



## *this month*

Can French design work on the Main Line? You decide.  
(page 42)

## *trends*

The most popular kitchen upgrades.  
(page 44)

## *homefront*

Cool products for hot barbecues.  
(page 44)

## *hot property*

A Mediterranean marvel in Gladwyne.  
(page 44)

JOHN LEWIS





## *french accents*

Two Francophiles transform a Malvern contemporary into their version of a Normandy château. *By Tara Behan*

At least once a year, Susan and Jeff Hedrick travel to Paris. The trip usually combines business—Jeff owns an engineering company—with pleasure. Through their excursions in France, the Malvern couple has gained a serious appreciation for the country's architecture, especially the Normandy style.

When the Hedricks began looking for a new home in Willistown Township, they hoped to find an approximation of one of the French châteaux they so admired. Three years later, they were ready to give

up. "So many of the houses we looked at had the typical characteristics of a Chester County farmhouse, with small rooms," says Jeff. "We wanted more of an open floor plan with larger rooms."

Then they stumbled onto a property less than a half-mile from their home. Situated at the end of a long, private driveway winding through the woods, the large contemporary house was built in the early 1980s on a clearing of more than eight acres. Its open layout and large rooms were begging for renovation.

Enter Spence Kass of Kass & Associates of Philadelphia. "The house looked like one you'd see in the mountains or out West," says Kass. "It didn't have any great character, other than being a contemporary home."

Always thinking ahead, Susan had compiled a portfolio filled with images collected over more than two decades. Kass welcomed the visuals as inspiration. "We work better when the clients have their own dreams and visions than we do if they just give us a *continued on page 46*

≡ **resources architect:** Spence Kass, Kass & Associates, 1921 Fairmount Ave., Philadelphia; (215) 665-9140, [kassarchitects.com](http://kassarchitects.com).  
 ≡ **builder:** E.B. Mahoney Builders, 718 W. Lancaster Ave., Bryn Mawr; (610) 527-6584, [ebmahoney.com](http://ebmahoney.com).





**EUROCENTRIC CHARM:** (Clockwise from opposite page) A gorgeous chandelier in the dining room draws the eyes to the subtle sky scene painted on the tray ceiling; the view of the living room from the wrought iron Juliet balcony; the kitchen is dominated by an island so large that a solid piece of granite couldn't be found to cover it; the family room, with its exposed beams, is easily the most informal space in the home.





habitat continued from page 42

blank slate," he says. "It's actually a preferred way of working for us."

The couple also shared a love of the George V, their favorite hotel in Paris. "It's usually where we stay when we visit," says Susan.

In a stroke of luck, Kass already had a trip to Paris planned around the time he started working with the Hedricks, so he was able to get a firsthand look. "It's probably one of the most elegant hotels in the city," says Susan. "Its Old World charm is why we love it so much."

Back in Malvern, the Hedricks' project entailed a complete renovation of the home's interior and exterior—everything from installing a geothermal system to updating the façade with stucco and stonework, to adding a sweeping staircase inside. French doors were introduced in the sunroom, along with the dining and living areas.

"Rather than casement windows, Jeff suggested that we add two sets of French doors in the dormers to match the sets of French doors below," says Kass. "It not only looks great but also brings so much natural light into the room."



The pool and backyard.

