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AFTER

# How We Decorate & Design

Dramatic Headboard Inspires Master Suite's 'Livable Elegance' Design Approach

Written by Merilee Kern

Elaine Williamson of Elaine Williamson Designs was called upon to design a large, elegant master suite for a couple relocating from New Orleans to Dallas who wanted their new custom home to reflect a refined, yet comfortable style. Elaine and her team had the benefit of working directly with the home builder from project inception, which maximized the cohesiveness of structural and style-based project elements.

Every element of this master suite – from floor plan to furniture – was designed for livable elegance. “When designing this large of a space, it’s important to incorporate furniture and elements that create a sense of intimacy,” Elaine notes.

The design inspiration for this room began with a custom oversized headboard covered in a rich, chocolate velvet. The tufted upholstery and creative use of decorative molding added boldly rich detail. Incorporating the oversized headboard in the room anchored the space, creating a dramatic focal point and had the visual effect of bringing the ceiling down to a more comfortable height.

The headboard serves as a striking backdrop for an elegant, carved demi-post bed. While actually ornate and large in scale, the bed appears inviting in relation to the grand headboard. Elaine then layered the bed in tone-on-tone linens in varying fabrics to exude luxury.

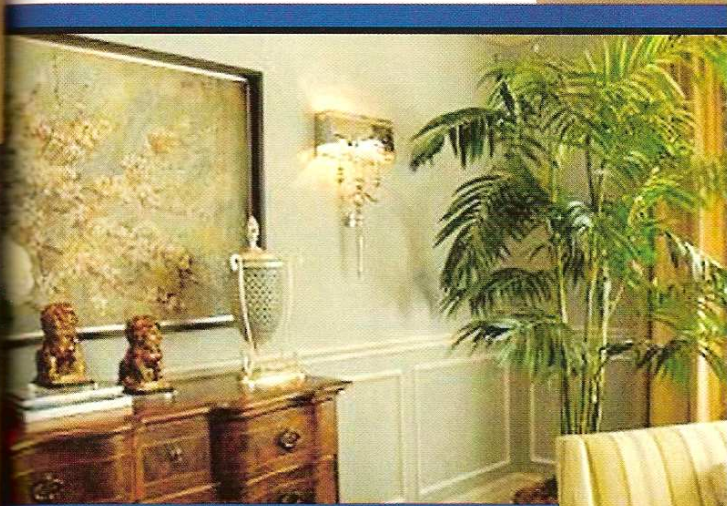
In the bedroom’s sitting area, the now-Dallas couple desired a place to sit and relax in front of a fire after a hectic, cool day. There Elaine opted for a more avant-garde solution to the problem of scale, raising the floor. In doing so, that area of the suite was set apart from the rest of the room and, again, created a more intimate-feeling space. Warm wood flooring further defines this area, allowing it to hold its own against the sizeable and commanding adjacent sleeping area.

Iridescent glass Cristallo tiles that surround the fireplace subtly reflect a golden light and



BEFORE





give a feeling of warmth that one would not normally associate with glass. A cozy crème brûlée-colored damask on the Raymond Waites chair and ottoman invite the homeowners to curl up with a good book.

A pair of champagne-colored quilted silk curtains flank the stairs leading up to the sitting area. Loosely tying them back with oversized silk tassels propagates the feeling of relaxed luxury – styling also reflected in the custom silk window treatments. For this, Elaine used a combination of classic ornamental hardware and loosely draped silk to make an otherwise very elaborate window treatment moderately less formal.

Another notable feature of the sitting area is the ceiling. In the center sits a stunning dome that peaks at 16 feet tall. A dome of this scale could have easily seemed cold and cavernous but, with its painted finish in various tones of gold and bronze, it reflects the light of the chandelier hanging below and warms the space while duly maintaining its grandeur.

“The key to maintaining the feel of luxury while not making the room overly ‘fussy’ lies in the carefully edited palette,” Elaine continues.

The use of furnishings with various textures in a limited color palette adds interest and depth while maintaining the room’s elegance. The walls were painted a warm golden brown to compliment the neutral furnishings. Layering the bed in various textures also adds interest and appeal while keeping a restful and inviting sensibility.

Elaine concludes, “Every surface of this master suite room reflects the clients’ desire for an elegantly restful master suite that evokes their refined New Orleans-influenced style; we were all thrilled with result.” ♦

