



HOUSTON EUROPEAN

Designer Pamela Pierce uses plaster cabinetry, limestone flooring and antiques to achieve a **rustic yet sophisticated** look for her Texas kitchen

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN KARLISCH/TEXT BY VANESSA KOGEVINAS

"I like clean kitchens—European-feeling kitchens with plaster hoods, wood beams and lots of light," says designer Pamela Pierce. But when Pierce began remodeling the kitchen in her own Houston, Texas, residence, which was built in the 1920s, she found the middle of the room

limited by a coal shaft that couldn't be removed, thereby reducing the amount of usable space. The solution—"Along an entire wall, I put in metal-framed doors that open up to a patio," explains Pierce, "and from the inside, seeing the garden made the kitchen feel much bigger. I can

(ABOVE & RIGHT): Reclaimed Italian Cathedral Stone flooring and reclaimed marble counter-tops from **Chateau Domingue**.





“I have to have a lot of light,” says Pamela Pierce. “That makes for a more pleasant environment.”

entertain and move out into that area, where there’s also an outdoor kitchen.

“I have to have a lot of light, so I also put in a big window over the sink,” she continues. “I do this in most kitchens because I think that having so much light makes for a more pleasant environment to be in and to cook in. It just seems to make people happier.” Not a fan of upper cabinets, Pierce chose to build a plaster floor-to-ceiling open pantry at one end of the kitchen, where she displays and stores her dishes and glasses. In front of the open pantry sits an antique Swedish drop-leaf table surrounded by eighteenth-century Dutch chairs, creating a cozy, visually interesting area. “I have the open shelves,” she notes, “but then I also have deep drawers and will be adding a butler’s pantry for more storage. Another thing that I’m doing in most kitchens is building a counter-height shelf in traditional pantries so that you can have the coffeemaker, toaster, and so on, out of sight. And then you don’t have to have those appliance garages.”

For her cabinetry, Pierce experimented for the first time with plaster, and having seen the positive results, clients are now requesting it. “All the walls in the house are plaster, so I built the outsides of the cabinets with plaster. For the cab-

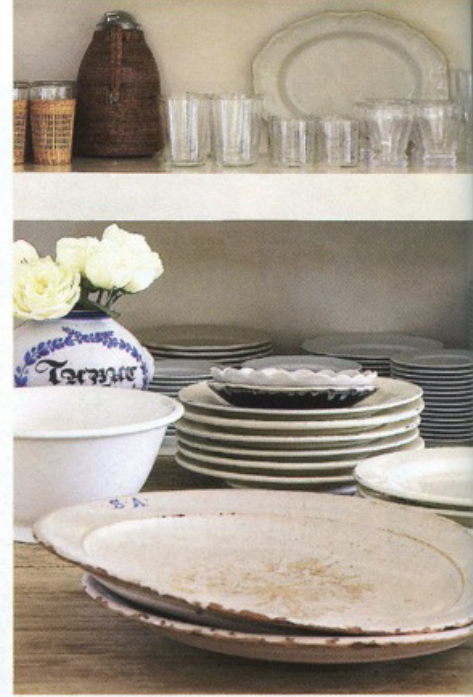
ABOVE: Horizontal beams accent the windows, while limestone flooring and plaster cabinets add texture to the uncluttered space. A French baker’s table with a marble top is used as an island. ABOVE RIGHT: Pierce stores her French sterling flatware in a vintage champagne basket.



KEEPING IT LIGHT AND SIMPLE

- A wall of metal-framed windows and doors floods the kitchen with light. The doors open onto a patio, which increases the usable space for entertaining.
- An oversize window installed above the sink lets in additional light.
- Light-hued plaster cabinets and flooring give the kitchen a fresh atmosphere.
- Instead of having upper cabinets, Pierce designed a floor-to-ceiling plaster pantry for storage. Orderly stacks of her monochromatic dinnerware add interest.
- The minimal use of hardware enhances the kitchen’s uncluttered ambience.
- A sitting area extends off of the kitchen and creates a comfortable space for gathering.
- Pierce uses antiques, including a French baker’s table and oak chairs from Holland, throughout the space to add character.

“A floor-to-ceiling plaster pantry houses my dishes,” notes Pierce, “so I don’t need upper cabinets. And it’s a fun way to display collections.” **RIGHT, TOP:** Antique Italian chargers and other dishes are organized in stacks. **RIGHT, BOTTOM:** Pierce keeps her glassware on exposed marble shelves.



etry drawers and doors, I used old pine flooring from a cheese shop in Sweden,” she explains. “The flooring, eighteenth-century Italian cathedral stone, is a little bit busy, so the plaster keeps it cleaner, and using minimal hardware helps with that as well.” In keeping with the style, even the Viking refrigerator is set in a plaster alcove. Statuary marble is used for the countertops, shelving, and a backsplash in a small preparation area that has a second sink beside the refrigerator.

Antiques are prevalent in the space and serve to give it an authentic and a more intimate feeling, yet they are also functional—French sterling flatware is stored in a vintage champagne basket, and a nineteenth-century French baker’s table doubles as an island.

“I think you should be open to the idea of doing away with upper cabinets,” says Pierce. “Instead, build a floor-to-ceiling dish pantry, which houses everything. And have lots of light. It’s one of the most important things that I look for in a kitchen.” +

FLOOR PLAN

- 1 Floor-to-ceiling plaster pantry
- 2 Dining table
- 3 Sitting area
- 4 Preparation area
- 5 Refrigerator
- 6 Island
- 7 Sink
- 8 Range
- 9 Pantry

