

A Sleek & Stylish Showing

Modern, clean design showcases one firm's diversity.

By Diana Tuorto

Frederick Flock, CKD, CBD has spent the past twenty years designing kitchens and baths. To help sell those designs, he's created an eye-catching showroom with a modern, sleek design that captures the interest of all of his clients. Located in Sylvan Lake, Michigan, Bella Cucina was started in May 1999 by Scott Grandis, CKD, and Kevin Zaleski.

Flock had worked with both designers in previous years and joined the firm in April 2002.

Flock has always had a love for design. "I interned at General Motors Styling while completing my BFA in Industrial Design at the University of Kansas," he said. "I designed appliances for Toastmaster, Whirlpool, Kenmore, and others for over ten years. In addition to designing residential appliances, I spent twelve years designing restaurant interiors and kitchens."

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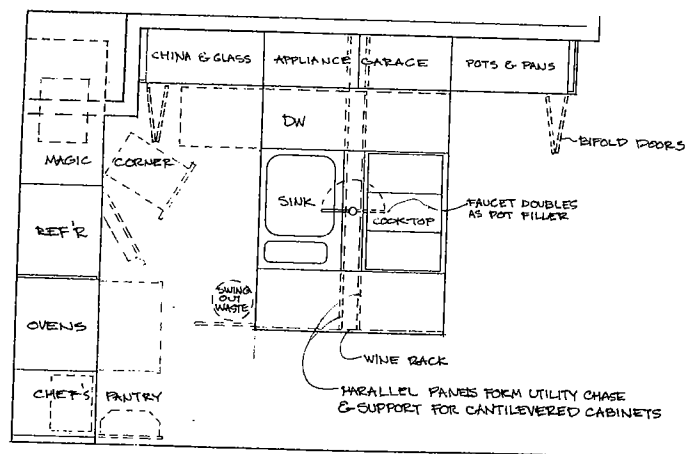


Flock is a designer who thrives on a difficult project. "I love the challenge of small kitchens; making a seemingly hopeless space workable is like a puzzle to solve or a game... a game of inches," Flock said. "Extremely large kitchens are likewise a challenge. Filling a lot of space in a meaningful way, and in a way that still functions efficiently, can be a very difficult task. Over the years, I've found that the best designs are the ones that look like they were easy to do, but in reality, the designer spent hours obsessing over the details until they were 'just right.'"

In addition, Flock has a very unique design style. "From a personal standpoint, I prefer the European approach of designing the kitchen as a total entity, both functionally and aesthetically, without the constraints of having to fit a given space. Balancing this approach with the realities of our market is one of the reasons why I haven't gotten bored with this business!"

When it came time for Bella Cucina to design a kitchen showroom display, Flock had a number of ideas, but wanted to create a modern kitchen to show the company's range. "The challenge in designing showroom displays is to incorporate the maximum number of features in a visually appealing way," said Flock. "In this case, the display is in the front window, so it needed to have the maximum 'wow' factor. For a firm noted for exceptional traditional and period styling, this display really needed to make the statement, 'we do cutting-edge contemporary' as well."

Flock added, "The display's premise was a 'loft' kitchen in a compact space that could be made fully-functional, incorporating as many unique ▶▶



