

Homework

A personal look at how designers create their own spaces.



In January of 2005, my husband I began a complete home remodel to make our house healthier by incorporating sustainable design principals and materials.

DESIGNING HER OWN SPACE
Molly McCabe, AKBD creates her showcase kitchen following some unfinished business.

The goal was to make the floorplan more conducive to gourmet cooking and frequent entertaining, while also creating a showroom for my design work. Being a regular attendee at KBIS and an avid reader of many kitchen and bath trade magazines, I knew exactly what I wanted in my dream kitchen, including the island countertop made of recycled glass terrazzo with green, brown, and purple glass chips.

When construction began in June 2006, we moved into my 400-square-foot studio; our two school-aged children slept in a 26-foot travel trailer beside it—living conditions that created a strong incentive to complete the project quickly. When we moved back into the house, the 210-square-foot kitchen was unfinished. Have you heard the cliché, “the cobbler’s children have no shoes?” In this case, the kitchen designer’s children had no kitchen. The laundry sink, a countertop microwave, and a refrigerator in the garage served as our kitchen.

I designed the anigre cabinetry and selected an aubergine stain for the island and a cognac color for the perimeter cabinets. These colors were compatible with the terrazzo island countertop I’d specified. Of course, I was breaking the cardinal rule of good kitchen design by selecting the cabinetry after the countertop. I’d just become my own worst client!

Finding a backsplash material that wouldn’t conflict with the terrazzo island top proved impossible. I considered quartz and concrete, but didn’t like the inevitable layout of the grout lines, so I searched in vain for a neutral tile. In the end, I gave up on the terrazzo for the island, although I still hope to use it for a breakfast table. I went with the same color quartz on the island as on the perimeter countertop and selected a lovely brick pattern tile for the backsplash.

I then labored over the selection of the cabinet pulls. I found a pull made in

Spain that I really liked, although I had to go through two different suppliers—one American and one Canadian—to get all seven sizes that I wanted. I received the first third of the handles from the U.S. supplier in less than a week because they were in stock, but the Canadian supplier had a difficult time reaching the manufacturer. Two weeks later, we were informed that the manufacturer had gone into receivership and there would be no shipment.

I had some contacts in Spain who searched existing inventories for me, but there was no inventory to be found. I renewed my search for available pulls that met my criteria, but finally contacted a local metal sculptor to have my cabinet handles custom made. The rest of the project was completed in March of this year, but as I write this, I still don’t have the pulls.

– MOLLY ERIN MCCABE, AKBD