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# NATURALLY NEUTRAL

Bringing natural elements and soft tones into the kitchen makes a big impact.

Stories by Meryl Siegman







Cardello Architects in Westport, CT, is known for creating innovative luxury homes that expertly blend harmony, timelessness and functionality. These modern kitchens from two recent projects showcase the firm's skill, creativity and versatility. What the kitchens have in common is the way in which modern and traditional elements such as oak and metal are thoughtfully woven together to create highly functional spaces for their owners. Their aesthetics, however, couldn't be more different.

David LaPierre, a partner at Cardello Architects, says, "We completely renovated this home in Darien, CT. The existing house was very traditional, with compartmentalized rooms and a kitchen that was practically an afterthought. We opened it up to the adjacent family room and dining area to create a space where the family would enjoy hanging out." He goes on to describe the space as a "clean, crisp interpretation of a kitchen, with everything tucked away." For example, the freezer, refrigerator, dishwasher and secondary beverage storage are seamlessly integrated into the dark gray millwork to create a pristine look.



The kitchen blends modern materials, such as metal, with natural stone and wood. The plank flooring and ceiling beams are made from a warm and inviting white oak. The long island countertop from Absolute Granite and Marble is crafted

from elegant black granite, featuring a waterfall edge on both sides.

These details are but a backdrop to the focal point of the kitchen: the stunning back wall that immediately catches the eye from the adjoining spaces. Above the stovetop, the architects designed a three-paneled hood in painted white that is perfectly integrated into the matching cabinetry. But it's the striking marble backsplash that makes the statement, rising from the stovetop and bleeding up behind the symmetrical shelves that frame the hood.

"The stone has a lot of activity in it," says David. "It makes a great contrast to the millwork, which is very clean and very white. It took the owners a long time to choose that stone slab. It's quite unique." The matching shelves on both sides of the hood add a delightful detail. They're made of quarter-inch-





thick glass with bronze trim that ties into the three brass light fixtures on the ceiling. The shelves, David explains, “are set right into the stone and jut out just far enough to hold a glass mixer and serving goblets, which reflect the light beautifully. It’s a very subtle and unique treatment.”

By comparison, this home in Westchester is a new build rather than a renovation. It is designed with lots of natural materials,

including oak floors and beams. “Because the homeowner is a serious chef, this is a highly functional chef’s kitchen,” David explains. “It has a commercial range fitted with an enormous hood, a salamander for grilling steaks, a large island with a butcher block top and a professional knife rack. It’s used every day; it’s more user friendly, and everything isn’t so tucked away.” Antique mirrors behind both sides of the range and the window provide a visually interesting detail.



One architectural firm, two very different takes on modern, functional kitchens that are designed to meet the distinct needs and desires of their individual owners.

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