

# KANSAS CITY HOME DESIGN

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All the large homes we looked at felt cold to me, like a museum,” explains Rhonda Shafran into the telephone. She and her husband, Zachary, are eager to talk about the home they built in Leawood—so much so that they’ve conferenced in for a three-way conversation with *KCHD*. As each confirms the glowing remarks of the other, it’s obvious the Shafrans indeed love their home.

Which is odd because, on paper at least, their home is everything they say they didn’t want—cavernous and new.

But after more than two years of house-shopping in Mission Hills and old Leawood—each old house coming up short in either amenities or space for the couple and their three children, ages 2, 4 and 6—the Shafrans decided to build.



**ABOVE:** The Shafrans, seeking a large piece of artwork to complement the antique buffet they acquired in New Orleans, found this 10-foot painting in an antique shop in Laguna Beach, CA. The Old-World scale and imagery of the painting works with both the design of the house and the Shafrans’ decor.

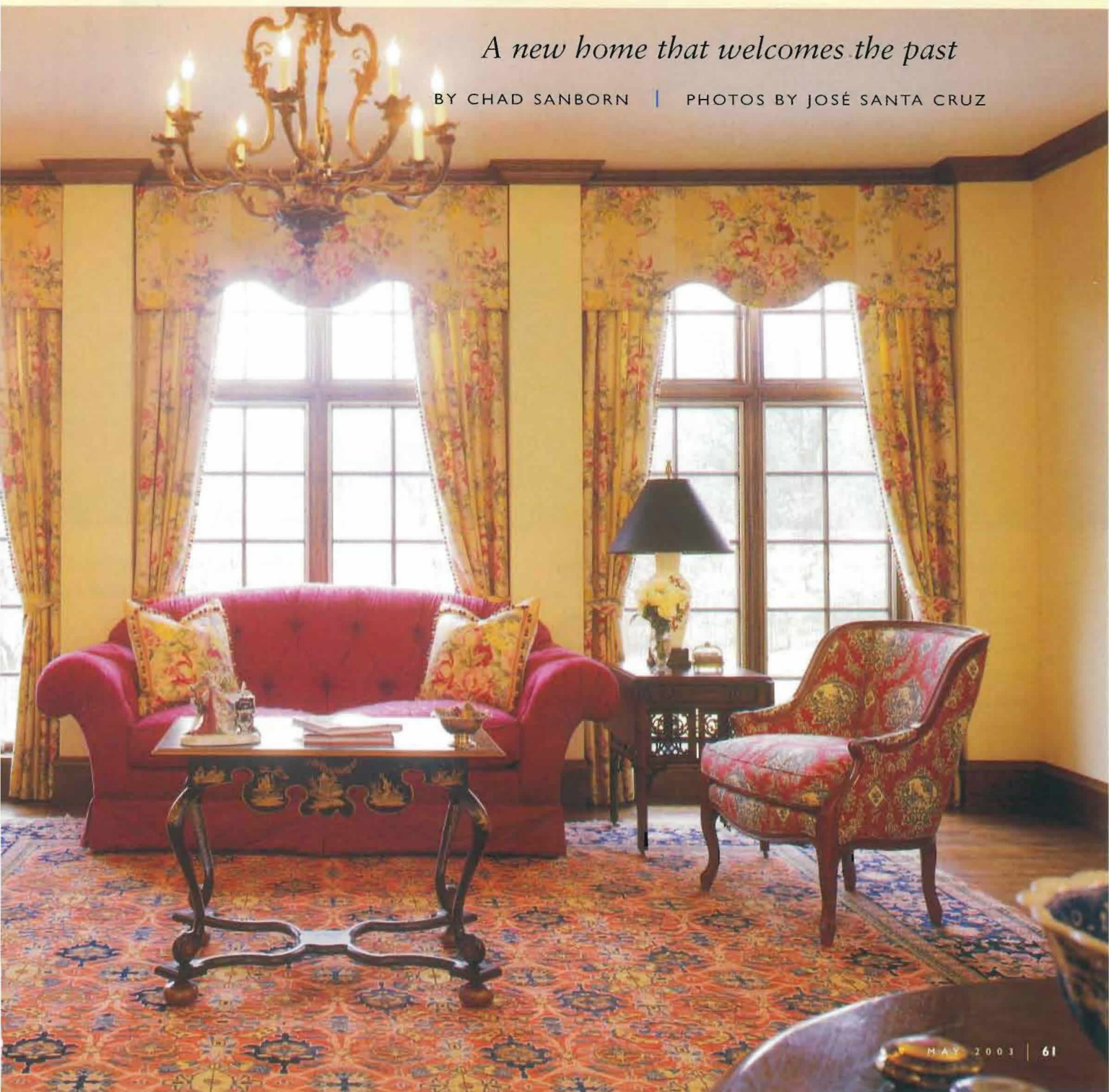
**OPPOSITE:** The formal living room is segmented into three distinct sitting areas, yet still allows for conversation with anyone in the room. The lamp on the end table next to the sofa belonged to Zachary Shafran’s great-grandmother, certainly qualifying it as a conversation piece.



