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GENTLY MODERN

Yes, this space is sleek and steely, but it's also soft and serene. See how comfortable and captivating a contemporary kitchen can be.

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Crispy cabinets and pale oak flooring help warm the cool steel and dark stone in this lake-view kitchen. The dining table's granite top matches the counters.

The stop-saving plan has the island cooking opposite the sink. The island "spits" on a 12-inch steel band—a sleek, durable toe-kick.



Take-Home Tip
Frosted-glass cabinet doors create an open, modern look—and the obscured view covers any bits of untidiness.



The look of many modernist spaces borders on severe. Not this kitchen, which puts a soft, serene spin on contemporary design.

Cream-color cabinets, charcoal-gray granite, and brushed stainless steel create a beauty that's far from skin deep. "This is probably the most functional kitchen I've ever done," says designer Jodi Caden, a member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKA) and a licensed builder based in Birmingham, Michigan. "Inside every drawer or cabinet door, all the storage is very well defined, and it's very easy to see and grab everything," Caden says.

The client and her husband were eager for change. Their old kitchen, full of peach laminates, had a U-shape layout that trapped the cook behind a peninsula by the breakfast nook. "It created bottlenecks, and she was really tired of walking around that U," Caden says. With the couple's kids in college, it was time for the kitchen to grow up and move on, too.

The new island-based plan features a compact work zone with a cooktop opposite the sink. A few strides from the dishwasher, a stylish storage wall stretches from floor to ceiling, its frosted-glass doors silhouetting white dishes. "It's an interesting focal point from the dining area," Caden says. "The doors and the dishes become part of the architecture."

Glass and steel make the room a playground for gentle sunlight. "It's not like a mirror," Caden says. "The effect is very soft." Stainless steel dresses the fridge and freezer and climbs high on the walls. It covers the tambour door of a high-rise

OPPOSITE PAGE: The sink faucet teams with an ultracool dispenser for cold and hot filtered water—perfect for tea. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** An island niche keeps spices close to the cooking. Metal fine china holds barware from flower-colored sunlight. **OPPOSITE:** The refrigerator (on the right) and separate freezer both wear polished stainless steel, like the backsplash.





appliance garage that's an integral part of the design, not an afterthought. "I never design an appliance garage where you have a little box stuck under a wall cabinet," Caden says.

The client inspired many choices. For instance, she wanted a microwave at counter height, so Caden placed it on the storage wall, crowning it with candy drawers for fun. "She always had candy out when we met," Caden says. The client also wanted her spices in the open by the cooktop—but not obvious to guests. The solution? A spice niche carved into the support wall of the island's raised and curved eating bar.

Two slender divider walls, set on opposite sides of the kitchen, add architectural appeal. In the first, peekaboo cutouts showcase sculpture and pottery while preserving lake views. Across the room, a matching divider shields views of a desk area from the adjacent formal dining room. "We needed more privacy here, so we closed the cutouts and made niches facing the formal living areas," Caden says.

To furnish the space, interior designer Jeffrey King created custom tables and light fixtures for the eating nook and formal dining area. The result is a sleek, contemporary setting.

"This kitchen is timeless," Caden says. "In 10 years, it will still look modern and crisp." ■

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ABOVE LEFT: A desk area includes video screens for monitoring security cameras—or watching TV from the eating area. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A buffet in the eating area holds champagne flutes and other barware. **LEFT:** Double doors open the kitchen to a formal dining room, where mahogany tables separate for bridge—and come together for meals.



Curly seating was a must in the eating area. Office-style swivel chairs match the modern feel of the lighting and artwork.



Six Key Storage Spots

1. PLATTER SLOTS: Vertical slots above the built-in refrigerator are used to hold occasional-use serving platters and trays. A horizontal shelf at the top stores more.

2. APPLIANCE GARAGE: Small appliances park in a triple-drawer garage with integral electrical outlets and a steel tandem rack. Proximity to the sink shortens the water for coffee commute.

3. CANDY BINS: More than just for candy, these clear bins above the microwave provide bins of color and a handy place for kitchen treats—be it the or otherwise.

4. SERVING-PIECE SHELVES: If the homeowners want that candy in a dish, they can find a serving piece on these shelves above the griddle. The design makes items easy to store and see.

5. BUNNY DRAWERS: Drawers between the freezer and refrigerator stock boxed and canned goods, centralizing food storage. The drawers are adjustable.

6. BASK TOWER: This tall "paperwork pantry" by the desk includes fixed and pullout shelves for office supplies, plus electrical outlets for recharging phones.



storage spotlight: DISHWARE

This kitchen's owners love white dishware and wanted to store it in cabinets with frosted-glass doors that would show off the various shapes and shades. Each shelf in this unit has a U-shape cutout in the middle. The design accepts deep and shallow items, yet eliminates rummaging. "My client wanted to see everything at once and never have to reach over anything to find something at the back," kitchen designer Jodi Caden says. "And she was willing to give up a little shelf space to achieve that." With the doors open, dishes are easy to see and reach. When the doors close, the neat stacks are put into soft focus. "This look wouldn't have worked with a hodgepodge of dishes," Caden says.

More Storage Ideas

Consider these dish-storage ideas from other kitchens.



Prized dishware deserves a high-profile spot in your kitchen. A cooktop hood with a mantel-like plate ledge fills the bill, as do lighted niches in upper cabinetry.



Bowls and dishes stacked inside cabinets can be hard to handle, especially when they're up high. A drawer with adjustable peg dividers eases access and sorting.



For classic style and reliable function, it's hard to beat an old-fashioned plate rack. This one, set conveniently above a dishwasher, includes a nice niche for crockery.