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Dark Horse Woodworks

RAUVISIO ingrain™ wood fiber laminate gives chef's kitchen contemporary appeal and family-friendly functionality.

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Kitchen gets modern overhaul fit for a restaurateur

The kitchen is the heart of the home for many families, but when that kitchen belongs to the co-owner of multiple restaurants, getting the look, feel, function and details right becomes even more important.

In this Midtown Atlanta kitchen remodel, Chris Dehmer of Dark Horse Woodworks was referred for the job by a previous client whose kitchen he'd completed. With the new clients, he found himself in the unique position of working on a kitchen for the co-owner of several area restaurants, including the Michelin Starred Lazy Betty.

The homeowner loved cooking, hospitality and entertaining, but was frustrated by the original kitchen. The space was small and cramped, with minimal storage and countertop space. She needed the kitchen to be sophisticated enough to prepare meals in, yet also family-friendly, as the clients have two children. Dehmer noted that, "Dinner together was an important time for them."

The clients' aesthetic called for "a modern look and feel," according to Dehmer. However, this was "the exact opposite of the exterior of the house, and the rest of the neighborhood," he noted. While some homeowners might have felt pressured to conform to the neighborhood's existing, more traditional vibe, the clients had strong design sensibilities and a powerful vision for their new kitchen.

Dehmer explained, "Fortunately for me, they knew what they wanted and were able to express that."



While the clients weren't looking for a great deal of direction with the overall design, they were counting on Dehmer to help guide their product choices. Dehmer, a former president and board member of the Cabinet Makers Association, did not disappoint.

A long-time user of REHAU products, he suggested RAUVISIO ingrain in Roasted Oak to add visual impact and imbue the space with a rich, luxe feeling, noting that, "It is a great product, and also economical." The laminate combines natural wood fibers with synchronized etching, offering a luxurious veneer aesthetic that appealed to the clients. Additionally, because RAUVISIO ingrain is crafted from organic materials, it does not contain melamine resins, formaldehyde, phenol or solvents, making it a safe and family-friendly addition to the home.



Heat and moisture resistant, it also offered the kind of durability that this active family needed. The clients were particularly pleased with how easy it was to clean and maintain the cabinets.

From an aesthetic standpoint, the rich, burnished tones provided a sense of warmth, while the vertical pattern accentuated the grain, adding to the feeling of contemporary elegance.

The clients themselves discovered the Vetro-Line glass tambour door system on REHAU's website, drawn by the sleek, modern feel and the way the glass both revealed and concealed the cabinet contents. The Smoke shade added a bit of contemporary chic, while the stylish tempered glass was designed for strength and durability, making it a good choice for a kitchen that gets plenty of use by a busy family.

To address the family's storage and organizational needs, Dehmer incorporated several in-house-made storage pieces, one for spices and another for utensils. "They really love them!" he enthused.

Project: Midtown Garden District kitchen, Atlanta, GA

Project type: Kitchen remodel, completed in April 2023

Cabinet shop: Dark Horse Woodworks

REHAU systems used: RAUVISIO ingrain™ Roasted Oak with perfectly matched REHAU LaserEdge™ technology and Vetro-Line glass tambour door system in Smoke

Photographer: Eric Sun Photography

The 1920s home was designed by Atlanta's first female architect, Leila Ross Wilburn, and the homeowners wanted the kitchen to honor her aesthetic and complement the age of the house. At the same time, they wanted to bring in some modern elements, as well as some dark and minimal elements of Japanese design.

Unhoned soapstone was selected for the countertop and backsplash, both for its soft touch and feel, and for its ability to handle hot temperatures. In a tribute to the shiny brass hardware traditionally found in homes of the 1920s, the cabinets feature natural brass hardware from Rejuvenation.

A prep sink was also on the homeowners' wish list, since this would minimize the chance of cross contamination while preparing meals. The larger kitchen footprint allowed for the addition of the desired sinks with Kallista faucets. An unlacquered brass Waterstone pot filler added another cook-friendly touch.

Both the natural patina of the unlacquered brass and unpredictable veining of the soapstone evoke the Japanese Wabi-Sabi philosophy, so it made sense to pair them in the Japanese-inspired design.

Finally, because cooking was a priority, the clients wanted high-quality appliances to round off the space. A stylish stainless steel Wolf range with all the bells and whistles and a Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer fit the bill. The end result was a modern, affordable and upscale-looking kitchen equally well suited for cooking, entertaining, enjoying family meals together and raising a family.



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