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family rooms...

where memories are made



by William L. Nolan

Creating a family room is like filling an album with family pictures. What begins as blank space becomes a rich repository of treasured keepsakes and fond memories. A room that close to your heart needn't be made of mere boards and bricks; it can also take shape from things that already have strong family connections, or things that simply say "home" the way your family likes to express it.

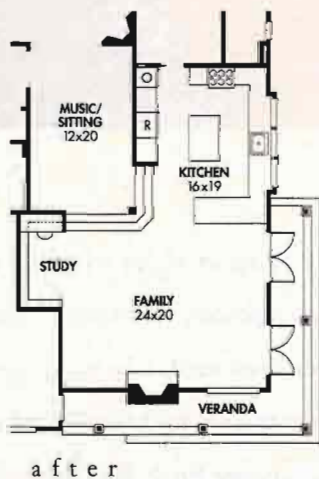
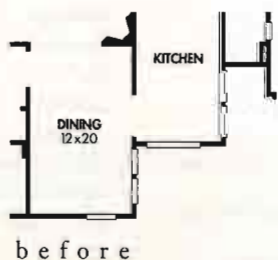
Although newly built, this family room in California already has a settled, lived-in look.

Even the columns on the veranda (right) have family ties. They were salvaged from Lynette's childhood school, a convent built in the early 1900s.



Relaxing by the fire. The hearthside retreat that Jamie and Lynette Sutton recently added to their home near San Francisco looks as though it has already warmed several generations of Sutton get-togethers. That's because Jamie and Lynette built a lot of themselves into the new space. "We had no real gathering place for our family," says Lynette. Stretching their 1898 house into the backyard gained them an informal room where they can relax with their twin daughters, age 11, and their son, age 14. To give the family room a highly personal stamp, they incorporated items that have close family connections, and they carefully wedded the new with the old.

There's room near the fire (right) for the family to stretch out and relax. Simple finishes showcase the Suttons' favorite collectibles, such as the replica of the USS Independence on the mantel.



ILLUSTRATIONS: CARSON ODE



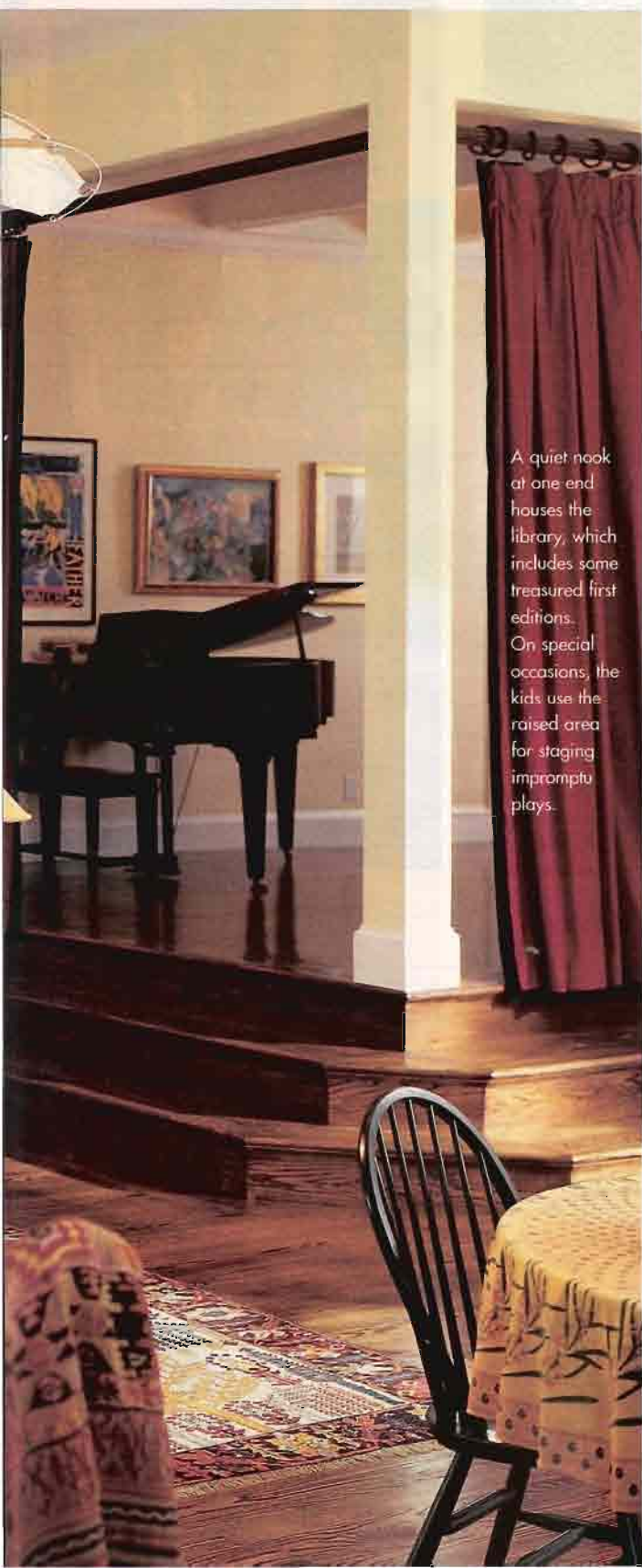
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A quiet nook at one end houses the library, which includes some treasured first editions. On special occasions, the kids use the raised area for staging impromptu plays.



The addition wraps around one corner of the house to merge with the kitchen (see plan, *page 138*), creating a spacious main room overlooking the backyard. Broad steps lead down to the new space from the old dining room, now a sitting/music room. On special occasions, the curtained opening between the two areas doubles as an informal stage for family theatrics. Near the steps, a book-lined alcove and a computer station provide cozy quarters for board games and for the kids to do their homework.

A Country French theme and views of the garden set a sunny mood in the dining area (above). Plates that the Suttons found in France share space in the hutch with favorite family photos.

