

Breaking Big

Boyz and the Hood

» CHENG DESIGN BY ZEPHYR

Fu-Tung Cheng
CEO, CHENG DESIGN



TARGET HAS ITS PHILIPPE STARCK, H&M has its Karl Lagerfeld, and now Zephyr Ventilation has its Fu-Tung Cheng. Zephyr, a \$20-million-a-year San Francisco-based manufacturer of kitchen ventilation hoods—filters built in above stovetops to absorb smoke and fumes—is on track to double its revenues in three years by partnering with Cheng, an award-winning Berkeley-based designer, for a product line called Cheng Design by Zephyr.

KITCHEN CONNECTION: Alex Siow, 34, founded Zephyr in 1997 when he began importing range hoods from Taiwan. Cheng, meanwhile, was designing high-end kitchens and bathrooms, custom-creating his own \$15,000 hoods. Cheng, 56, had approached Viking and SubZero to try to bring his designs to the masses, but they passed. In 2000, Siow spotted a Cheng creation and realized how sophisticated the traditionally plain hoods could be. In 2003, Siow approached Cheng about a partnership.

HOT PRODUCT: The duo expected their first shipment of 300 hoods to sell out in six months; it sold out in two. Those units, bought by showrooms, went on display in January. Siow has lofty expectations of selling 1,200 units in 2005 at prices ranging from \$2,800 to \$6,800 (Cheng takes a 10% to 20% cut of the profits). Within three years Siow expects to sell 4,000 a year.

—JULIE SLOANE



Alex Siow

FOUNDER,
ZEPHYR VENTILATION