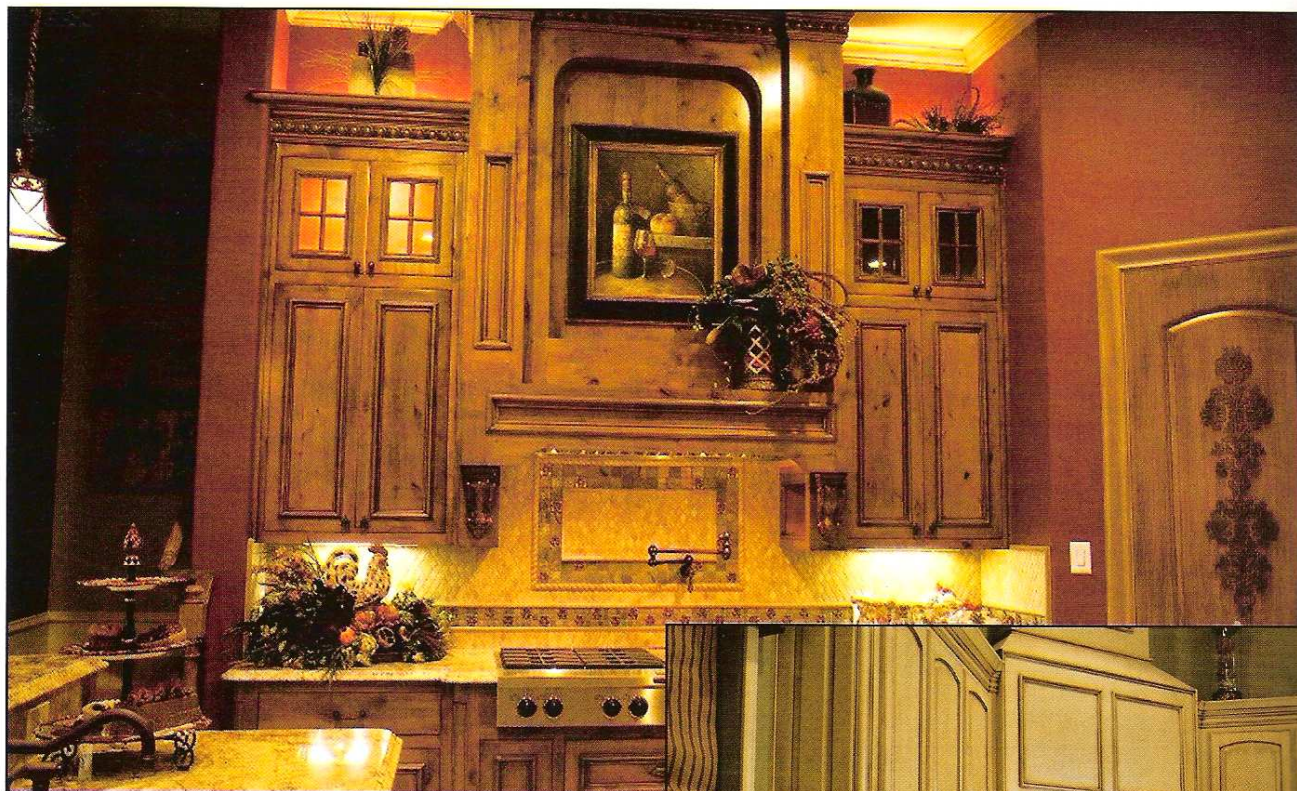
*Photos courtesy of Elaine Williams Designs of Dallas, TX, [www.elainewilliamsdesigns.com](http://www.elainewilliamsdesigns.com), 214-536-5552*





# Designing Your Kitchen for Entertaining

By Tenisha Waldo



The kitchen is truly becoming the focal point of the home, serving as the hub of family activity and a sure stop for entertaining guests. That said; now is the time to liven up your cooking space by heeding to three key tips that will help make your kitchen ideal for entertainment.

## 1) Make sure there's room in your room.

Creating the model kitchen for entertaining begins with choosing a layout design that puts functionality and style in sync. Dr. Michael A. Smith, a member of the National Kitchen and Bath Association and a seasoned kitchen and bath designer, stressed the need to adequately maximize kitchen space while not making the room seem overwhelming.

"The worst thing you can do is make a kitchen feel cramped where there is not enough room to move around," he said.

When in doubt, a professional kitchen designer can gauge the most cost-effective and realistic approaches tailored to your budget and space limitations. "Everybody's expectations are always much larger than the space," Smith said. His company, Design



