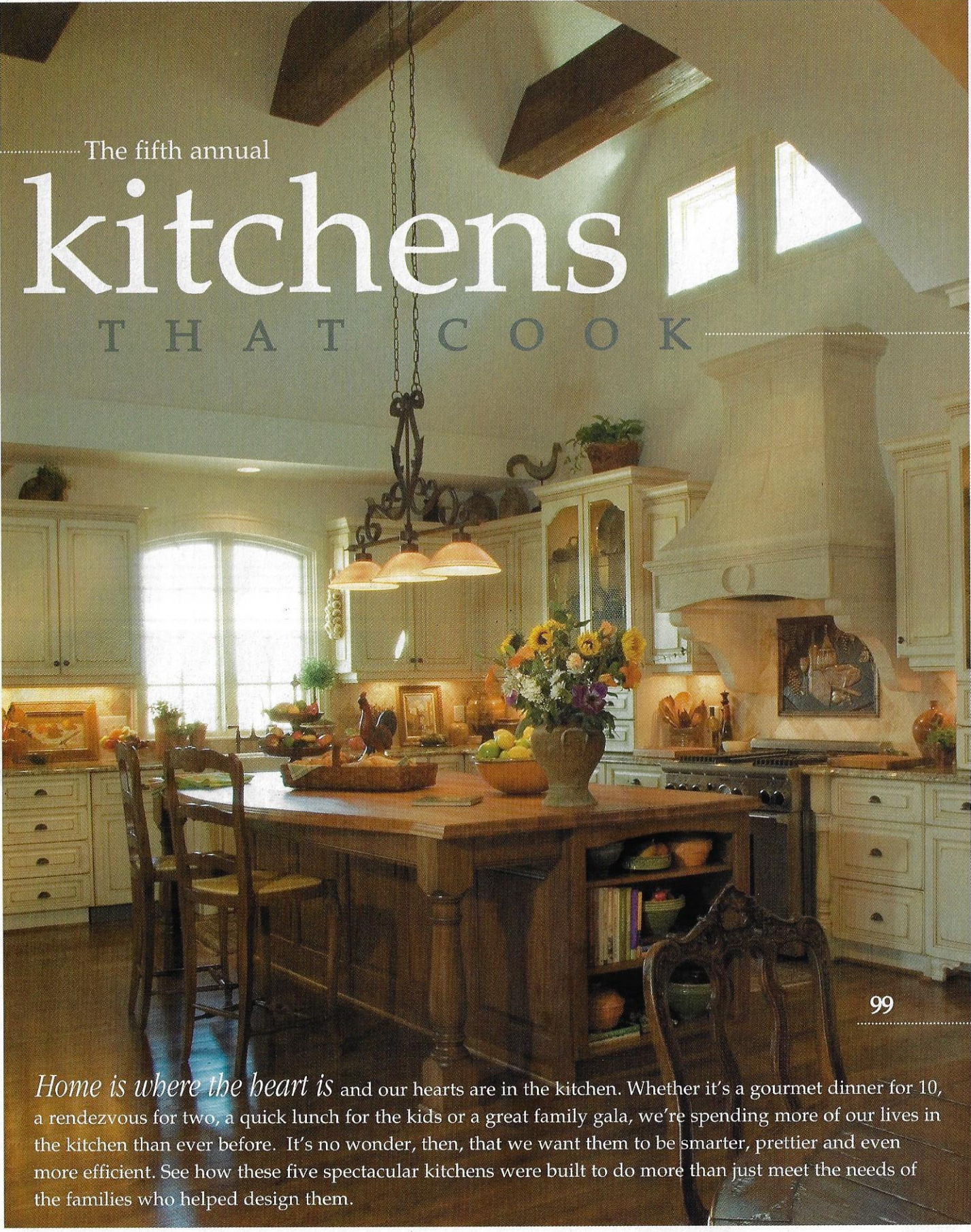




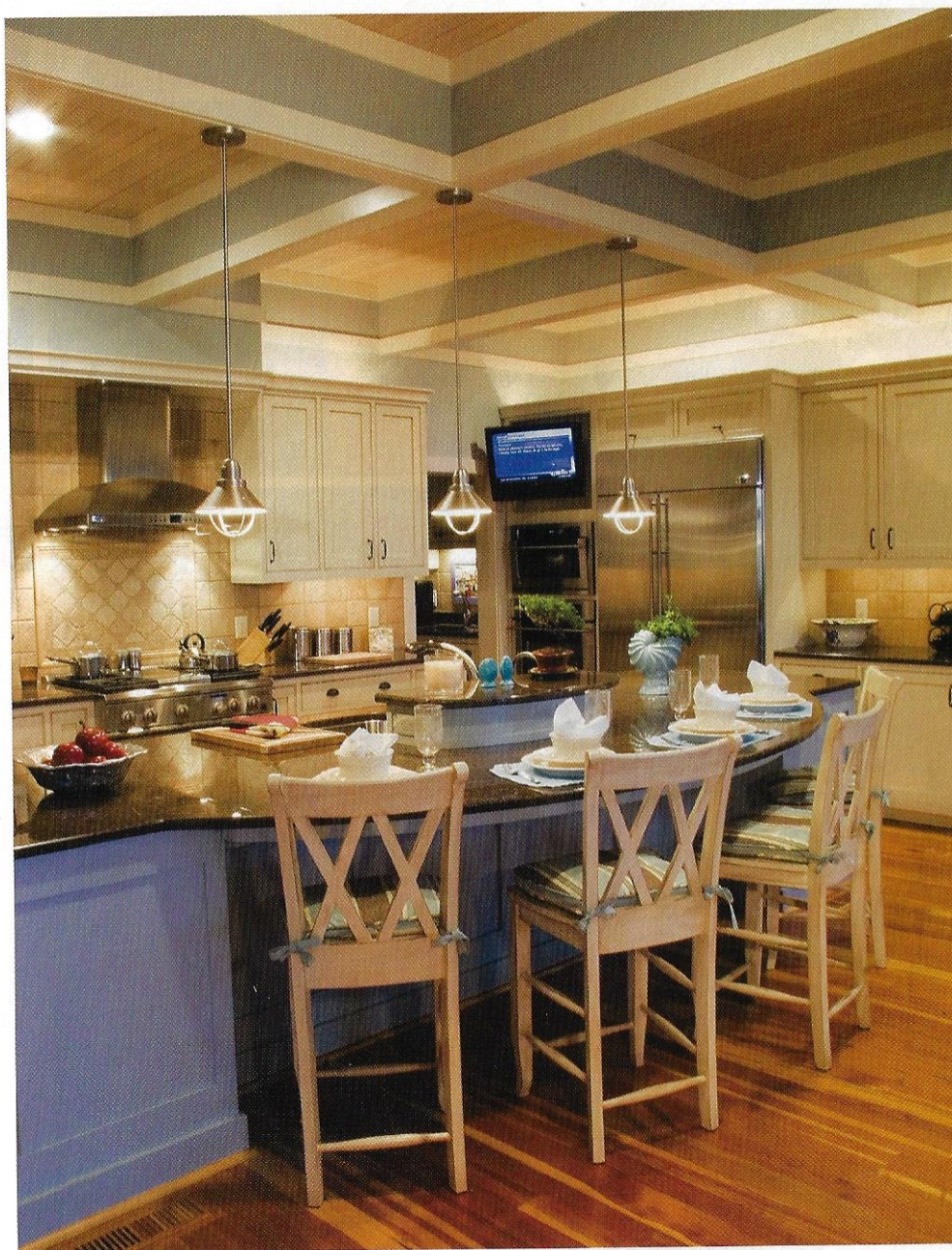
The fifth annual

kitchens

T H A T C O O K

99

Home is where the heart is and our hearts are in the kitchen. Whether it's a gourmet dinner for 10, a rendezvous for two, a quick lunch for the kids or a great family gala, we're spending more of our lives in the kitchen than ever before. It's no wonder, then, that we want them to be smarter, prettier and even more efficient. See how these five spectacular kitchens were built to do more than just meet the needs of the families who helped design them.



