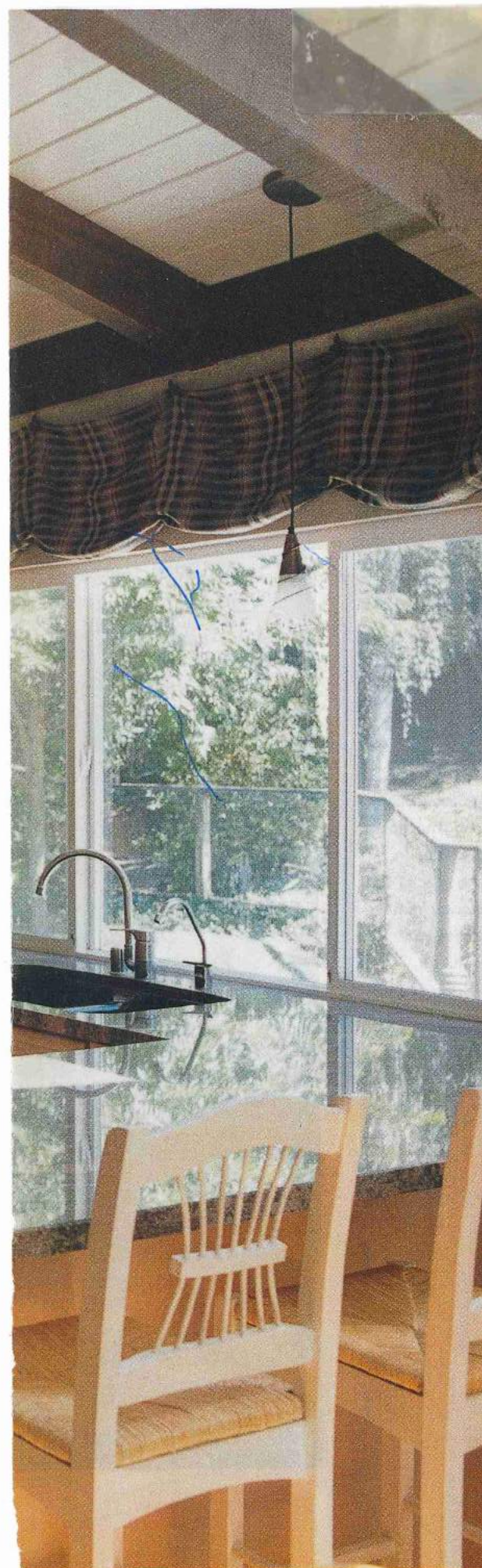


tuscan TREASURE

Minor adjustments transform a dated kitchen into a space filled with warmth and charm.

PHOTOGRAPHY: KATHLEEN AHERN

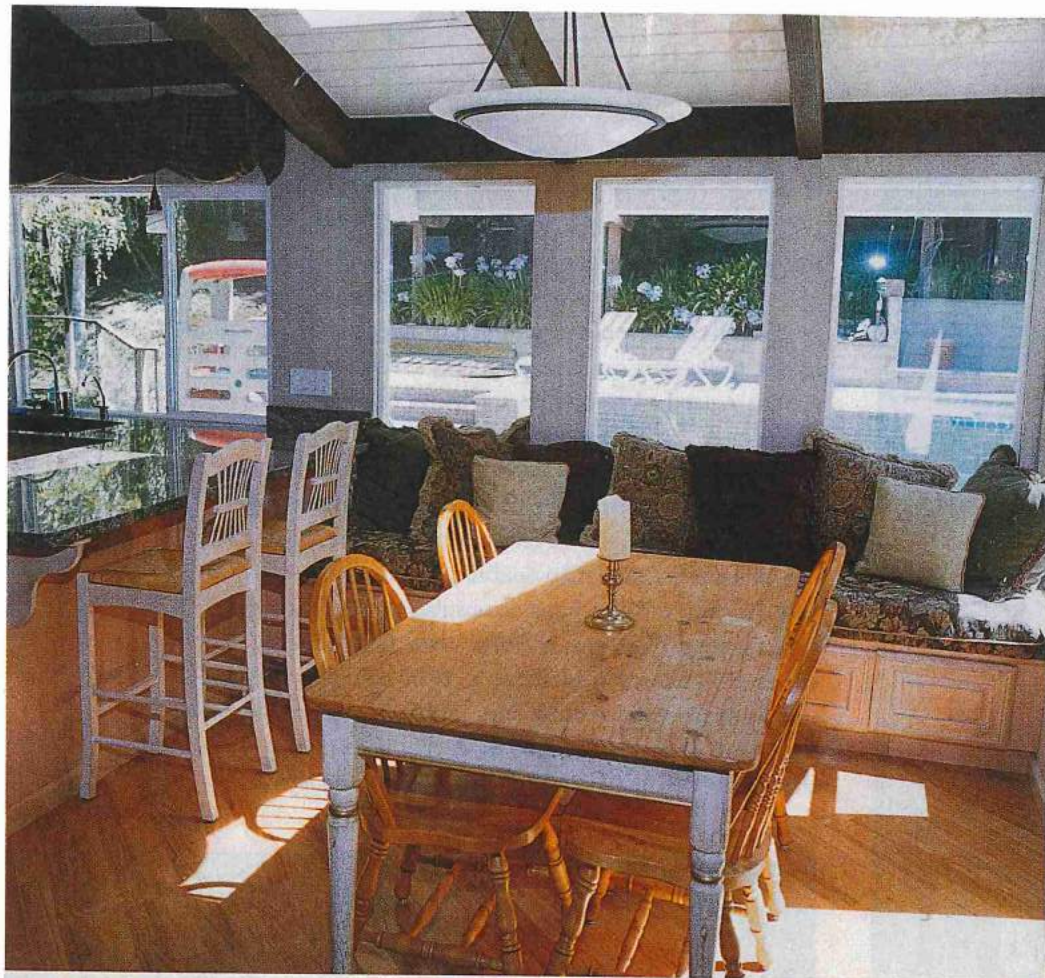


When George and Darlene Gayler, of Gayler Construction Company in Hayward, California, were asked to update this typical 1980s space, they jumped at the chance to maximize its functionality and give the space the feel of an old Italian farmhouse. The kitchen's flaws were not uncommon to spaces of this era: poor layout; inadequate casual seating; awkwardly positioned appliances; and a lack of light and access to exterior views, which made the kitchen look drab and uninviting.

George Gayler bumped out only one section of wall by three feet to gain needed breathing room. Design changes included repositioning the refrigerator from the exterior wall to a facing wall; more than doubling the size of the window over the sink; and creating a peninsula and window seat for casual sitting. The 9-foot cooking alcove fits seamlessly within the kitchen's work triangle. Warm cabinets with custom interiors replaced dated ones, and skylights now flood the room with sunlight. The final product: a Tuscan-style kitchen that works well and looks inviting.—Colleen Macdonald



LEFT: The Italian country look was achieved with earthy-looking products such as the wood floor, rose-infused granite countertops, and a cultured stone surround in the cooking alcove. ABOVE: The existing ceiling beams fit right into the Tuscan theme and were left in place. The original plank ceiling was given a fresh coat of paint.



ABOVE: A window seat was the perfect solution for guest seating; hidden storage under it maximizes the space. BELOW: "The most challenging aspect of the project," says designer/contractor George Gayler, "was the unusual angles of the existing space." To avoid more angles, he pulled the cabinets six inches away from the back wall so they would be flush with everything else. RIGHT: Added windows let the back yard become a focal point. SEE BUYING GUIDE FOR DETAILS

