

Rich pickings

Just one vibrant material or color can form the basis for a kitchen design, and create an eye-catching feature in the process



Moody blue

A glazed blue tile was the starting point for the design of this asymmetrical contemporary kitchen

Find the one thing that anchors the room, and it will set the palette for what follows. For the designer of this kitchen in a rebuilt house, that starting point was a decorative blue tile that mimics the glazing on Japanese pottery.

Architect Linda Brettler says that analogy is especially appropriate, as the owners have a collection of traditional Japanese teapots, which are displayed in the kitchen.

"This tile inspired the subtle smoky blue color of the front of the island, and the choice of the other materials," Brettler says. "It also determined the minimal number of overhead cabinets on the rear wall – we wanted the tile to shine."

"The house has a contemporary-transitional design, and the kitchen, as the center of operations, needed to reflect this. To this end, we chose a quartersawn white oak for the cabinetry. This features a Rorschach-style ink blot patterning within the burled grain, which adds visual interest – it avoids a monotonous look."

The white oak is teamed with black granite countertops on the perimeter cabinets, while the island closest to the cooking center has a cream-toned quartz countertop.

"I didn't want the kitchen to be a sea of black granite, hence the change in color," says Brettler. "I also introduced a natural bar top cut from reclaimed monkey pod wood. Everything else in the kitchen is very orthogonal – the natural free-form shape of the wood balances this."

The architect says she prefers asymmetrical shapes, and this can be seen in the kitchen. The island with the bar top, for example, is L shaped, with shelves for cookbooks at one end. There is also a cutout area beneath the bar that opens up the island, making it appear less heavy.

As part of a large family living space, the kitchen incorporates a breakfast area at one side, with colorful bench seating tucked beneath a large window looking out to the garden.



Preceding pages: This spacious kitchen is part of a large, open-plan family living space in a rebuilt house designed by architect Linda Brettler. The blue color accents were inspired by the decorative glazed blue field tile that features on the backsplash.

These pages: Quartersawn white oak was specified for the cabinets, for its burled patterning. The doors and drawers are all flush, with most of the storage is provided within large drawers.



These pages: To counter the strong linear look of the kitchen, the bar top was carved from reclaimed monkey pod wood. A breakfast area at the side of the kitchen incorporates banquette seating.

Story by Colleen Hawkes
Photography by Tim Maloney

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