

Change of heart

Whether it's a dramatic rethink of the layout or a more subtle fine-tuning of detail, an effective remodel transforms the mundane into the highly personal



Personal space

This chic kitchen plays with scale, surfaces and expectations

Creating visual interest in a remodeling project can be achieved by a thoughtful use of materials and detailing. The trick is to combine the various elements into one harmonious look.

This fit-out by designer Fu-Tung Cheng replaces an original kitchen which was cramped and dim, despite the large window wall. Cheng improved the pedestrian flow by relocating an existing kitchen door closer to the entry foyer. In addition, a table and chairs at the end of the space obstructed access to the window. With banquette seating and a smaller table installed in their place, it is now possible to walk right up to the windows and views, says Cheng.

"This high-end apartment originally had a pretty standard kitchen. I removed the tired above-counter cabinets that blocked out light and oppressed the space, and replaced them with a tall bank of FSC bamboo cabinetry, an appliance garage and undercounter cabinetry."

There are visual surprises everywhere in this design – but a linear emphasis and a varied, yet balanced use of materials ensure everything works as a whole. For example, silver tile flooring and bamboo wall panels in the foyer are used in reverse in the kitchen, with the silver tiles on the walls and the natural bamboo on the floor – this swap putting the durable tile to best use in both rooms.

Features of the space include a sculptural prep island, a Zephyr Okeanito hood designed by Cheng Design, and a Geocrete™ countertop in red – the owner's favorite color.

"The backless wood cabinet with an inset narrow steel ledge plays with proportions and allows the eye to appreciate the full depth of the room. Below this, a smaller wall cabinet has a back-lit, translucent polyester-resin lift front inset with twigs," says Cheng.

Inset details are a feature of the kitchen, and include tiny mosaics in the silvery tilework and fossil ammonites in the countertop.

