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a cherry welcome

Convention went out the window when interior designer John Robert Wiltgen tackled this traditionally configured bay in an upscale, suburban-Chicago home. Turning the tide on the typical, he brought a fresh, and somewhat formal, face to casual dining by decorating the kitchen's eating area with a lively interplay of contemporary contours, catchy colors, and classic motifs.

"We wanted to make a newly constructed home look like it had a history," Wiltgen says, "but we also brought the kitchen, outfitted with traditional white-painted cabinets, subtly into the 21st century. The windows are really done in a traditional style, but the paint treatment is so unexpected, people generally say 'wow!'"

Wiltgen drew his primary hue from the kitchen's countertops, carrying the red of the granite to the windows with pairs of sculptural curtain panels spilling over with dress-maker details and lined in the same camel-hue fabric used on the Roman shades and braided tiebacks. The color combination appears again on the combed walls—a painted substitute for a woven-fiber wall covering.

"We wanted to find a grass cloth with red grass on a camel background for the walls, but couldn't," Wiltgen says. "But by using paint, we brought exactly the right color—from the granite and fabric—to the walls. I'm a big fan of color. It's really all about color—the contrast between walls and furnishings makes it dramatic."

For more information, see Resources on page 98.

WRITTEN BY ANN WILSON PHOTOGRAPHER JON MILLER, HEDRICH-BLESSING
FIELD EDITOR ELAINE MARKOUTSAS



Opposite: Wrapped in cherry red warmth and punctuated with touches of camel, this room's patterned perimeter provides a vivid backdrop for a contemporary carved table, black iron chairs, and painted cabinets. **Above:** Braided tiebacks wrapped high on the smocked panels corral the draperies so they don't block garden views.



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Decorative painters from Simes Studio in Chicago rendered a paint treatment in the style of an uneven grass-cloth weave on the walls of the kitchen's work core, the eating area, and the family room. One painter started by brushing a red oil glaze atop a beige eggshell latex base coat. Working in 3-foot sections, a second painter followed, running a notched squeegee blade vertically through the glaze. After the glaze dried for 24 hours, the painters brushed a coat of thinned red glaze across the previously combed sections and pulled the notched squeegee horizontally across the walls.

