



nearly anything is possible to do, but stop now and ask a builder or architect for an informal opinion of the feasibility of your dream layout. This will give you an idea of the time, disruption, and expense involved, and you'll know whether to explore this dream further, with professional help if needed, or edit it to be more attainable for you.

ABOVE: If one room can truly be the heart of the home, this may be it. The kitchen area is state of the art, there's a table where the whole family can sit down to eat just beyond it, and at the end, a big fireplace with a couple of comfy chairs looks delicious and is removed enough from the action to permit a quiet read. Old-fashioned beadboard on the walls and ceiling join the stone fireplace to give a homey tone to the open space, while large windows and a glass door provide natural light, air, and access to the garden. (Architect: William F. Holland)

COOK'S ESSENTIALS: Major Appliances.

Appliances are essential. Without them, your home dining pleasure will be at the mercy of the local takeout restaurants. Three overall categories exist: residential, semi-commercial, and commercial. Commercial appliances look great and have terrific features, but they are costly to purchase and operate, often require more space, may be noisy, and don't necessarily make you a better cook—unless you enjoy using them so much that you spend more time in the kitchen. Style-wise, commercial and semi-commercial appliances tend to have signature looks that don't date the way residential styles do. To decide what to install, think about the kind of cooking you do and your budget. A good designer knows how to accommodate whatever you wish to use, but he or she is probably not an expert on BTUs and operating noise levels, so do your homework by visiting some appliance centers and talking with the salespeople so you are well informed on the practical as well as aesthetic considerations. This is a good time to check the operating

efficiency and impact of each appliance on the environment too. It's fine to mix appliances from different manufacturers; if you are considering this, think about their aesthetic compatibility (check the handle styles) and consider adding door panels to match your cabinets. Once you have an idea of what you like, talk with your designer; you are unlikely to have the knowledge, skill, or patience to fit the pieces together—besides, he'll have access to resources you do not.

Which appliances should a great kitchen include? Refrigerator, stove, and dishwasher go without saying, most people want a microwave oven too. Check refrigerator models to be sure the drawers and shelves accommodate the kind of food you store, some hold more veggies than others. You might want to check out undercounter refrigerator drawers to supplement or replace the main unit. For cooking, decide between a one-piece range and a separate cooktop and wall oven (your layout may decide this for you, sometimes one option is more workable than the other). Few residential ranges include two ovens, so if this is important to you, go with separate pieces or plan to supplement the range with a countertop oven or a dual microwave/convection oven. Whichever way you go, investigate the options for an exhaust hood, which is not always possible over an island cooktop. Check dishwasher interiors to see that the dishes you own will fit in the racks—large plates and stemware can be problematic in some. Consider smaller, drawer dishwashers if you would like to do small loads. Nice extras (or expert's essentials) include warming drawers, a steam oven, a wine cooler, trash compactor, and a wood-fired grill and a wood-fired pizza oven (not really appliances, but still something to plan for). When you shop, open and close all appliances to see that the doors feel sturdy and substantial, the seals look businesslike, and any racks or shelves operate smoothly. If you've lots of space, you can have two of anything if it suits your needs and makes you happy.

LEFT: If you are a sophisticated chef, you'll appreciate the specialized equipment in this kitchen: Set into a niche in the wall beyond the unusually deep commercial refrigerator/freezer are a steam oven, convection oven, and warming drawer. (Architect: William F. Holland)

OPPOSITE: Undeniably handsome, a large stainless steel range like this is designed for serious cooks. This model is standard cabinet-depth, has two ovens, six burners, a griddle, lots of power even with propane (an important thing to check if that's your fuel), and a tall backguard with a shelf; a number of manufacturers and other sizes and configurations exist. Note the pot filler faucet on the wall to the left. A good exhaust hood is a must for a stove like this; here one hides inside the paneled overhang. (Architect: William F. Holland)



