

# residential architect

hanley wood

SEPTEMBER · OCTOBER 2008

good is in  
the details

in custom work, every  
little thing counts big

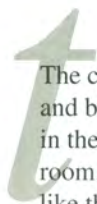
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# k + b studio

## kitchen: pattern play



The clients for this Seattle kitchen remodeling job wanted more space and better light. Nils C. Finne, AIA, suggested knocking down walls in the dining room and breakfast nook to create one contiguous room. But the owners were nervous, at least initially, “about feeling like they were eating in a kitchen,” he says. Those worries vanished once they saw Finne’s design for a light-filled space full of stunning details and textural contrasts.

A custom island embodies Finne’s “crafted modernism” concept for the 640-square-foot space. For the sake of continuity, fabricators

used planks from the same elm tree to make the island countertop and a custom dining table nearby. To add visual and tactile interest, they left the long outside edge of each piece raw and used sleek machine finishes on the remaining sides.

Fabricating the open island was especially tricky. Plumbing, wiring, and disposal installations had to be exact, Finne says, so everything would be in the right spot when the island was put in place. To make those exposed guts look good, the architect spec’d blackened copper piping and a stainless steel disposal shroud. He also concealed

the electrical outlets beneath the island tabletop, because there are no vertical surfaces. It “was a huge challenge,” he acknowledges, “because the mechanics of an island are usually hidden, and in this case nothing was hidden.”

Finne’s choice of subtly opposing textures and materials in soothing hues communicates comfort while also conveying a contemporary edge. Panels of slender bamboo stalks are set in yellow cedar door frames. Sea grass embedded in a translucent resin panel filters daylight while screening undesirable views. And a variegated stone mosaic backsplash provides a colorful counterpoint to the polished limestone counters.

Despite the varied patterns, the overall space feels calm because “the color palette is simple and almost monochromatic,” Finne explains. And yet, he notes slyly, “on second and third looks, you discover this interplay of materials and details.”—*shelley d. hutchins*



In the dining area, upper cabinets segue into open shelves. The shelves’ contrapuntal dimensions and strong horizontality provide a striking contrast to the vertical patterns throughout the rest of the kitchen.



**architect:** Finne Architects, Seattle

**general contractor:** Schultz Miller, Seattle

**cabinet fabricator:** Seaboard Cabinet Co., Seattle

**wood fabricator:** Urban Hardwoods, Seattle

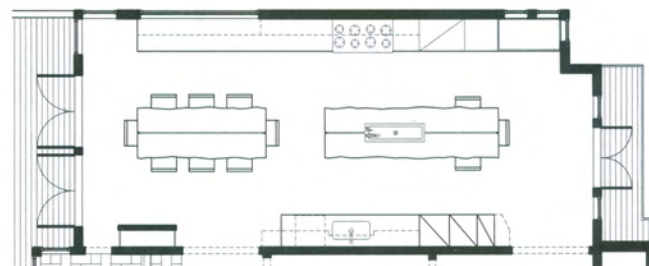
**steel fabricator:** Illume Inc., Seattle

**resources:** hardware: Sun Valley Bronze;  
plumbing fixtures: Elkay USA, Hansgrohe; range:  
Wolf Appliance; refrigerator: Sub-Zero





Photos: Benjamin Benschneider





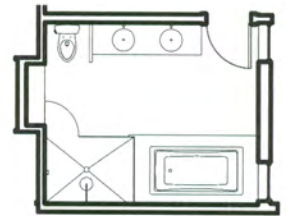
# k + b studio

## bath: space within space

Elegantly detailed materials culminate in lighthearted surprises in this master bath. Architect Nils C. Finne, AIA, chose cool stone and glass to balance a rich fir ceiling, for example, but spec'd cherry wood cabinets to highlight the use of that wood throughout the rest of the Redmond, Wash., house. Sand-colored limestone tiles cover the floor, but then extend 8 feet up the walls to "create a space within the space," he says, adding that custom glass mosaics in irregular strips on the floor "break up that stone wrapper."

Clever contradictions continue elsewhere in the space. Of note is the custom steam shower Finne designed with alternating clear and sandblasted glass panels to create a "play of translucency and transparency" within. A subtly canted glass ceiling in the shower keeps condensation from dropping onto its occupant. And a pivoting transom above the shower door vents the steam.

Another custom touch takes its cues from the alternating shower panels. The twin mirrors above the vanity are flanked by recessed fluorescent lights covered with sandblasted glass. A blackened steel frame and a strip of cherry wood along the top complete the composition. "The lamps are positioned behind two pieces of sandblasted glass," Finne says of the detail, "for a greater diffusion of light." —s.d.h.



Black steel outlines the custom light and mirror panels above the vanity and accents the shower enclosure. A frosted glass panel at one end of the vanity conceals the toilet.



**architect:** Finne Architects, Seattle

**general contractor:** Schilperoort & Brooks, Mountlake Terrace, Wash.

**resources:** glass tile: Oceanside Glasstile; plumbing fittings and fixtures: California Faucets, Duravit USA, Elkay USA, Hansgrohe, Kohler Co., TOTO USA



Photos: Benjamin Benschneider