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The Fine Art of Kitchen Design

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SUB-ZERO WOLF



A high-contrast color scheme and a massive island make a powerful statement in this penthouse kitchen.

CUTTING EDGE

Designer Friedemann Weinhardt, whose design philosophy is to “be fearless,” discusses the challenges involved in creating a 16-by-23-foot kitchen in an Art Deco building.

What was your assignment?

“My client, a single professional man who loves to cook and entertain, wanted a striking yet functional layout in a kitchen that is integrated with the main living area. Other than wanting the Wolf dual-fuel range and a built-in aquarium, he was open to new ideas.”

What challenges did you face?

“Getting all the details of design and execution right was the biggest challenge. For example, we discovered that the tray ceiling over the island was originally built off-center by one-and-a-half inches and we had the contractor redo it. Then, the more than six-foot-square

LEFT Standard ¾-inch-thick Nero Absolut granite slabs are mitered together to give the effect of 8-inch blocks of stone. This apparent thickness aligns with the control panel of the 48-inch-wide Wolf dual-fuel range; a similar band of stone runs along the backsplash. Blond sycamore cabinets and shelves are the pale counterparts of the dark walnut cabinets; limestone tiles behind the range contrast with granite elsewhere. The stepped ceiling is aligned above the island. **RIGHT** Designer Friedemann Weinhardt poses by what he calls the “massif” granite island top.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MARC FOWLER/METROPOLIS

mitered-granite counters • bridge over fridge • bistro table attached to island • built-in aquarium • stepped-tray ceiling

Nero Absoluto granite countertop was too large to fit into the elevator, so it had to be hoisted by crane to the terrace.”

What determines the overall effect?

“One of the most important features is the strong color contrast of black against blonde, using only a few beautiful materials. Black granite, charcoal-finish maple floors, and mink-finish walnut cabinets are played against pale curly-sycamore cabinets and a limestone backsplash behind the range. The massive granite island is a visual focal point, as well as a central work zone. A 36-by-30-inch walnut bistro table extending over one edge of the island is mounted on an inverted pyramid of sycamore that tapers toward the bottom to provide more legroom. Beneath the aquarium, a granite edge matches counter edges. Toe-kicks are dark under dark cabinets and blond under blond ones.”

How about the functional aspects?

“The island accommodates a cleanup sink opposite the fridge and a prep sink opposite the range. Its walnut base cabinets hold pots and pans. The integrated 36-inch-wide Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer under the bridge is key to the clean lines of the design. An echoing cabinet on the right conceals the dishwasher below; above it, a microwave oven hides behind a retractable door. Both cabinets are faced with sycamore, as is the cabinet holding the aquarium to the left of the fridge. The walnut pull-out pantry cabinets that form the bridge offer strong color contrast.”



Is this kitchen typical of your work?

“Every design my firm does is highly responsive to the client’s needs. What we achieved here is perhaps a bit beyond the standard kitchen because of the scale of the range and hood, the bridge over the fridge, and the out-size island.”—*Interview by Barbara Mayer*

A “bridge” of walnut cabinets, including pull-out pantries, surrounds the integrated Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer on the left and a concealed dishwasher and microwave on the right. All are fronted in sycamore. The fish tank sits flush with the cabinets. A Sub-Zero wine-storage unit is at the end of the same wall. The door to the left of the range leads to the pantry; the one on the right to the dining room. The decorative pendant fixture sparkles with candelabra bulbs.