After 13 years in a more traditional home in Landfall, Mary Beth Couper loves the openness of her kitchen in the new home she and her husband Lee built off Greenville Loop Road.

"We wanted to have this open feeling," she says, standing beneath the high ceilings of an expansive kitchen that blends into a formal dining area and great room. Large windows on the opposite wall provide an unencumbered view of Hewletts Creek view from the 12 1/2-foot island where Mary Beth preps, cooks and cleans up.

"In our old home, the kitchen was separated from the dining room and the

dining room was separated from the great room. Typically, in the past, when we had guests, everyone would congregate in the kitchen, and that's true here, too. But they are more apt to mingle in other parts of the house," she says.

Rectangular on three sides, it is arched on the four-seat final side. The shape allows conversational eye contact without

A drop-beam ceiling creates a coffered effect over the Couper kitchen, a study in native woods, Carolina blues, pale cream and iridescent granite countertops. An elliptical apron adds an informal seating area to the central island.

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kitchens that cook | the open sea

Right: Lee Cowper, the home's owner and builder, designed the inlaid tile backsplash behind the range. Far right: Flavored oils and vinegars are within easy reach in a vertical storage rack. Below: The

open kitchen flows into the dining and living rooms where exposed trusses resemble an inverted ship's hull and continuous floor-to-ceiling windows welcome views of Hewletts Creek.



- Building Contractor** Lee F. Cowper, Inc.
- Architect** Kevin Pfirman
- Interior Design** Village Design Group of Southern Pines — Pam Hill
- Faucet/Plumbing Hardware** Ferguson Enterprises
- Plumbing** Precision Plumbing Contracting, Inc.
- Electric** Seaport Electric Company
- Wood Flooring** Cape Fear Riverwood
- Countertops** Cape Fear Marble & Tile
- Painting** Derrick Barton
- Cabinets** Custom Wood Products, Inc.
- Carpentry Trim** James Topping
- Appliances/Interior Hardware** Atlantic Appliance & Hardware
- Tile** In Line Marble and Tile
- Lighting** Coastal Lighting Supply Company
- Carpet** Sutton's Rugs & Carpets
- Interior Millwork** Stephenson Millwork Company, Inc.
- Window Treatment** Wilmington Blind, Shutter and Closet

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the neck strain that a linear arrangement would impose. So heavy is the granite overhang, it is supported by a cleverly designed steel brace.

A tile relief backsplash above the stove was designed by Lee. "My husband drew that out on a piece of paper," Mary Beth says. "He is really good at perceiving things and seeing exactly how things are going to fit."

