

TALE OF TWO KITCHENS

A busy family of five keeps kosher in a stylized Southern house they commissioned in Sandy Springs.

By Stephanie Smith
Photography by Willett Photography

Several Fridays a month, this family of five has 15 to 20 people over to break bread for Shabbat dinner. To accommodate this important ritual, and allow them to keep kosher as well, they enlisted Rodolfo Castro of Castro Design Studio to build a Sandy Springs abode that had not one kitchen, but two. "There's an everyday kitchen with a smaller prep kitchen behind it," says Castro, who says the client came to him after becoming familiar with another house he designed.

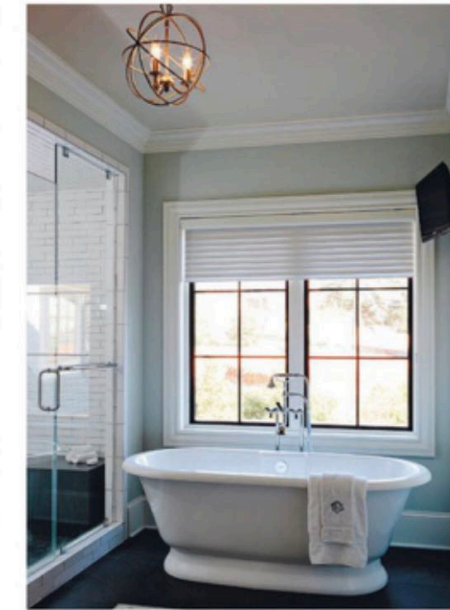
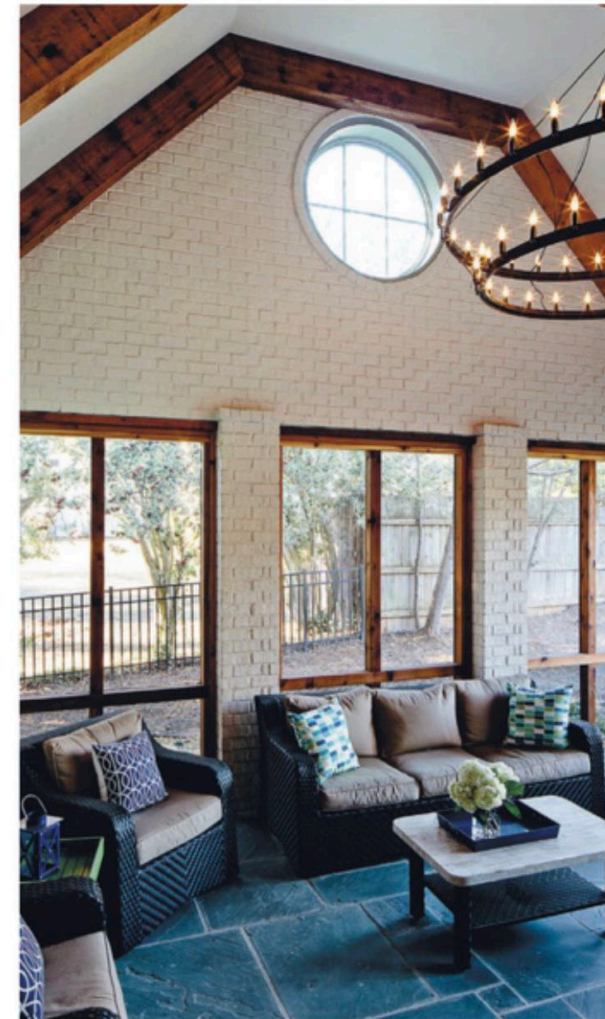
Chelsea Dunbar of BLU interiors, who has worked with Castro on other projects, was hired on as the interior designer after having created spaces for both the client's sister-in-law and mother-in-law. "I love working with [Castro]. He designed the elevations of the kitchen, did all the millwork and always does a beautiful job," says Dunbar, who has crafted many kosher kitchens for clients and knows the ins and outs of installing two dishwashers, as well as keeping separate areas and counters for dairy from meat. "We used quartzite countertops, which is harder than marble or granite and not penetrable." Its denseness means manufacturers have to use certain blades to cut it to fit. "Quartzite is the only way to not use marble and still get a light-colored, natural stone," she says, adding the problem with limited light or white granite choices.



ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT
Because the family entertains so frequently, Dunbar thought it would be a clever idea to use typical outdoor fabrics and materials inside because they are durable and so easy to clean. The coffee table's natural stone surface is as chic as it is practical, as it won't show drink marks.



NATURAL FEEL An important facet of the kitchen is its unique use of quartzite on the countertops, which is both harder and less penetrable than marble. The hanging light fixture from Gabby serves as an artistic piece that ties the room together.



HEIGHT OF THE MATTER From left: The indoor patio is the pinnacle of Dunbar's concept for mixing indoor and outdoor designs. The rustic-chic chandelier complements the natural stone floors and wooden accents along the tall windows and doors; the master bath, a contrast of stark whites and dark charcoals, emphasizes the stunning light fixtures, which include the chandelier from Ballard Designs and the sconces from Circa Lighting.

In the main kitchen, custom cabinetry cradles the quatrefoil backsplash tile from Walker Zanger, which, in turn, mirrors the shape of the chandelier in the cozy breakfast nook. "We spent a lot of time on lighting in the house," explains Dunbar, who says the client came to the table with dozens and dozens of Pinterest pins. "Each one was handselected by the client and acts as kind of an art piece in the room. It serves a purpose, but is also beautiful." Instead of choosing one line of light fixtures throughout the home, Dunbar prefers a kind of piecemeal approach that allows different fixtures to work together.

The resulting feel of the house is clean and contemporary with much of the lighting coming from Ballard Designs and Circa Lighting, furnishings by Gabby and Century, and certain high-end accessories by Stanton Home Furnishings.

Knowing the family entertained a lot, the pair took pains with designs and choices to make sure they could throw a party seamlessly. "I love how we designed the house to have a large dining room that opens to the front porch," says Castro. "By doing this, they could double the amount of seating for big family gatherings. It also connects the house to the

front yard and makes for a great entertaining area."

To make it livable and comfortable, Dunbar accented Castro's vision by integrating durable materials such as tough acrylic kitchen stools, a natural stone coffee table that wouldn't show drink rings and outdoor washable fabrics on the breakfast-nook chairs. "We used a lot of outdoor fabrics inside because they're so easy to take care of," shares Dunbar, adding many of the building materials and fabrics were eco-friendly.

Castro used arched front doors to "set the tone as you approach the house," he says, adding a pronounced curve and sidelights to give it a distinct character. The archways are repeated throughout the downstairs level of the home, giving off an equally welcoming feel to guests—no doors close rooms off from company. Happily ensconced in their new home, the owners credit Castro and Dunbar with helping them hit the right note. "My job as I see it is to help clients create a house that is perfect for them, not me," he says. "What I love most about this house though, is getting photos of different family events they've held in it." ■

DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE
Single-family home

LOCATION
Sandy Springs

INTERIOR DESIGN
BLU interiors
Chelsea Dunbar with Jessica Park
bluinteriors.com

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
Castro Design Studio
Rodolfo Castro
castrodesignstudio.com

CONTRACTOR/CONSTRUCTION
**Design Construction
by Craftmaster Inc.**
Eddie Levin
404.372.0300

RESOURCES
JPS Custom Cabinets
Bathroom and kitchen custom cabinetry
678.525.7157

Ballard Designs
Master bath chandelier
ballarddesigns.com

Circa Lighting
Master bath sconces
circalighting.com

Walker Zanger
Kitchen tile
walkerzanger.com

Specialty Tile Products
Bathroom floor tile
specialtytile.com

Century Furniture
Living room sectional sofa
adacatlanta.com/showrooms

Stanton Home Furnishings
Living room accessories
stantonhomefurnishings.com

Ferguson
Bathroom and kitchen fixtures
ferguson.com

Gabby
Kitchen light fixtures
gabbyhome.com

CB2
Kitchen acrylic stools
cb2.com