



Photo, Scott Sandler



southwest savvy

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Scottsdale's The Apollo Group remodeled a kitchen for a Paradise Valley couple, and created an adjacent butler's pantry from a laundry room as part of comprehensive remodeling.

Tyler Kestner, principal of The Apollo Group, which he founded in 1988, completed the design and build-out in two months. He worked closely with the homeowners and was assisted by interior designer, Theresa Jilek, owner of Pillars of Design, Tempe.

In a gated community adjacent the Camelback Golf Club golf course, the 5,800-square-foot home and detached 900 square-foot casita were completed in 1994. Originally Santa Barbara style, the home has been slowly remodeled to Tuscan and furnished Southwestern Contemporary.

For the butler's pantry, Kestner and crew removed the entry door and added cabinets, a wine cooler and beverage center. He also added a wine rack, Kitchen Aid wine and beverage coolers and ice maker, a Franke brushed-nickel undermount sink, under-cabinet lighting on a dimmer and a three-light chandelier and a backsplash to match the one in the kitchen.

"The hand-wrought chandelier adds ambiance to the butler's pantry with toffee art-glass shades wrapped in metal curls," Jilek explains, noting that it was adjusted for the client's ceiling height by adding a custom finial. She finished the room with caramel-glaze paint.

In the kitchen, Kestner installed cabinets, countertops, plumbing fixtures and appliances from Wolf, Grohe, Franke, Stone Forest and Kitchen Aid and completed with sepia paint.

He enlarged the island for additional storage and added a second Franke undermount brushed-nickel sink to match the Décor oven.

For the cabinetry here and in the butler's pantry, he installed five-piece distressed knotty alder doors with custom finishes and roll-out shelves. For the main cabinets, he finished with dark brown with a black rub and black with rustic rub on the island and range hood to resemble the furniture pieces. For the existing Viking refrigerators, Kestner installed panels matching the cabinets.

Focal-point details distinguish this kitchen. For example, dramatic Volcano granite countertops complement the black island as well as the brown cabinets.

He installed a nostalgic Stone Forest farm sink with a double basin, carved from one block of black granite. "The front of the sink has a hammer-and-chisel finish, giving this sink a natural finish," he explains, "while the inside was honed and polished to a crystal black, allowing both finishes to blend extremely well with the cabinets and granite."

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