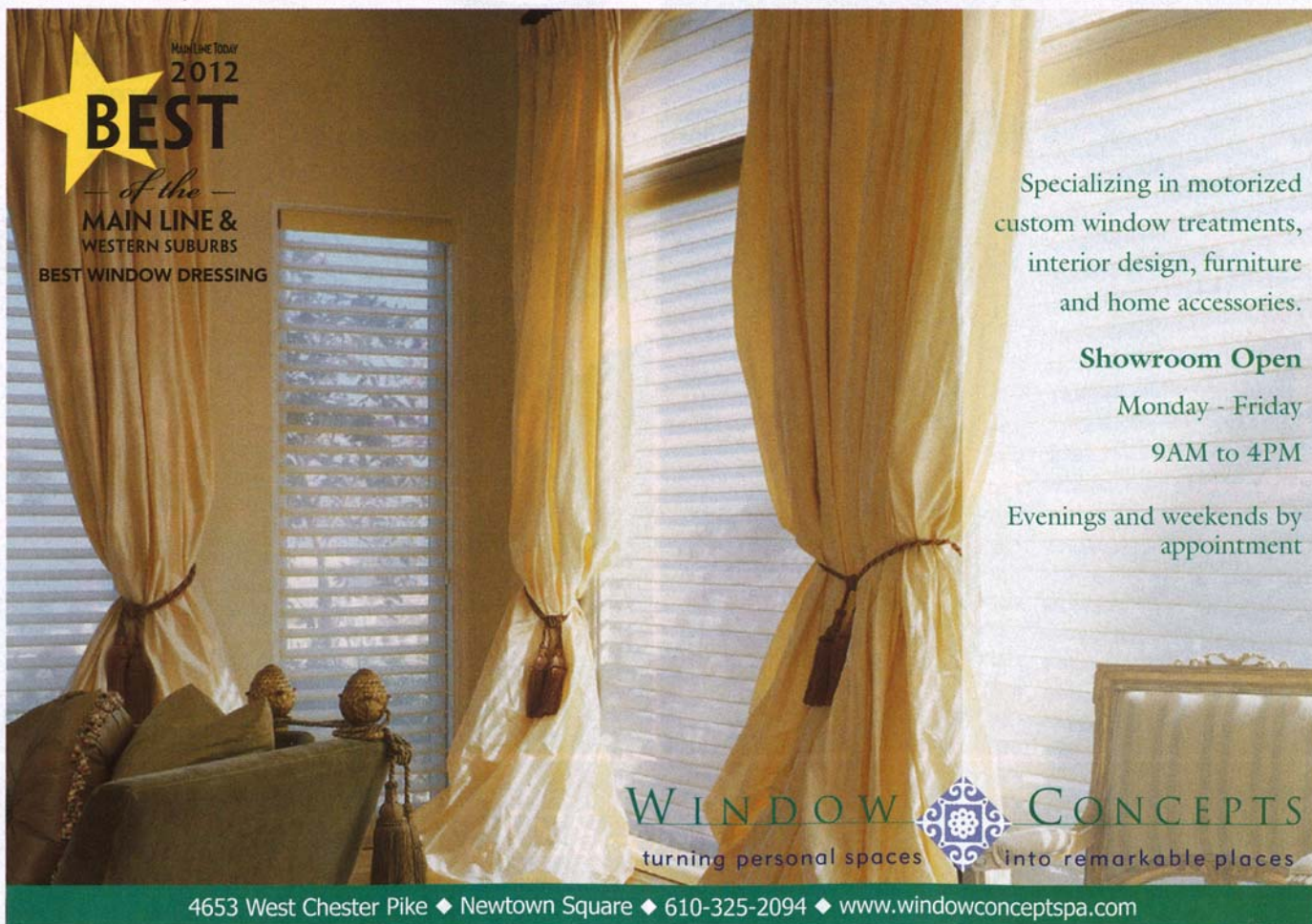
The living room's new vaulted ceiling allowed for another set of French doors in a second-floor bedroom, along with a wrought iron Juliet balcony that overlooks the living area. The same wrought iron reappears in the railings of an open hallway that also overlooks the space.

The interior design throughout the home is Susan's work. "Design is something I've always loved," says Susan, who does portrait sculpture in her spare time.

"I wanted to keep the furnishings and accessories simple. I'm not one for over-decorating."

Many of the furnishings are things Susan and Jeff have inherited, or pieces like the two settees in the living room, which Susan found in a local antiques shop. A baby grand piano is a major focal point.

Herringbone oak floors define the formal spaces, and a faux limestone chimney painted by artist David Bruce Michener



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## Viagra®, Levitra® or Cialis® not working?

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realistically accentuates the existing limestone fireplace. Michener also painted a subtle sky scene in the dining room's tray ceiling, where a striking crystal chandelier draws the eyes upward.

When it came to the kitchen, the Hedricks rejected the plans of three designers and took on the job themselves, with the help of Kass. "We knew what was missing in our previous kitchen, and we wanted to make sure our new space accomplished everything we knew it could," says Jeff.

Indeed, right down to the last detail. "Susan loves to cook, and Jeff loves all the appliances and gadgets that go along with a kitchen," says Kass. "So they both had opinions and ideas."

In keeping with the Normandy theme, the kitchen boasts French doors with another wrought iron Juliet balcony that overlooks the property. "It's nice to be able to open the door and let fresh air in while we're cooking or eating," says Susan. "It feels very European."

The kitchen's island is so large that they couldn't find a solid piece of granite to go on top, so they sidestepped the problem by covering a portion of it with a rich mahogany. European-inspired travertine tiles line the floor, and a wall of cabinets offers space for a wine cooler and display shelving for special dishes.

The kitchen area also has enough space for a small office workstation and additional storage. "One piece of advice I'd give to someone designing a kitchen is to put in two dishwashers. It's convenient and totally worth it—especially when you're entertaining," says Jeff. "We also put in two ovens."

With a master suite on the first floor, the two upstairs bedrooms are reserved for family and friends. Each has an attached bathroom. A third room is an apartment with a kitchenette, a sitting area and a separate bedroom.

The Hedricks freely confess that they were demanding clients, and they credit Kass and Bryn Mawr's E.B. Mahoney Builders for having the skills—and the patience—to execute their vision. "Spence contributed so much to this project," acknowledges Jeff.

For his part, Kass will soon be returning to the home to begin the second phase of the renovation: a six-bay garage with a studio space above for Susan.

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