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West Olive Kitchen

Super-matte REHAU cabinet surface creates
dramatic, kid-friendly design

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Contemporary black-and-white kitchen features child-friendly style

When Kevin and Niki Kloosterman wanted to create a spectacular kitchen for their new-build home, they began by approaching Eric Exo, who was not only a personal friend of the couple, but also as an engineer for the Grand Rapids, MI-based Woodways custom cabinet manufacturer.

The clients wanted a kitchen design that would incorporate a contemporary, European-style aesthetic, durable, easy-care materials and a black matte color scheme – all of which meshed perfectly with the REHAU RAUVISIO noir After Dark, a new monotonic matte cabinet surface inspired by the look and feel of film-noir.

Additionally, with three children under the age of five, the clients needed a kitchen that would be family friendly, while balancing their desire for ample storage and countertop space with an open layout that would facilitate entertaining.

The Kloostermans came to Exo with some Pinterest photos to express their goals and style ideas, and Exo used these as a jumping-off point to develop a design that would meet all of their needs. The floor plan was an open concept layout connecting to the dining and living areas, so he proposed an L-shaped layout with a center island that includes an overhang to provide informal seating for the clients' three children.



The color scheme was a crucial part of the design. Niki Kloosterman explained, "Our whole house is modern black and white, and we really wanted black cabinets in our kitchen; it was something a little bit different from what everyone does, but we really like the black and white look."

Exo agreed that the color choice was definitely on trend. "We have been seeing a movement more toward black cabinets in the modern/contemporary style and the matte material is a perfect finish to hide fingerprints," he noted.



But while black was the Kloostermans' desired color choice for the cabinetry, with a four year old, a two year old and a newborn, she admitted to being "nervous about black wood because it can easily scratch and show what's underneath."

She continued, "We knew people who sold REHAU and they told us about the product, and we loved that it was so durable and we could still do black and not worry about all the scratches."

Woodways had REHAU samples displayed in its showroom, as it is frequently selected for the company's projects. Exo thought it would be a good fit, but he proposed several solutions of different materials and brands to give the clients multiple options. He noted that the RAUVISIO noir super-matte surface was selected "because of the superior durability and zero-edge seam, as well as the material's fingerprint resistance," adding that "cleaning and durability were very important to the project." The clients also loved the matte black hue, which meshed perfectly with their color vision.

To provide contrast, the big waterfall island is topped with white Envi Quartz Carrara Fina countertops from Lakeside Surfaces, which also help to keep the kitchen bright. "The strong veins give a very modern and

Project: West Olive kitchen

Project type: Residence, built in 2021

Designer / Manufacturer: Woodways

Distributor: J. Kaltz & Company

REHAU products used: RAUVISIO noir™ After Dark with perfectly matched REHAU LaserEdge™ technology

Photographer: Above the Horizon Media LLC

contemporary feel and pull coloring from the black cabinets," he said, adding that the quartz was selected for durability and easy maintenance as well.

The island incorporates an Elkay Quartz sink in Caviar, which allows the clients to engage in kitchen cleanup tasks while still spending time with guests. Since entertaining was a priority, they selected a host of highly functional appliances including a Bosch Benchmark Series refrigerator and wall oven/microwave, Bosch 30" gas cooktop and Bosch 500 series dishwasher.

The kitchen also features open shelves, which add a decorative touch, and since the clients wanted a sleek, clean look, they went with a drywall hood that incorporates a Zephyr Monsoon Mini range hood insert. The backsplash features Rumba Diamond 4x8 tile in Bianco, while large Somerset Pendants from Heritage Brass add light and a stylish element to the space.

Function was also a crucial element of the design, particularly in terms of storage. "One of my favorite things about the kitchen is our walk-in pantry," Kloosterman said. "It looks like cabinet doors, however they open into a walk-in pantry. Everyone who walks in doesn't know we have a pantry; even the guys laying the floor didn't know. It flows seamlessly into the kitchen, and gives us the storage we needed." As with the cabinetry, the pantry doors feature RAUVISIO noir monotonic matte finish, which adds an elegant touch to the space, while still providing the kind of durability needed to accommodate three active children.

Putting it all together was the easy part. Exo explained, "We always build our cabinet boxes in the shop and if we use an outside material, we will

purchase prefinished panels and doors and apply those. We purchased the REHAU panels, crafted cabinetry boxes and applied the doors, and there were no challenges with the fabrication and completion – it went smoothly as usual."

While typically, an engineer would not be the one to take on the lead role in a kitchen design project, Exo also had 20+ years working with cabinetry – a talent that was evident in the design of the range wall where he used two tall towers (with different configurations) to create an asymmetrical balance and make the range a stunning focal point.

Exo's engineering background also brought a unique perspective on functionality and practicality to the project, providing valuable technical expertise. This was especially helpful in regard to proper clearances and codes when designing around built-in appliances. Exo said his background also helped the process run more smoothly, as he could answer questions about technicalities and create alternative solutions as needed.

He noted that the clients made only minimal changes to the initial design. "They chose to add more drawers than doors because that was going to better suit their kitchen supplies and how they intended to use their space." The end result was a stylish, child-friendly kitchen with a contemporary black and white design that is equally well suited for entertaining and meeting the functional needs of a busy family.



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