

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO KITCHEN DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST

NORTHWEST HOME

JAN / FEB 2007

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KITCHENS

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HAVEN'T
YOU
HEARD?
THE
KITCHEN
IS
THE
NEW
LIVING
ROOM.



By Sara daSilva My favorite kitchen is a spacious, sunshine-filled rectangle in a beautiful ranch house that a friend's dad built more than 50 years ago. My friend has since updated the appliances and painted the walls a dreamy buttercup-yellow, but she hasn't bothered to replace the aging flooring. Why? Because that old linoleum has been worn to the perfect smoothness for spinning around in one's socks, and that kitchen's most important function—although my friend is the best cook I know—is as an impromptu dance hall. Inevitably, friends drop by after dinner, someone cranks up the music, shoes start sailing into corners and there is much swinging, dipping and interpretive movement. ✱ Great kitchens, no matter their size or expense, are always cooking up a party. The four envy-inspiring examples featured in this issue say so long to the kitchen door—that old-fashioned ingress to the domain of the harried, apron-clad housewife—and hello to gracious, open-floor plans and multipurpose space planning. A place for staying up late, cooking with friends, hitting the books or just hanging out, these sizzling kitchens are the new household hot spots.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIA KUSKIN; STYLIST: MICHELLE CRISTALLI

To see the full story
on this kitchen,
turn to page 36.



GLAMOUR RAMBLER

THERE'S A LITTLE SLICE OF SOHO COOKING IN WEST SEATTLE

GROCERY

From the graphic stripe of the exposed cedar rafters, to a triangular window and cabinets in playfully irregular rectangles, architect Suzanne Zahr Fleming delights in variations on a geometric theme.

FOR EVERY RELUCTANT SUBURBANITE who has traded dreams of downtown chic for a semi-affordable fixer a few exits down the freeway, Suzanne Zahr Fleming's fresh and modern West Seattle kitchen should sparkle like a very hip beacon of hope.

"Part of me wanted a SoHo loft," admits the architect and ex-Manhattanite. Never mind that the dumpy '60s rambler Zahr purchased with then boyfriend, writer and editor Terrence G. Fleming, in 2002, had a cramped galley kitchen and a most un-loftlike dearth of light and air. An undaunted Zahr bumped out the footprint, jettisoned a warren of walls and, literally, took the lid off, raising the ceilings and installing a ridge skylight to flood the space with sweetly diffused southern light.

Painted snow white and lavished with gorgeous modern details, such as floating walls and ribbons of anodized aluminum trim, the breezy new great room needed a kitchen that would anchor all that open space, while acting as a fluid portal between the dining area and the triple-terraced back yard. Naturally, it had to be wickedly sleek as well. "I wanted the kitchen to express itself like a fine piece of furniture," explains Zahr.

For a bespoke look at an affordable price, Zahr tapped design guru Nathan Hartman, of Kerf Design, for a suite of mid-century styled cabinetry in his trademark plywood and plastic laminate. While the materials may sound humble, the results are anything but ordinary. Interlocking rectangles in soft Tiffany

blue and a chocolately rosewood-esque veneer (because real rosewood is not environmentally sustainable, Zahr chose an engineered wood look-alike) create an arresting collage in a color combination that evokes the home's swanky Rat Pack-era legacy. "The cabinets are like a piece of art. They remind me of a Mondrian painting," says Zahr.

Icy glass pendant lights in stainless and white furnish a cool counterpoint to the richly hued shelving, while a weather-beaten grocery store sign found at a local antique shop provides a tongue-in-cheek accent to a space that oozes sophistication. And if the kitchen's gallery-like effect tricks anyone into believing that Zahr chooses form over function, check out the efficiency

of the kitchen triangle formed by the stovetop, refrigerator and sink. It's a set-up that Zahr swears by when preparing stuffed grape leaves, rack of lamb and other spicy Lebanese specialties she loves.

Zahr and Fleming gave their new kitchen the ultimate christening one balmy August night with their own Bollywood-themed wedding, complete with bindi-decorated bride, silk pavilions and fire dancers. As the festivities died down and the pungent aroma of Arabic coffee filled the air, the party drifted to—where else?—the kitchen. "It was perfect," says Zahr. "The kitchen fell back and became an extension of the wedding venue." ♦

❖ TEAM

DESIGN Suzanne Zahr Fleming, ZDS Architects, Inc., 123 Boylston Ave. E, Suite C; 206.937.6937; zdsarchitects.com.

BUILD Tom McGeorge, McGeorge Construction, 49 W Eturia St.; 206.261.4810.

CABINETS Nathan Hartman, Kerf Design, 3635-A Thorndyke Ave. W; 206.954.8677; kerfdesign.com.

COST 30,000.

KITCHEN CONVENIENCE A 7-foot-by-7-foot drawer front perfectly sized for spices proves that it's still hip to be square.

EARTH FRIENDLY ELEMENT Zahr and Fleming get green stars for caring about the environment. All of their major appliances are Energy Star-approved, meaning that they meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and the US Department of Energy.

Page 31 and below right: Charming retro details, such as this tailored sink-front vent, characterize the custom cabinetry of Kerf Design. Below left: The upbeat cubist effect of Kerf Design's custom cabinetry. Forest Stewardship Council-certified madrone hardwoods in a high-character grade from Green Mountain create a natural flow between the open kitchen and the dining room, while "Cube" lights, from Tech, bring cocktail-hour glamour to the bar counter.



FOR COMPLETE DETAILS, SEE FIND IT, PAGE 76.