



Beth Whitlinger's Vision for the 2005 House of Design Creates the Parisian-Style Kitchen of Two Homeowners' Dreams.

WRITTEN BY BRICE COOPER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN KING


Orange County, California

When it came time to create the kitchen of their dreams, Venelin and Veronica Khristov did what any other homeowners would do. They gave up their home for six months and donated it to the Philharmonic Society of Orange County to be used as the 2005 House of Design. House of Design, a charity that benefits Orange County youth programs, uses a team of talented designers to redesign an entire home in three months using top-of-the-line products donated from various vendors. After the home is completed, the Philharmonic Society charges upwards of \$30 a person to showcase the creation to the public.

Although there were thirteen other designers working on the project, interior designer Beth Whitlinger, a member of the Orange County chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers, was given the task of creating a beautiful dream kitchen capturing the Parisian high style her clients had wished for. Beth worked alongside homeowner Veronica Khristov to create a vision that they both believed would convey the look of a formal European kitchen without being too stuffy. "The home's exterior played a large role in inspiring the kitchen's overall theme," said Whitlinger. "The client expressed to me that they wanted to capture an essence of Europe that would better coincide with the look of their home as a whole." Veronica had always lusted after a Clive Christian kitchen with the beautiful glazed cabinetry and ornate trim that make this style of kitchen so desirable. Because Christian rooms can cost upwards of a quarter million dollars, Beth had to find companies that provided great products for reasonable prices. She was lucky to find a Canadian company by the name of Cuisine Laurier Inc., which produced the gorgeous glazed cabinets that serve as an anchor for the room.

"To continue with the European theme, we painted the existing box beam ceilings a dark wood color to really emphasize the look of French country," said Whitlinger. She was quick to point out the subtle fleur-de-lis that adorns the hood over the stove like a coat of arms. This theme was carried out on the ceilings to tie the scheme together. Beth and Veronica agree that one of their favorite parts of the kitchen is the massive island in the center of the space, topped with stunning black granite laced with silver veining and surrounded by intricate moldings from Enkeboll Designs. "The island is not only beautiful, but it gives my family more space to use when we entertain," said Veronica. She was also quite pleased by the way the countertop bumps out to bring her closer to her bay window while working in the space. "I love to look out my window and see wildlife and all that nature has to offer." When she is not looking to nature for inspiration, Veronica can tune into the television that is cleverly hidden behind one of the massive hand-glazed cabinets.

If it were not for the generous donations of various vendors, the kitchen's grand total would have been in the neighborhood of \$170,000. This may seem like a substantial amount to pay for a space to prepare a meal, yet Veronica could not be more pleased with the outcome. "We use this space for more than just preparing meals. This has become a gathering space for my family to spend time in as well." All of these donated products would be wasted if not for the talented eyes of Beth Whitlinger. Her design not only captures the essence of a formal European kitchen, but it also proves that when it comes to creating a dream kitchen, it's the smallest details that make for a delightful topping to a feast for the eyes. ■



Seeking to capture the essence of Europe in this kitchen, designer Beth Whitlinger merged a European style along with the homes' Southern California location to create a kitchen masterpiece.

"The island is not only beautiful, but it gives my family more space to use when we entertain."