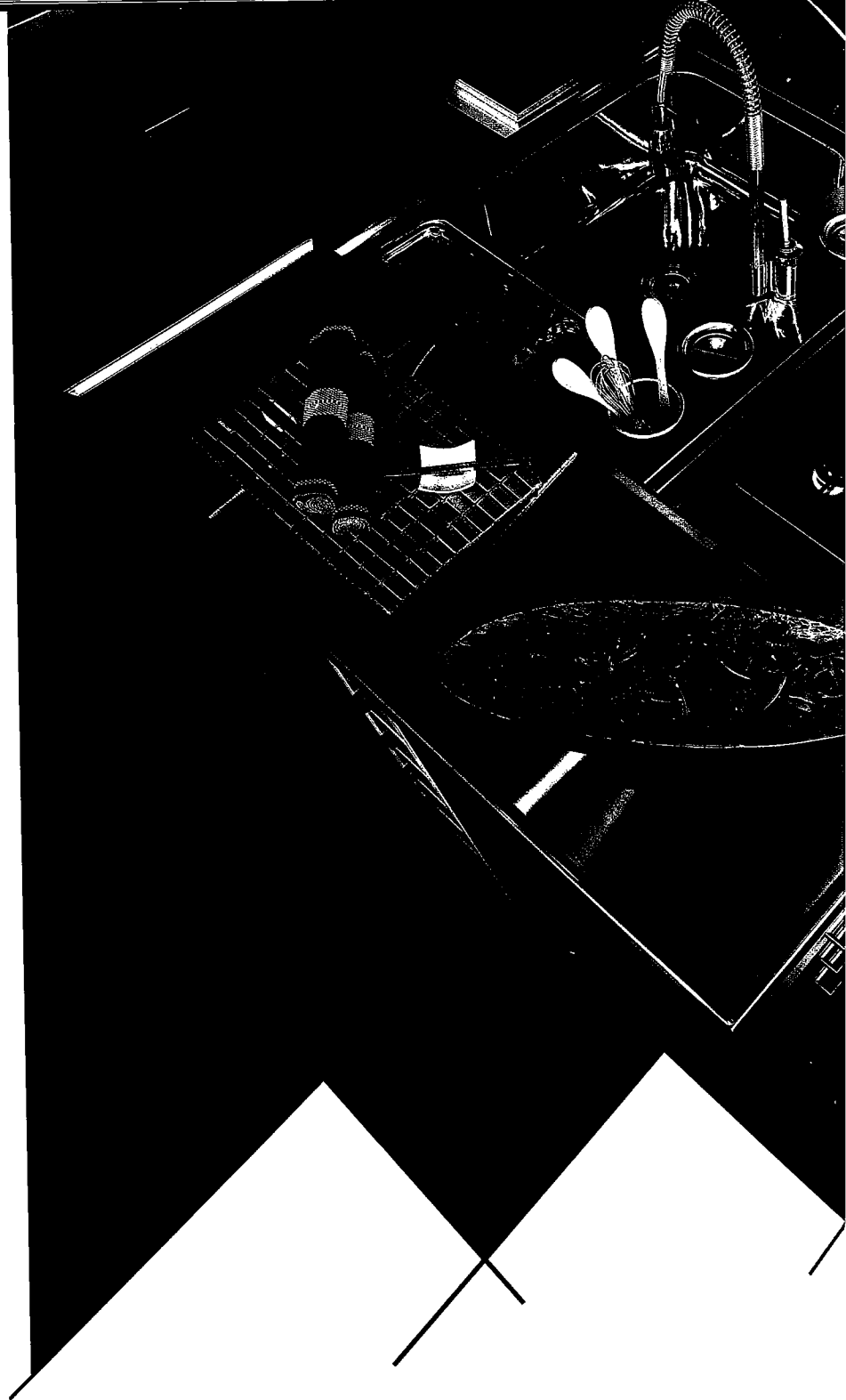
showroom profile

features as possible." Brick was salvaged from the surrounding metropolitan area to give the room a sense of history. To complete the color palette, carob-stained ash, stainless steel, and high-gloss metallic lime green acrylic polyurethane were used.

