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A New Stripe

East and West fuse in a contemporary kitchen's deftly designed storage and intriguing material combinations.

A modern kitchen featuring white oak cabinetry with a strong linear grain. The kitchen includes a stainless steel refrigerator, a built-in coffee maker, and a wine cooler. A wooden island with a honed granite countertop and a metal laminate backsplash is in the foreground. The floor is made of dark, rectangular tiles. A potted orchid is on the counter to the right.

White oak is quartersawn to reveal a strong linear grain in the cabinetry veneer. Each panel is carefully aligned to continue the horizontal graphic across expanses of cabinets. A metal laminate backsplash, zebrawood on the island, and honed granite countertops heighten the textural intrigue.




OPEN-AND-SHUT CASE

Smooth expanses of rift-cut white oak cabinetry open and close in a variety of ways for great looks—and great ease. Kitchen designer Zack Simmons explains the benefits of each choice.



SLIDING DOORS: Sliding doors on upper cabinets stay open without getting in the way. "The homeowners love to stir-fry—a rapid cooking process where you need to have everything within grasp fast," Simmons says. "Plus, the doors recall Asian tansu cabinets."



WALK-IN PANTRY: A bump-out in this wall of cabinetry creates enough room for a walk-in pantry. The unexpected angle helps break up the cabinetry, while concealed hinges, integral hardware, and book-matching of the grain keep the look sleek.

GARAGE-STYLE DOOR: It swings up to reveal a cubby for coffee and supplies above the built-in espresso maker. "We wanted to keep this door a single panel for a clean look, but didn't want its large size (18x24 inches) to block traffic when it was open," Simmons says.

DRAWER REVEALS: Pot drawers are partially open, enabling the cook to quickly spy the necessary pot or pan. "The reveals add a lightness to the design that we couldn't create with a full flat front," Simmons says.

BUTCHER-BLOCK PULLOUT: What looks like a shallow drawer is actually a butcher-block pullout that provides work space below the espresso maker. "We wanted to create an impromptu, full-service coffee station around the appliance on the wall," Simmons says. "We even added a little drawer below to store spoons and other flatware specific to coffee."



This kitchen had to marry style, influences, and—most of all—cultures. Kathy Yu Brown was born in Hong Kong and brought an affinity for Asian architecture and design to her marriage with Nate Brown. He spent his formative years in Connecticut and later attended college in St. Louis, where he developed a fondness for homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The kitchen in their new home uses elements of both aesthetics without jarring contrast.

Deliberating between the styles, the couple discovered they shared a desire for a contemporary space with clean, horizontal lines. They preferred a minimal look without clutter, but did not want a cold industrial space. "We wanted a place where we could imagine living with a family," Kathy says. "It had to feel warm, with natural materials."

The couple turned to Zack Simmons of CKS Kitchens & Design, a member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), who conceived this sleek space wrapped in the strong linear grain of quartersawn white oak veneer. The grain runs horizontally, with each vein carefully matched across wide expanses of cabinetry.

A zebrawood table extending from the island adds another strong linear grain. The design is entirely custom. Counter heights on the island ascend gradually from a standard 36-inch-high butcher block for cutting, to a honed green granite a few inches higher to accommodate Nate's tall stature, to the 42-inch-high zebrawood counter tall enough to pull up barstools.

Appliances and hardware are stainless steel. In counterpoint to their cool tones, warm textural metal laminate clads the range wall from counters to ceiling. The gray mottled finish has an attractive abstract pattern up close yet reads as an overall texture from just a few feet away. "Kathy wanted something fresh and different," Simmons says of the unusual material that still blends with the room's natural stone and wood.

The beauty is in the mix—of materials, styles, and function. The Browns were so pleased that they decided to mix materials intended for their kitchen throughout their home: The zebrawood of their counter repeats in living room tables, and the floor tile clads walls in a nearby bathroom.



This Photo: A small sink, a low backsplash in the same granite as counters, and a dishwasher below make this zone ideal for cleanup.

Opposite Left: A second oven with convection heat for baking is sited on the wall opposite the range to isolate dessert prep from the primary cooking zone.

Opposite Right: Stainless-steel door and drawer pulls are integral to cabinetry for a clean aesthetic.

In Detail

Surfaces in this kitchen are installed with thoughtful regard for the textural beauty of their materials—whether natural or industrial.

OPPOSITE: Textured metal laminate provides a sturdy and stylish backsplash. Running from counters to ceiling, the metal offsets the smooth polish of a stainless-steel vent hood.

CLOCKWISE, FROM RIGHT: A bar-height zebra-wood dining surface overlaps hardworking seafoam-green granite on the tiered island. • End-grain maple butcher block creates a subtle checkerboard pattern on one end of the island, which Simmons playfully juxtaposed with the strong linear grain of the island's dominant zebra-wood. • Ceramic floor tiles in a dark, subtly striated pattern complement the prominent grain of the zebra-wood island.

For more ideas on textural surfaces go to KitchenBathIdeas.com/product



KEY TO THE LOOK

Cabinets: Quartersawn white oak in a natural finish, by CKS Kitchens & Design; 919/477-6318; cksdesignstudio.com

Backsplash: DecoMetal laminate by Formica; 800/367-6422; formica.com

Countertops: Honed seafoam granite, end-grain maple, and zebra wood

Hardware: Häfele; 800/423-3531; hafele.com/us

Vent hood: Fu-Tung Cheng collection by Zephyr; 888/880-8368; zephyronline.com

Espresso maker: Miele; 800/883-4537; miele.com

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
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