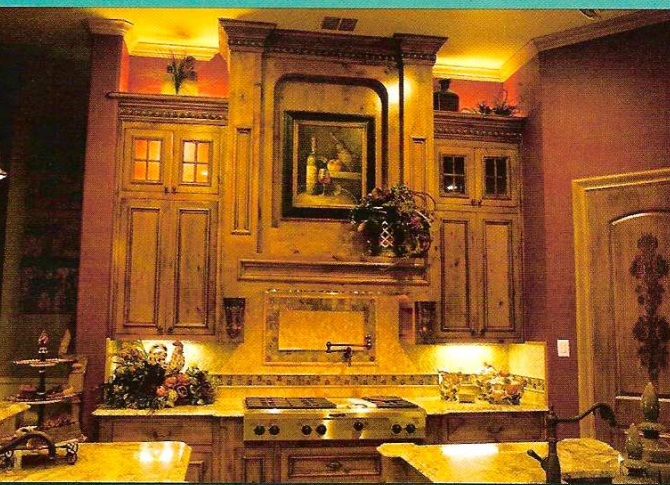
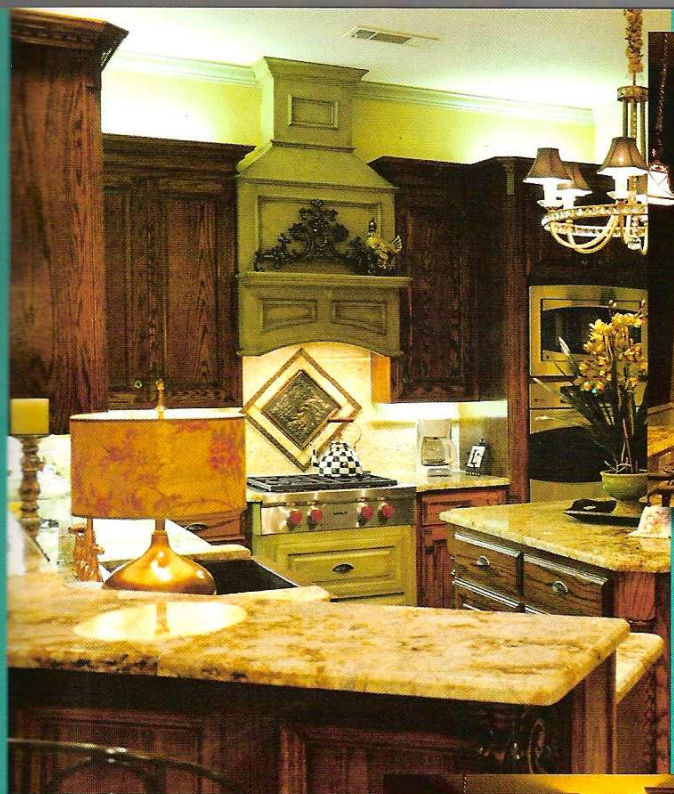
by Michael, LLC, does both residential and commercial design. Smith holds several graduate and undergraduate degrees, and he is considered an expert in current kitchen and bath trends.

He noted that the biggest no-no one could do in kitchen remodeling would be trying to put oversized appliances in too small spaces, while painting the walls lighter colors, particularly pastel hues, can help kitchen space look bigger.

New-age designs call for open floor plans that often join the family rooms and/or dining areas with the kitchen, thus creating a cohesive "great room" of sorts, according to [www.kitchendesignersideas.com](http://www.kitchendesignersideas.com).

The helpful kitchen design website also suggests that "a good





kitchen floor plan must provide a good work triangle that will provide a working relationship between the cook top, the sink and the refrigerator. You should have a good flow between these three areas. The best work triangle will have a total of 26 (feet) or less, with no single leg shorter than 4 feet or longer than 9 feet. However, if you are remodeling an existing kitchen it may not be possible to live up to this standard."

Indeed, remodeling a smaller kitchen space can be tricky, which is why you may want to consider knocking out walls to open up space. Bigger spaces invite more activity and help draw guests to your new central spot for entertaining.

## 2) Cut the clutter.

Clutter, or that random "stuff" that seems to arbitrarily collect on kitchen countertops and shelves, is quite unattractive and certainly makes a kitchen less appealing for entertaining guests. Clearing away unsightly items helps to create space, which ultimately helps make a kitchen appear larger and more spacious. To achieve this result, one should properly store cleaning supplies, cooking utensils and even knickknacks in cabinets and closets. Additionally, keep in mind that open shelves placed in the upper and lower areas can help utilize wall space while still keeping the room organized. Cutting the clutter will ensure you present your kitchen at its finest.

## 3) Make your kitchen self-service.

Sure, your kitchen serves as your primary work area for drumming up tasty creations. But consider this: why not make your space self-service for times when you're busy being a gourmet chef or for times when you've stepped away from the kitchen. For example, Smith

suggested organizing areas for kids to serve themselves by putting things at reachable levels where they can get their own drinks and snacks. This idea is perfect for the summer, when the kids are at home and their friends come by to hang out.

Islands are a great way to add countertop space, adding a chic flair to kitchens. As noted by [www.kitchenbathideas.com](http://www.kitchenbathideas.com), "Kitchen islands work well in U-shape and L-shape kitchens because they shorten the distance between work centers and direct traffic outside the work core. Islands also add beauty and architectural interest to the kitchen."

But beware: to achieve maximum accessibility and best use of space, don't install an L-shape island in a kitchen where work areas are on opposite walls, per the Kitchen Bath Ideas website.

For a truly entertaining-worthy kitchen, use your island or bar to lay out hors d'oeuvres and snacks in buffet style. Guests can then congregate around the island or bar, or they may wish a small plate of food and he to the patio to eat and chat.

However you choose to design your kitchen for entertaining, keep in mind the simple, guiding principle that "presentation is everything." Present your kitchen as an inviting, central spot for your guests to be entertained. ♦

*Kitchen Designs courtesy of Elaine Williams Designs of Dallas, TX, [www.elainewilliamsdesigns.com](http://www.elainewilliamsdesigns.com), 214-536-5552*

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*Dr. Michael A. Smith, a member of National Kitchen and Bath (NKBA), has been a kitchen and bath designer for over seven years. His company, Design by Michael, LLC ([www.designsbymichael.net](http://www.designsbymichael.net)), does both residential and commercial design. Dr. Smith holds several graduate and undergraduate degrees, and is considered an expert in current kitchen and bath trends.*