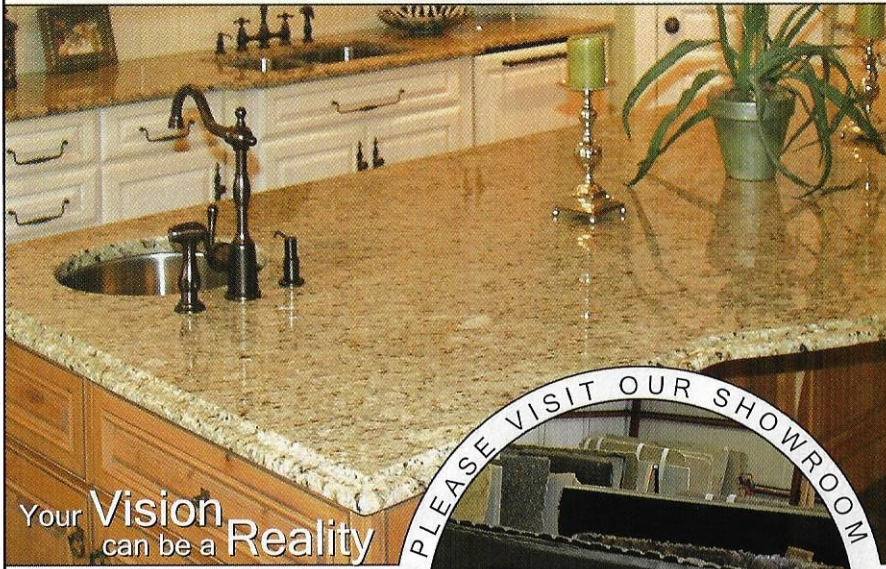
A walk-in butler's pantry behind the stove includes a wine rack, built-in desk, countertops and a second sink, where large cookware might be soaked, out of sight. Food staples are stored in a second pantry off the entrance hall.

For their cabinets, the Cowpers chose a slightly distressed, cream finish, accented by a blue wall beneath cedar ceilings over heart pine floors. "These boards actually came out of an old textile mill in South Carolina," Mary Beth says. Wood in the kitchen is not a problem, and she cleans the floor with just plain water. "This wood is softer than your 'normal' wood," she muses. "And if you drop something on it, you have an instant dent. That just gives it more character," she adds with a laugh.

Ultimately, it all comes down to function. The Cowpers entertain frequently — once or twice a month, by Mary Beth's estimation — and the kitchen is easy to use, right down to the built-in spice and oil drawers adjacent to the stove. These drawers, like all the others in the kitchen, are self-closing.

She does the cooking, Mary Beth says, but claims no particular specialty. "I like a lot of pasta dishes, chicken dishes, different kinds of salads. I'm not good at seafood," she says, reserving those entrees for her husband, not guests.

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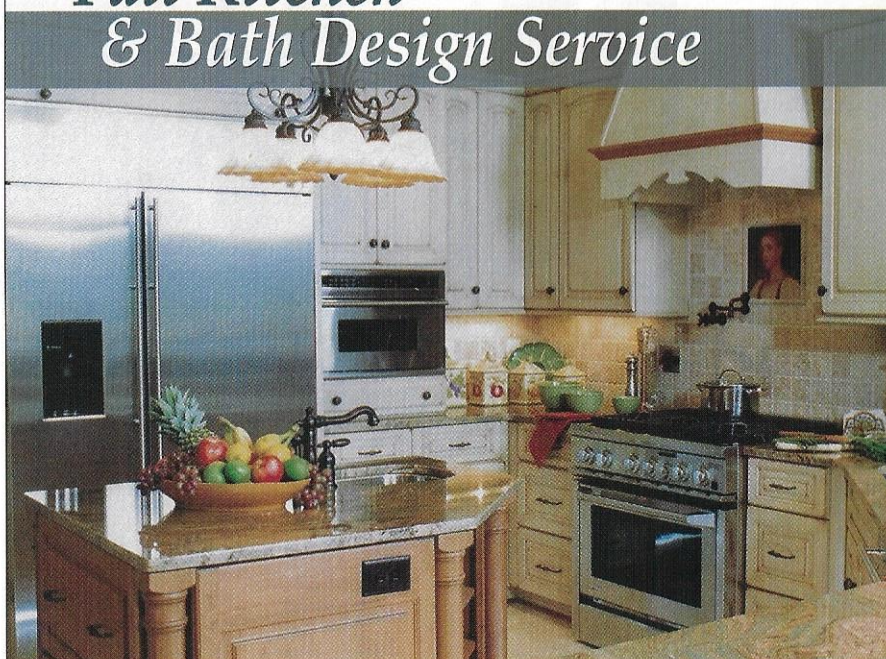
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