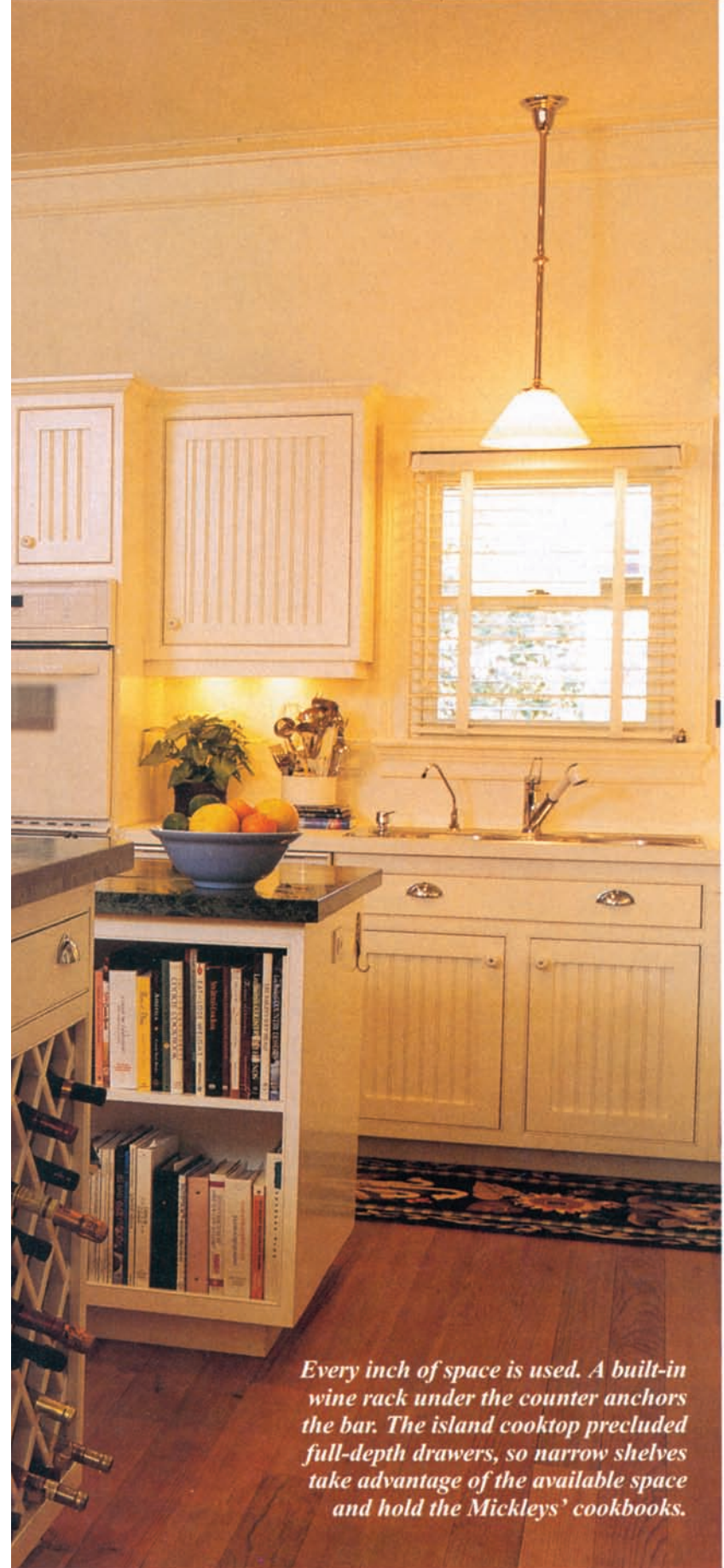
*Here's how one family  
stuck to a budget and  
included special features,  
without sacrificing style.*

Everyone knows that too many cooks can lead to trouble in the kitchen. The same could be said about too many designers. When it came time to remodel their kitchen, Rod Mickley gave his wife, Lyra, the lead—even though Rod is a full-time designer with an active practice and a shop in Vero Beach, Florida.

Lyra was a home economics major in college before she went to design school, and now she's the primary cook for their active family with three boys. "I know how I work and how I cook, so I know how my kitchen should be laid out," says Lyra.

A compact and efficient work triangle (the three imaginary lines that connect the cooktop, sink, and refrigerator) was the first requirement. Rod and Lyra also wanted lots of light, plenty of storage, and direct access to the family living spaces.

For a crisp, contemporary look utilizing traditional materials, Lyra chose



*Every inch of space is used. A built-in wine rack under the counter anchors the bar. The island cooktop precluded full-depth drawers, so narrow shelves take advantage of the available space and hold the Mickleys' cookbooks.*

BY LYNN NESMITH  
PHOTOGRAPHY JEAN ALLSOPP





*ABOVE: The pantry offers ample shelving for staples and counterspace for appliances that aren't used every day. LEFT: A tall glass-fronted display closet offers practical storage and echoes the scale of the adjacent stainless refrigerator.*



white cabinets with beaded-board door insets and carpenter detailing. Chrome pulls enhance the cabinets' straightforward lines. To ensure a workable floor plan, Lyra placed the cooktop in the island and stacked double ovens along the perimeter wall close to the sink.

Because the existing kitchen was small with a low ceiling, major structural changes were necessary. "Raising the ceiling height from 8 to 10 feet was expensive," says Lyra. "So we had to find other ways to save money that wouldn't detract from the overall design."

#### A TALL ORDER

To showcase their china and colorful dishes, Lyra incorporated one tall display closet (left). Using standard doors with glass insets and simple shelves offered significant savings over custom wall-

mounted cabinets. The depth and height of the closet provides lots of storage.

#### COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

Dark green marble countertops were the main splurge. Lyra found an economical compromise: The richly textured marble surface was reserved for the bar counter and island; other counters are clad in less expensive white plastic laminate. She says, "The marble is incredibly durable, and the white laminate cleans up easily with bleach—a necessity with our boys."

#### BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Rather than every wall of the kitchen being lined with cabinets, two large closets were incorporated into the design. "The closets offer a visual break from all the cabinets," says Lyra. "It's also a much more economical way to get extra storage." (To page 136)



*At mealtime, the computer closet is easily closed off to hide clutter. The antique chairs and farm table offer a nice counterpoint to the crisp white surfaces.*

With close proximity to the kitchen's work triangle, one closet serves as a pantry with storage shelves, counter-space, deep drawers, and electrical outlets. "I don't like cluttered counters," she says. "This way I still have access to the small appliances that, when not in use, can be closed off from view." Because the shelves and cabinets aren't visible

*The Mickleys' home office is conveniently located between the kitchen and family room.*

when the doors are closed, a less expensive line of stock components was used inside the closet.

Both sets of closet doors are basic bi-fold units that swing outward. Stock trim molding applied to the panels adds a level of architectural detail for a fraction of the cost of custom wood doors.

In the breakfast area, the closet opens up to reveal an efficient home office. A deep counter provides space for the computer terminal, and a pull-out shelf accommodates the keyboard. "It's the perfect location for the boys' computer. When I'm fixing dinner it's easy to keep an eye on what they are doing," says Lyra.

The design of this kitchen is a lot like a scrumptious recipe. A few choice ingredients were used in proper proportions, and less expensive substitutions are barely noticeable. In the end, everybody is perfectly satisfied—and no one has overindulged. ◇

*(For sources turn to page 211.)*