# DECORATING FROM THE GROUND UP

*A new home that welcomes the past*

BY CHAD SANBORN | PHOTOS BY JOSÉ SANTA CRUZ





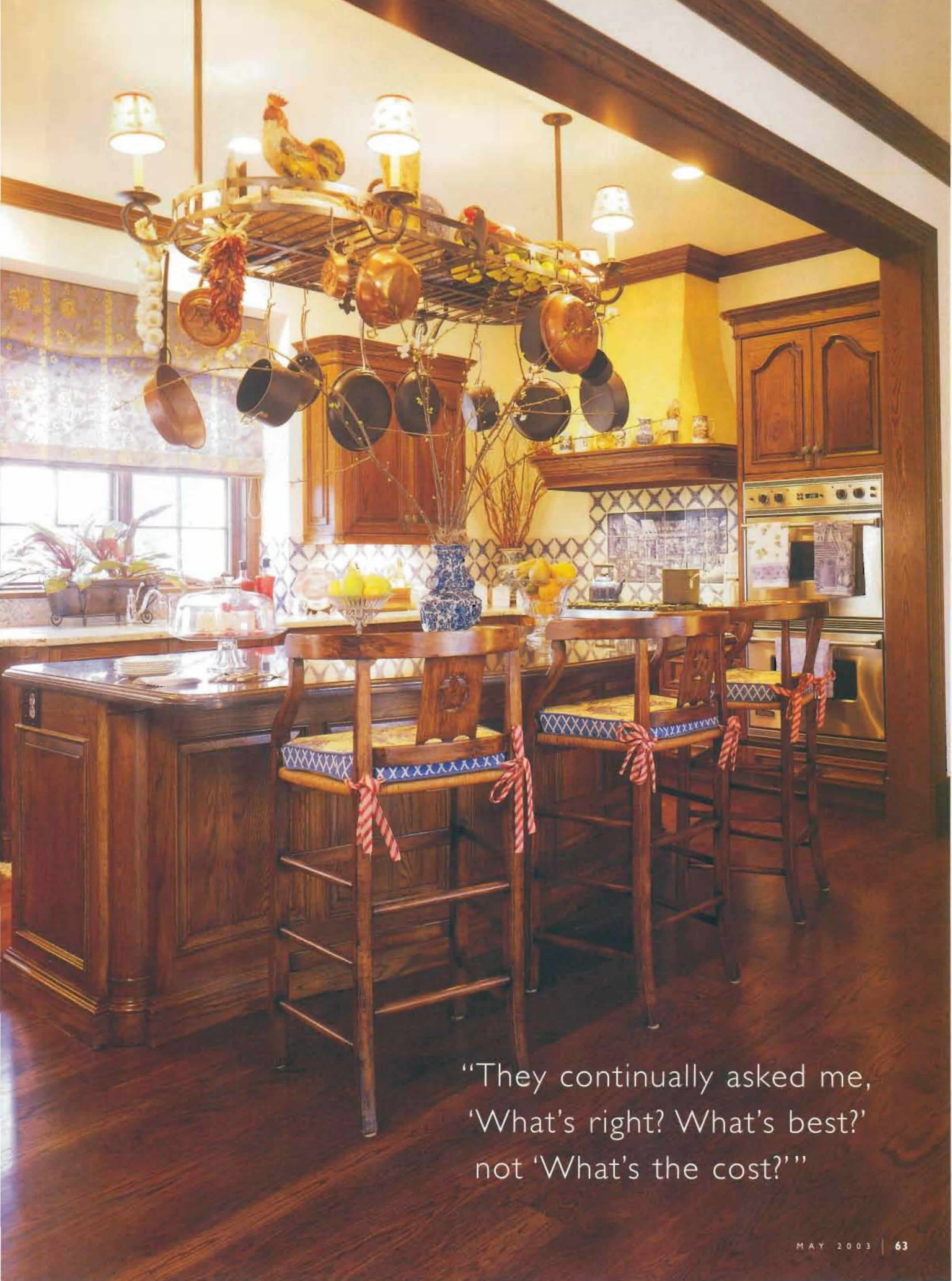
**ABOVE:** Almost all the major pieces and design elements in the formal dining room are culled from the Shafrans' personal history. The table and chairs belonged to Rhonda's parents, though the Shafrans added the large end chairs that could be original to the set. On either side of the buffet stand torchères that once belonged to Zachary's family. These heirlooms add greatly to the comfort and Old-World atmosphere of the house, say the Shafrans. **OPPOSITE:** Rhonda Shafran went with different shades of granite countertops to give the island its own distinct feel. The dark chocolaty floors only add to the kitchen's ability to whet one's appetite.

