

*Sarah  
McDey*  
I N T E R I O R S

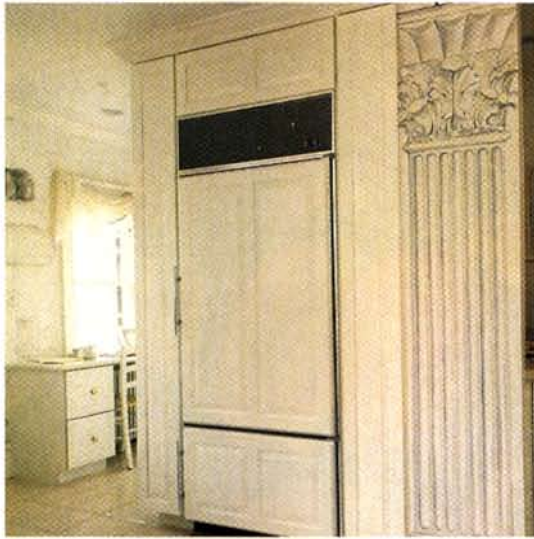
AS SEEN IN

**Window & Wall**  
IDEAS



*A former maid's room is now a cheery office, opened up by the removal of a wall and embellished with faux pediments above the windows and stonework on the walls. Two lightly dressed windows offer relaxing views of the garden.*

## RECIPES FOR PAINTED KITCHENS



### Classic in White

Vanilla isn't for Nan McVey. So it's not surprising that when the Richmond, Virginia, designer told her mother she was considering revamping her old-fashioned kitchen all in white, her mother responded with an album's worth of photos from magazines, all of them warm and drenched with color.

"Occasionally, she'd send a white one and write on it 'You don't want to do this!'" laughs McVey, who had a much broader vision in mind than just white or not white. "I wanted it to be ethereal. I definitely was not thinking of hospital white. More like a mix of different kinds of whites and, above all, a sense of classic elegance."

It all came together for her when she spied two stone cherub faces at an antiques store. She thought that the cherubs, and other figures of romantic myth and classical art, could turn an ordinary kitchen into an almost unworldly place. It would have whimsy, but also an opalescent beauty.

She immediately met with interiors artist William Perrine and the two began poring over books of mythology and classic prints. "It was a collaboration. I told him what I wanted to do and he came up with the Roman or Greek god or Latin phrase that would carry out the idea," McVey says. "It helped that he used to be a Latin professor." In the bar area, Perrine conjured a figure of Bacchus, Greek god of wine. A painted column fragment leading to an exterior door bears the Latin phrase that translates "Come, let us go into the garden."

The re-creation of Roman ruins might seem ostentatious for a kitchen, but the idea fit perfect in the stately Richmond house where McVey and her husband live. Designed by noted architect Duncan

Lee and built in 1920, it carries his trademark herringbone floors, classic black and white marble entrance hall, and a dramatic sweeping staircase.

The one room left relatively barren was the kitchen, which was really more of a workshop for the live-in maid than a distinctive showcase. Nan tolerated the dingy and dark room, with freestanding appliances, linoleum, fluorescent lights, and outdated laminate, for more than a decade. In her remodeling, she enlarged the space, knocking two small rooms—the kitchen and maid's quarters—into one. Trompe l'oeil painting techniques and the shadows created by various shades of white and near white add the architecture the room lacked.

"I wanted to have it painted for several reasons, but it's quite possible to do something like this with wallpaper these days," McVey says. "There are so many good artists now doing this kind of work, too. It took us about three months, working together, to do this and it's certainly worth the time." □

*The fluted column left, created by artist William Perrine, serves a practical purpose: It camouflages what is actually a laundry chute.*

*The doorway below to the foyer is "framed" with a trompe l'oeil arch that includes the pair of cherubs which inspired the design. The arch mimics the entry to the foyer as well as the stairway's dramatic curvature.*

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