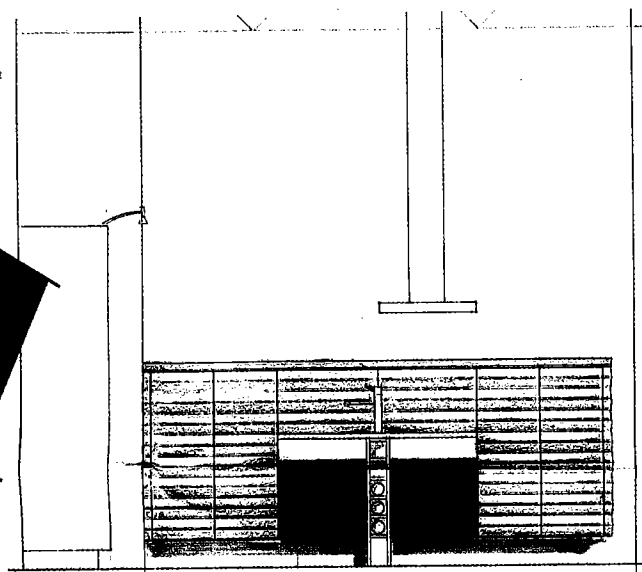
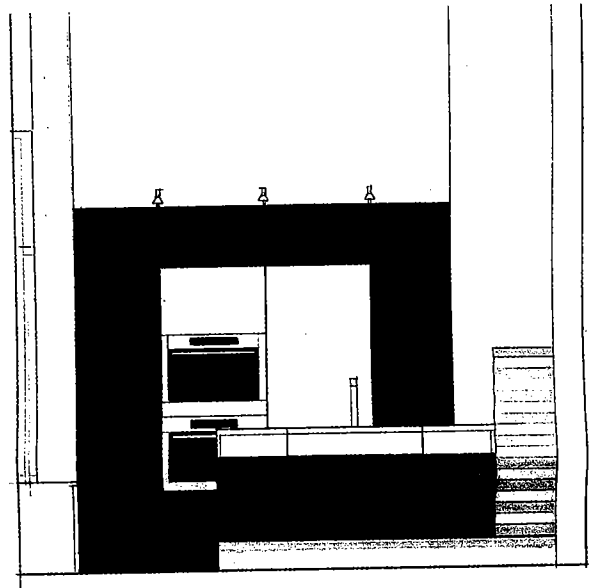
In order to create an art display area on the brick wall, conventional base and wall cabinets were eliminated. The cooktop/sink peninsula jets out from mid-height 16-inch deep wall cabinets that feature bi-fold doors that open away from the cooking and clean-up areas, allowing them to remain open for quick and easy access. Between these cabinets, the marine-edged stainless countertop extends into twin appliance storage compartments with flip-up retractable doors. At the core of the peninsula are two parallel cabinet panels perpendicular to the wall, forming a chase for utilities, as well as support for the cantilevered cabinets.

The panels are exposed at the end of the peninsula; shelves placed between them create a wine rack for what Flock calls "lagniappe" (Cajun for "a little something extra"). A 360-degree rotating Elkay faucet placed on the bridge, which is located over the panels between the back-to-back stainless steel cooking and sink wells, allows it to function as a pot filler as well. Restaurant-style bain-marie pans set into the bridge provide storage for utensils, bulk spices, or cleanup supplies.

The high wall makes a statement by cleverly surrounding the stainless steel rectangle of ovens and refrigerator with the carob-stained quartered ash veneer. The warming drawer and lower freezer door have matching veneer wood panels to complete the look.



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"Among my must-have features were the higher than normal counter-tops," said Flock. "This is something that clients are asking for more often, as the average height of the population increases."

Storage solutions were also very important to this showroom space. Flock added, "I think the most important feature is the two 36-inch wide x 48-inch high x 16-inch deep wall cabinets floating 8 inches above the floor. They provide a great amount of storage at a very convenient height. Tall magic-corner and swing out pantries flanking the refrigerator and ovens are equipped with door-activated lighting for ease of access."

During the process, Flock made some edits to the original design. "We originally wanted to include stained concrete floors," he stated. "However, in the process of removing the existing flooring, the concrete was found to be unusable for that treatment. Instead, we installed a porcelain tile that has the look of concrete."

Appliances in this stylish showroom include a warming drawer, convection oven, speed oven (a combination of microwave, thermal, and convection), gas cooktop, and 18-inch dishwasher, all by Miele. A Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer/icemaker is featured, and the vent hood is a Cheng Design from Zephyr. The cabinets are constructed of formaldehyde-free marine grade plywood and finished with low-VOC acrylic polyurethane.

This kitchen display has accomplished exactly what Flock intended; to create a space that is modern and diverse when compared to the company's traditional style. Flock said, "Most of our clients want their own unique look. However, this display seems to tell them that we can think 'outside the box' and can create something truly different for them." ■