"We wanted the room and the features of a big home," Rhonda says, "but we wanted to make sure it was warm and comfortable."

Before even breaking ground, the couple hired interior designer Steve Nuss to help them get it right.

"The Shafrans knew how they wanted their house to feel," says Nuss. "They wanted it to have the feel of an old house. They understood that was the time to think things through, so that down the road you're not thinking, 'If only we'd done this.' They continually asked me, 'What's right? What's best?' not 'What's the cost?'"

Nuss and Ambassador Construction Company's Keith Eymann, working together at the drawing board stage, ensured the floor plan would continue the style of the English Tudor facade. Looking at the floor plans, Nuss recognized that the living room was large enough to easily accommodate oversized pieces of furniture, such as book-



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**ABOVE:** “We couldn’t find enough toile,” confides Rhonda Shafran, who loves the illustrative scenes depicted in the heavy fabrics. Here, as custom-made window treatments, toile supports the European theme at to the ground-floor level of the house. Throughout the home, decorator Steve Nuss expertly deployed rich new fabrics inspired by traditional French and English textiles. **RIGHT:** Rhonda was adamant about continuing with toile in their powder room. “I just love toile,” she says, “It’s so rich in history.”

cases, that would contribute to the Old-World personality of the house. Nuss had Eymann remove a wall of built-in bookshelves from blueprints for the living room—much cheaper to make on paper than after the house was built. “Ambassador made my job easier,” says Nuss. “They’re used to doing really nice work.”

Floors and trim of oak stained to a chocolate brown pull together the antiqued theme though the more than 7,000 square feet of the two-story, three-level house.

The kitchen, one of the few rooms lit by recessed can lights instead of the lamps or sconces illuminating and decorating the rest of the house, is large enough to contain an original



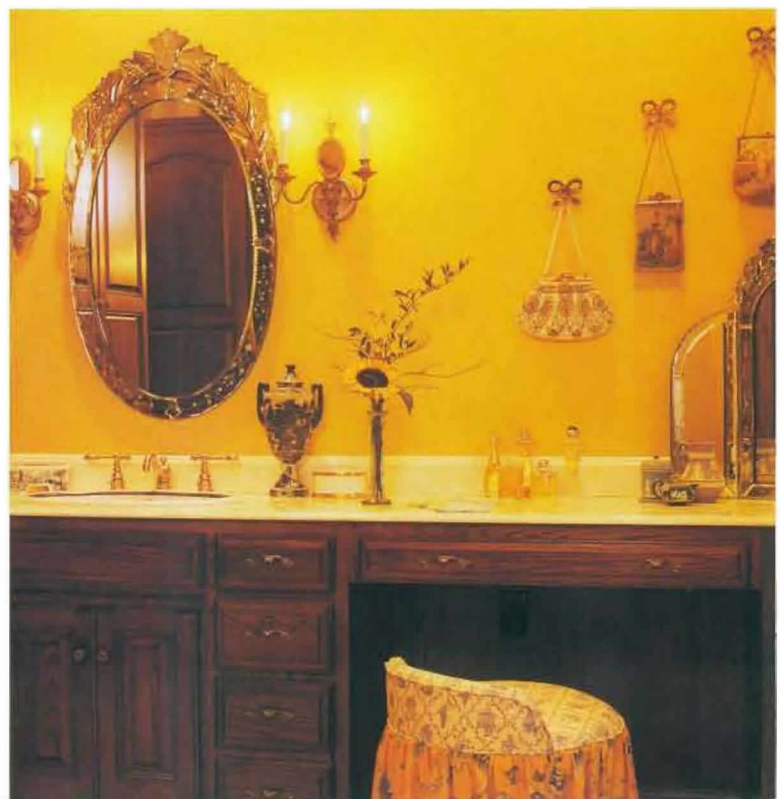
But after two years of house-shopping in Mission Hills and old Leawood...the Shafrans decided to build.

**ABOVE:** Cozy and comfortable though spacious, this room represents most of the elements sprinkled throughout the house by the Shafrans: heavy fabrics mixed with toile and stripes, dark wood and dramatic antiques. Note the silhouettes of French musicians embedded in the tile around the fireplace.