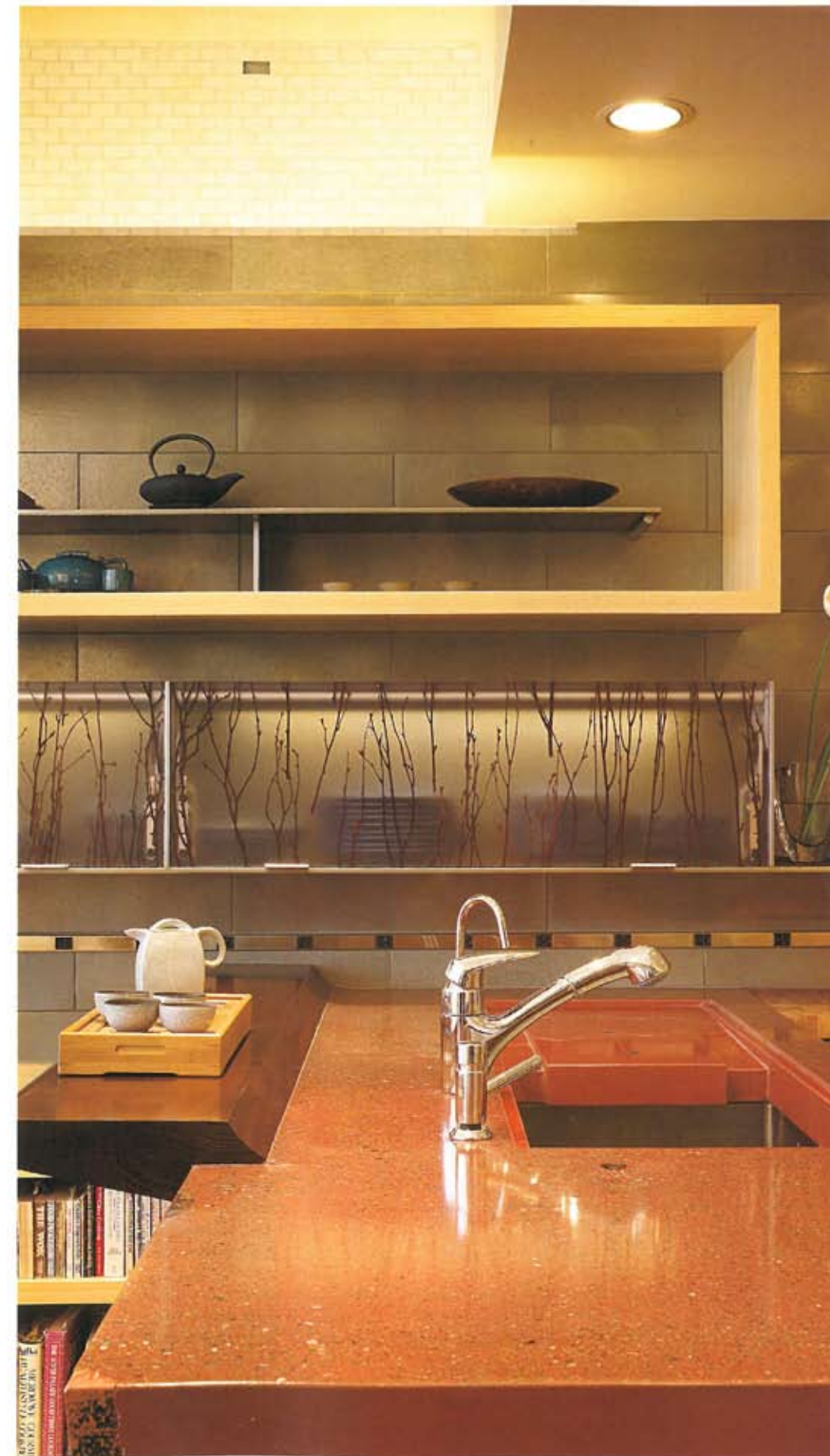


Preceding pages: This remodeled kitchen creates visual interest, while improving natural light and access to views of the city.

Above: The elliptical platinum gray prep island has a butcher's block countertop in bamboo. Pieces of antique china were cast into the base of the island, reflecting the owner's love of Asian antiques.

Right: A red concrete countertop is embedded with fossil ammonites.





Designer: Fu-Tung Cheng NKBA, Cheng Design (Berkeley, CA)

Cabinetry: Edge-grain Plyboo by William Guba & Associates; Varia Birch with Eco-resin finish on vertical door on floating steel kitchen cabinet

Countertops: Precast Geocrete™ island top in Platinum and main sink wall in Rouge by Cheng Design; polished granite in Absolute Black and Blue Pearl

Flooring: Horizontal-grain Plyboo in natural color from Smith & Fong

Wall tiles: Ceramica Fioranese in Steelwork/Argento with custom mosaic accents behind cooktop by Cheng Design, supplied by Italics; Oceanside Tessera Earth in White and Oceanside Tessera Ocean in Palladium, supplied by Ceramic Tile Design

Kitchen furniture: Breakfast nook, custom table top in North American walnut with brown lacquer finish and custom steel leg Alan Sklansky by William Guba & Associates, with leather cushions in chestnut color

Wallcoverings: Benjamin Moore

Kitchen sink: Avado in stainless steel by Elkay

Faucets: Chrome Eurodisc by Grohe

Hot water systems: Everpure

Oven, cooktop: Gaggenau

Ventilation: Okeanito by Zephyr

Water dispenser: Everpure water filtration system; Parche Waterstone filtered water faucet

Microwave: Sharp

Refrigeration: Sub-Zero with Plyboo overlay panels

Dishwasher: Miele with Plyboo finish

Lighting: Recessed, Halo; ceiling, Arne Jacobson; LED strip cove, Cooper Lighting; ceiling, Zero Suspension by Lucitalia

Lighting: ceiling, Zero Suspension by Lucitalia

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Facing page: Silver wall tiles are contrasted with smaller quartz tiles in a design that plays with surfaces and expectations at every turn. The metal shelf in the open-frame cabinet has a rubber mat surface to prevent damage to the artifacts on display.

Left: A small walnut shelf, matching the adjacent breakfast table, looks as if it has grown out of the concrete countertop. A slightly raised curve on the counter prevents any water run-off reaching the wood.