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Spacious Kitchen Receives Aquatic Makeover

By **Andrea Girolamo**

There's something fishy about this kitchen, and that may be what truly sets it apart from other kitchens Rebecca Reynolds has designed in the past. Reynolds, a veteran designer and principal of New Canaan, CT-based New Canaan Kitchens, LLC, says the large tropical fish tank quickly took center stage and the surrounding design was created to showcase it.

"I think the fish tank was the inspiration for me; it dictated that the kitchen design reflect a natural, organic feel," she says.

HOMEGRUUN DESIGN

Reynolds says the clients' personalities informed the design.

"The homeowners began diving on vacations years ago and now it's a shared passion," she says. "They wanted to bring that into their home as a focal point, as a unique element."

Photos: Courtesy of New Canaan Kitchens



This spacious L-shaped kitchen, designed by Rebecca Reynolds, features solid alder cabinetry in

The fish were the inspiration for the color and texture choices, which the designer selected to create a warm, organic look. But Reynolds adds, "While the tank is certainly a focal point, I did want to establish that the rest of the kitchen would have its own beautiful flow."

"The kitchen cabinetry is solid alder in two different stains: a deep honey on the perimeter and a stain two shades darker for the island," she continues. She selected granite

Right: A bronze/brushed stainless steel hood from RangeCraft and a Viking dual-fuel cooktop are paired with a mosaic tile backsplash in ocean-inspired shades.

Below: The large tropical fish tank on the right acted as the inspiration and focal point for the space, reflecting the clients' love of diving.



a honey shade on the perimeter and a stain two shades darker on the large, functional island.

hood from RangeCraft Manufacturing sits above a 48" Viking dual-fuel gas cooktop. Between them is a mosaic tile backsplash in shades that further set off the blues and greens in the granite.

"The main 'working' part of the kitchen is a large L-shape that begins with a 48" Viking refrigerator near the kitchen table, ending at the 30" double oven cabinet, also from Viking," adds the designer. "At the far end of the kitchen is a 30" nook where we added some Sub-Zero 700 series refrigerator drawers so the children would have easy access to drinks and snacks. Above that nook is a bookcase with wine cubbies for everyday wine storage."

The island mimics the kitchen's overall L-shape, with radius cabinetry at both ends. Reynolds specified a lowered wood tabletop for casual dining on one side, while the other side is all business. Within the island is a second dishwasher, trash

for the countertops. "It has beautiful greens and blues as a base, with muted pistachio green and bronze/copper veining throughout. When I found this granite, I knew it was complementary for the space and wouldn't compete with the fish tank."

Repeating the subtle notes of bronze and copper in the granite, the bronze/brushed stainless steel

pull-out and microwave, Franke's Beach sink, plus additional storage space.

"Off the kitchen is an informal dining area with seating for six and, beyond that, a homework nook for the children with two different work areas and wall cabinets for homework projects and art supplies," says Reynolds.

She also addressed the needs of a modern, busy family by adding a desk/work station beside the fish tank.

TANK TALK

As for the fish tank, Reynolds observes, "It's certainly a conversation piece." And it was certainly a challenge, as well.

"From an experience standpoint, I went into this project with a lack of knowledge about designing cabinetry around salt water fish tanks of this magnitude," Reynolds says. The local fish tank company that sold the homeowners the tank didn't add much in the way of clarity



Radius cabinetry appears at both ends of the island to add visual appeal.

panels around the tank, to ensure consistency throughout the space.

The tank and surrounding floor-to-ceiling cabinetry eventually amounted to a kind of feature wall, separating the kitchen from the family room. "Some of the base cabinetry had to be accessible to service the pump, in case there was a problem with it. Likewise, some of the cabinetry above the tank needed to be easily accessed for daily feeding and cleaning," Reynolds says of the solutions devised for the tank. "That 'A-ha!' moment is common in this line of work."

A BETTER BUTLER

The final room Reynolds was responsible for was a formal butler's pantry adjacent to the dining room.

Describing the room's aesthetic as "luxury and sheer elegance," the designer chose a Sub-Zero full-height wine refrigerator from the company's 700 series, which became the focal point.

"The room was challenging to design because it had two entries, but was only 12'x6' and had no access to natural light," she says. To give the illusion of space, Reynolds painted the cabinetry a buttercream shade and added a glaze; she also added a few glass doors to add depth.

Both the countertops and the mosaic tile backsplash are a honey-colored onyx; the backsplash also features a burnt umber glass rail in a slight arch, designed to mimic the arch in the cabinet above the sink and set off the dark bronze faucet.



on the subject, Reynolds notes, so the approach was to imagine all of the worst case scenarios and provide built-in solutions.

"The structural details for the

cabinetry and millwork surrounding had to be done on-site."

The custom cabinetmaker who did the work on the perimeter and island also did the millwork

Project Highlights

- Rebecca Reynolds, principal of New Canaan Kitchens, LLC of New Canaan, CT, created the design for this large, multi-entry kitchen, which centers around a large fish tank. The tank provided both the inspiration for the design as well as the biggest challenge to it.
- The presence of life the tank created within the kitchen led Reynolds to select earthy elements and colors. She specified granite countertops in a pastiche of muted pistachio green shades and deep azure, with bands of bronze veined throughout. Custom alder cabinetry is featured in both base and wall-hung cabinetry in two different stains: deep honey on the perimeter, and a stain two shades darker on the island.
- The designer specified a variety of appliances for the clients, a busy pair with young children, including a Viking 48" dual-fuel cooktop, with a bronze/brushed stainless steel RangeCraft hood above it; a 48" refrigerator, also from Viking; a double-bowl "beach" sink from Franke, and a variety of products from Sub-Zero's 700 series, including refrigerator drawers and wine refrigeration within the butler's pantry, which Reynolds also designed. Two sets of dishwashers were included, as well as two trash pull-outs, and two microwaves, all split between the perimeter workspaces and the functional island.
- The butler's pantry features a third dishwasher, onyx countertops and a Linkasink hammered copper bar sink crowned by a weathered bronze faucet.



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