**ABOVE:** Though at first interior designer Steve Nuss wasn't crazy about blue flowers, Rhonda Shafran says she was able to get him to come around. The rug is the same one that decorated the house in which Rhonda grew up—one of many decorative items throughout the home that belonged to either Rhonda's or Zachary's parents. **RIGHT:** The purses on the wall, once belonging to Rhonda's grandmother and great grandmother, serve as both decoration and totems of Rhonda's own personal history.





LEFT: Seeking to provide a quaint and charming environment for her children, Rhonda chose colors that also create a sense of warmth and security. She also made sure each child's room included window seats, a perfect place to sit and let the imagination take flight. BELOW: Decorated in pink and accented with rosebuds, this little girl's room has the comforting, cozy feel that Rhonda wanted. "I always wanted a canopy when I was a little girl," she says. "Bedtime rituals are important to me, and the canopies add to that sense of security that I want for my children."



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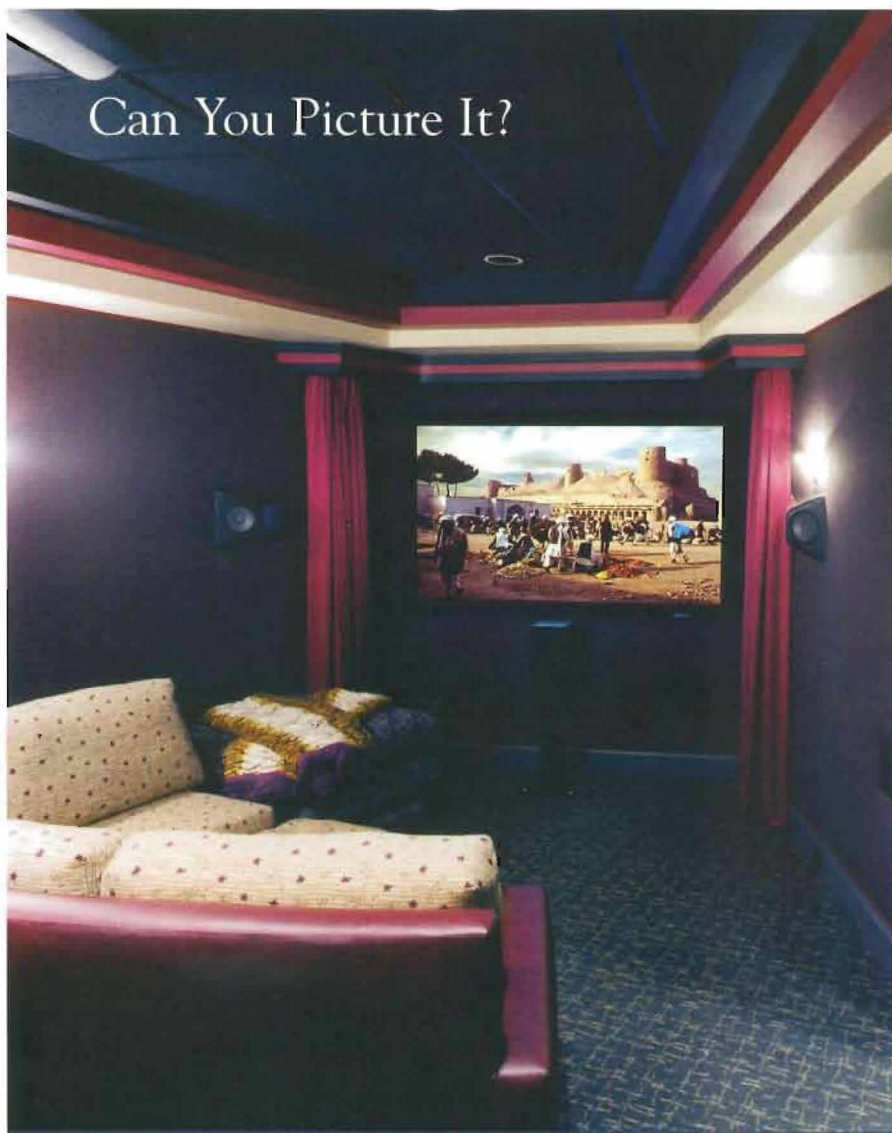


18th-century French vaisselier and a matching solid, one-piece 14-foot dining table. The table is a reproduction custom made in Provence. And of course it has 14 reproduction Queen Anne chairs to go with it.

It's these timeless, warm touches that make it possible for the couple to love every inch of their ample home.

"It's an open, airy home, but the reason we like it so much is because it's warm. We were able to put together something we're really proud of," says Zachary. In the background Rhonda is ardently agreeing into the phone, in the home that they built together and love. 🏡

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