

REGIONAL FEATURE

WHISKI KITCHEN

WRITER | MARY ANN HUMPHREY PHOTOS | GENE MEADOWS, MEADOWS & CO. PHOTOGRAPHY

Contemporary Kitchen with a Twist



Homeowners JC and Terri Malerbi

In the design world, something trending today might seem outdated in a decade or even less – remember avocado and harvest gold appliances? Pink tiled bathrooms? (Shudder. We’re sorry to have reminded you.) JC and Terri Malerbi wanted an update for the kitchen in their Novi home that would look modern five years in the future, and Rebekah Tull and Ricci Bellucci of Whiski Kitchen helped bring their vision into focus.

The couple relocated back to Michigan from California to be near family. Their 3,400 square foot, four bedroom, three and a half bathroom brick home was built in 1993. With a full finished basement, it’s just right for JC, Terri, JC’s two children, and the couple’s two rescue dogs. But Terri knew immediately that she wanted to make some updates, particularly to the kitchen. She happened upon Whiski Kitchen’s ad and thought it was humorous and whimsical. When she talked with the



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design team about a kitchen renovation, they offered to sit down and discuss it with her. Two hours later, she felt she had explained her desires for her house to someone who was just as excited and passionate about it as she was.

“I explained to them that my modern day “current” kitchen was good, but I wanted a kitchen that would be up to date five years from now,” Terri recalls. She remembers that she wanted a white kitchen like those trending in all the current magazines, but also with long term value. “I wanted people to say, when did this go in? It looks so good!” she said with a laugh. It not only had to look good, but it also had to be seriously functional for the cooking and family events they enjoy having so often. “Like many families, we spend a lot of time in our kitchen,” Terri noted.

“The team revised the design twice before we knew it was exactly what we were looking for,” she added, and went on to explain that the kitchen was older and they wanted to give it an edge. “We wanted everything to look completely built in,” she said. This was accomplished by using a European frameless cabinet for the aluminum doors combined with typical wood framed cabinetry for the rest of the kitchen. They used a mix of metals --brushed aluminum, pewter, stainless and even some chrome --to create a modern twist. Two accent cabinets of dark bronze glass and brushed aluminum add contrast with the traditional white décor. “It’s an eclectic mix – transitional, from modern to timeless,” Bellucci remarked. “Nothing competes; it’s understated and elegant.”

The kitchen previously had an island and a wall with a dining room on other side, so they

removed the wall and created a peninsula with an overhang for extra seating. “We really like to entertain and cook for friends, so we decided on a 48 inch two oven side by side stove with six burners and a grill,” Terri recalls. She also wanted good quality cabinetry, so the cabinets are dovetailed, with soft close doors, pull out shelves, and automatic LED lighting. LED lighting under the wall cabinets also enhances the kitchen’s work space.

“I’ve always enjoyed cooking and baking,” Terri stated. She cites a dear family friend, Maria, who got her started baking Christmas cookies at their previous home in California four years ago. Maria had moved to an assisted living facility and no longer had a kitchen, so the Malerbis invited her to stay with them the week after Thanksgiving. Maria and Terri made 2,000-2,500 Christmas cookies that week, and have done so each year since. “We are mixing, baking, icing, and sprinkling cookies and shuffling the cookie trays every 7-9 minutes,” Terri recounts. “It’s a production!”

Terri utilizes her Kitchen Aid stand mixer frequently when she is baking cookies, so the island has an electrical outlet as well as drawers with pull out shelves for storage. “I can use the power on the island to go from mixing the dough to putting it on the cookie sheet, then am able to turn and put the sheet directly in the oven. I can use the counter space by the sink and stove peninsula for cooling racks and recycling cookie sheets,” Terri says.

Manufactured by Kraus, the 33 inch, old fashioned style apron front sink consists of a single deep sink. Constructed of 16 gauge stainless steel and with a deep tub, it’s perfect for washing cookie sheets and large items. The back-splash by Ann Saks is a beautiful bronze glass metallic tile that coordinates with the hues of the mocha frosted glass cabinet doors. The countertops are Vicostone quartz, which in appearance is similar to marble. It’s predominately white, but has veining in two colors -- blue gray and bronze, which perfectly complements the kitchen’s “greige” tones. “Solid Surfaces Unlimited in Sterling Heights was wonderful to work with. They were able to get us a beautiful counter very quickly. They’re one of our favorite companies for countertops” noted Bellucci.

Delta Touch faucets were installed for ease of cooking and baking. “When you have your hands full, you can touch it anywhere to get the water going, and it turns off automatically after two minutes,” Terri says. They also put in an ultra- quiet garbage disposal and a GE Monogram 39 decibel dishwasher with a lighted interior.

“It turned out to be an amazing transformation,” Bellucci says. “It’s light, it’s airy, and it makes a statement.”

“At Whiski Kitchen, we’re known for our individuality and our ability to add a unique twist, but most importantly, we’re known for our kitchen design and quality cabinetry” he added. □



WHISKI KITCHEN DESIGN STUDIO

As the design aspect of Detroit Build flourished, Seabrook Satterlund made the decision to open Whiski Kitchen Design Studio in 2015 to focus purely on the design of new construction and remodeling projects. The studio is a full-service design center for kitchens, bathrooms, and other spaces. Though completely separate entities, the two companies are “sisters” and complement each other well. Clients go to Whiski Kitchen for guidance in the design realm, whether it be cabinet colors and styles or countertops or tile or paint -- or simply to learn whatever the latest trends are.

Initially, the design studio operated out of an old 1,100 square foot repurposed auto garage. The showroom was well lit and drew attention with its 10 foot glass garage door, clearly displaying the vignettes as well as the flat black 1965 Vespa that sat in the foreground. As with many good things, they have outgrown the original space and are looking forward to opening a new Royal Oak location later this year.

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