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Belltown Kitchen

RAUVISIO terra engineered wood surface grounds this nature-infused modern kitchen.
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Waterview condo kitchen gets modern update, enhanced storage

With its beautiful views of the water, multitude of windows and spacious kitchen, this Seattle condo had plenty to recommend it. But the dated appearance and limited storage made it ripe for a remodel, and when the new owner, a New York City transplant, met with designer and former New Yorker Yumi Kagamihara of Hatano Studio, LLC to discuss modernizing the condo, they instantly hit it off.

That connection inspired a design collaboration that would transform the entire condo into a relaxing, well organized, "feel-good" space that combined the best of East and West Coast styling. And, since the project was completed just before the pandemic, the joys of a well-designed and comforting home environment became even more valuable.

"The client wanted a soft but industrial look – think newly renovated Starbucks," Kagamihara noted. "The major challenge of this project was deciding on the color: She wanted it to be not too grey, but not too brown with all the sunlight coming in."

Indeed, while the condo's beautiful water views are part of what makes the space special, it also created its own unique set of challenges with regard to the color palette, according to Kagamihara. "With a water view, colors can be tricky in general," she explained. "You don't want to interrupt the view, but that water gives a blue hue to the space, so color selection gets slightly difficult."



The client initially was leaning toward painting the cabinets grey, but Kagamihara suggested REHAU RAUVISIO terra Whiskey Oak to bring in both warm and cool tones. "With the entire kitchen and living room areas being completely open, we wanted cohesive integration of the space," she stated, adding, "we wanted to add some cooler tones, but still have the warmth to fit in with her existing furniture."

"The walnut grey tone works so well in the space," she continued. "The Whiskey color introduces a 'greige' hue – a warmer tone with a little grey that goes well with anything."

Victor Barbascumpa of Acadia Craft collaborated on the project, and he noted, "The clients were on a mission to create a modern-inspired space. Our team mixed transitional design and modern design methods to transform their kitchen to they've always dreamed of."

The cabinetry is constructed with the RAUVISIO terra soft, textured HPL surface with perfectly matched REHAU LaserEdge for a seamless finish that gives the feel of a real wood board. These materials were key to creating that clean-lined, elegant look. "Through our simple, REHAU-manufactured materials and transitional, Shaker-style fronts, the client was able to achieve a beautiful kitchen that brought character and significant value to their home," said Barbascumpa.

Kagamihara added that the client also liked the texture of the REHAU material. "It gives the space textural interest so everything isn't so smooth and flat," she said.

In fact, the texture was so enticing, Kagamihara said the client initially thought it was wood. "The client immediately was drawn to the REHAU RAUVISIO terra Whiskey Oak and thought it was real wood – in fact, she thought the real wood cabinet that was shown to her in comparison was fake! She just loved the texture of the RAUVISIO terra."

After much consideration, the client decided to go with durable and beautiful quartz for the countertops and backsplash, selecting PentalQuartz Arabescato to add contrast and drama. "It has a similar greige tone in veining to match the Whiskey Oak," Kagamihara noted. Black cabinet pulls from Top Knobs' Nouveau III Collection sharpen the appearance of the cabinet material, and are carried over into the black light fixtures from Tech Lighting.

The lighting itself presented several challenges, as the condo had concrete ceilings and the existing lighting was

Project: Seattle Kitchen

Project type: Kitchen remodel, completed in 2019

Designer: Yumi Kagamihara, Hatano Studio, LLC

Cabinet Manufacturer: Acadia Craft

REHAU products used: REHAU terra™ Whiskey Oak with perfectly matched REHAU LaserEdge™ technology

Photographer: Hatano Studio, LLC

not placed to show off the kitchen in the best possible light. Concrete ceilings also come with certain limitations, she pointed out, stating, "Since you can't drill through it, we decided to have a drop ceiling and hide the wire."

Kagamihara selected the lighting fixture not only for its functional appeal, but because of its design, as she wanted something that would add interest without being obstructive. "With the views, you needed to be able to see through it, so it had to work within the space without being a distraction," she said. The open fixture manages to be both understated and eye catching, making a subtle statement that blends well with the space and doesn't block the stunning views.

Condos often mean space challenges in general, and while the kitchen was a good size, the overall space still had to be well thought out to maximize function. For that reason, Kagamihara noted, "We detailed all functions she wanted and planned the space out carefully from the beginning, starting with the cabinets. It is crucial to plan and think through how the space is going to be used when you are remodeling a kitchen – especially when you are working with limited space."

She continued, "Storage is important no matter what, but more so in a condo. Without enough storage, it just gets messy." While a dedicated pantry would have been ideal, realizing that "a walk-in pantry isn't going to happen in a condo," they opted for a tall pantry cabinet next to the refrigerator. This helped drive the decision to go with the GE Café double ovens, which allowed more space for the much-needed pantry cabinet.

The low ceiling also impacted the appliance choices, including the Liebherr 80" panel-ready refrigerator and the Zephyr 30" Pro Style Vent Hood. Other appliances in the space include a Bosch 24" Drop Down Door Speed Oven/Microwave, GE Café Six-Burner Range and Fisher & Paykel Double DishDrawer Dishwasher, all of which add functional appeal, while the Kohler Strive sink and Grohe K7 faucet add a modern touch to the space.

Sharing New York sensibilities, as well as backgrounds in technology and finance, Kagamihara and her client connected on many levels, allowing the design process to proceed as a true collaboration. "She knew I would be detail oriented and meticulous, and [I think] that made her feel more confident, because we saw eye to eye on many things," Kagamihara said.

The end result was a beautiful, open space that maximizes storage, functionality and awesome views – perfect for cooking, entertaining or relaxing. "I like the view, the different angles and the fact that we have space for everything. She just loves everything about her kitchen," Kagamihara said.

"I'm glad we did it before COVID," Kagamihara added. Like most people during the pandemic, "They were stuck in the space, and at least they could look at all these beautiful things."



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