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Photo: Chrissy Racho

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SPECIALIZED STORAGE



Designer: Kathryn O'Donovan, designer, Normandy Remodeling, Hinsdale, IL

Materials used: Calcutta Gold honed marble (island); end-grain Black Walnut (island); Mother of Pearl quartzite (perimeter)

His 'want' list included a 60" professional range, easy-to-clean materials, a commercial kitchen look and Calcutta marble. The lady of the home, also an accomplished cook, focused on a pleasing and inviting aesthetic where she could entertain family and friends.

"The challenges I had were to incorporate the wish lists of both homeowners in a thoughtful and purposeful manner," she says. "I set about marrying their wishes by creating zones defined by the variety of countertop materials."

Achieving the look: O'Donovan created preparation, cooking, cleaning and entertaining zones, choosing countertop materials appropriate for each. While the homeowners initially desired all surfaces be Calcutta marble, the designer encouraged them to consider other materials in the cleaning, prep and cooking zones due to marble's porosity.

"We decided on using Madre Perla quartzite in these zones, not just for the beauty of the stone, but also for its density, which minimizes concerns about porosity. With these



Desired look: The kitchen was designed for two avid chefs who wanted to use the kitchen efficiently at the same time.

Challenges: The gentleman of the home is a culinarian who loves to cook Italian and French dishes, which include many sauces prepared on the cooktop.

properties in mind, the quartzite was also a perfect material for the backsplash behind the range." The island was designed as the entertaining zone, which would be the safest zone for the marble. Since the island end near the range is a high-traffic area for food preparation, O'Donovan opted for an end-grain walnut chopping block counter.

Most creative aspect: The designer carried the quartzite from the countertop onto the backsplash behind the range. "I didn't want it to be a slab of stone applied to a wall," she says. "I wanted to give it some pizzazz, so I layered the stone and applied a 'frame' detail to emphasize the focal point."

"I also love the 3cm marble intersecting into the 5cm walnut top with a rabbited edge. One fits into the other like a glove."



Designer: Mark Williams, Mark Williams Design Associates, Atlanta, GA

Materials used: Blanco City Silestone

Desired look: The homeowners wanted a calm, simple palette with minimal contrast. The Blanco City Silestone blends harmoniously with the walnut cabinets and chestnut brown limestone flooring to create a sophisticated space that offers a casual 'entertain-in' kitchen

that doesn't interrupt the dressy nature of the adjacent living/dining space.

The slim, 2cm thickness of the Silestone also exudes a European influence, which reiterates the simplicity of the design. "In the overall context of the renovation, it makes sense," he says. "We didn't want the kitchen to be too busy or overdone because we wanted it to visually integrate into the rest of the space."

Challenges: The kitchen is part of a renovation of a 1970s high-rise tower. "Older buildings, especially older high-rises, always have challenges," he notes. "The way people lived then is so different than the way people live now. The open kitchen concept was unheard of when this condo was built."



Achieving the look: Williams knocked down a wall to make room for the island, which extends into the previous dining space (which was combined with the living area in the new layout). "The final layout was a 'wildcard' design that was completely different than the homeowners' initial plans," says Williams. "They liked this plan's openness and the ability to entertain around the island."

The large island – about 5'x9' – is substantial in terms of its presence in the space, he notes. "The island creates a nice place for everyone to gather. The antimicrobial aspects of the Silestone, along with its stain and scratch resistance, also help keep the kitchen clean," he states.

Most creative aspect: Williams recessed the cooktop so its surface is completely flush with the surface of the countertop. "The island is essentially a large table that people gather around," he says. "If the homeowners are having an event where they aren't cooking dinner, that area becomes an extension of the tabletop. The controls are integrated into the glass surface and there are no control knobs."