

RUNNER UP
KITCHEN REMODEL

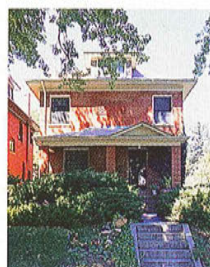




Asian influences yield a Zen masterpiece

A world traveler's request for a tranquil kitchen is answered.

by Linda Hayes • Photography by Emily Minton-Redfield



When Kristi Dinner, principal designer for kd design consultants, was commissioned to infuse the kitchen of a traditional Denver Square home with Asian flavor, her first step was

teaming with architect Scott Parker, of Nest Architectural Design. "The renovation involved pushing the footprint of the house out into the backyard, something that was more than I as a designer could do by myself," Dinner explains.

Her second step was ensuring that the design desires of the client, a serious cook who spent a lot of time traveling in Asia, meshed with the characteristics of the existing house. "Our client wanted the kitchen to have a calm, Zen-like feel and still be extremely functional," Dinner says. "Fortunately, the concept proved to be a good match with the Craftsman style of the house."

After thoroughly researching Japanese architecture, Dinner and Parker presented the client with three design schemes. The client's pick, with its modern, minimalist design, was unlike anything she could have imagined. "She called it the 'J. Lo scheme,' because it was so different," Parker laughs. "She wasn't sure she really understood it all, but she thought it was cool. And she trusted us completely."

Conceptually, the design began with the selection of materials, primarily a variety of neutral woods that, in keeping with

Asian sensibilities, were tactile and warm to the touch. All of the cabinetry is custom made of natural cherry, with raised "bird ledge" trim running horizontally along the bottom. Flooring is carbonized bamboo (boiled strips of bamboo that become darker in color), which matched well with the cherry. One of the room's focal points, a curved seating area that's part of a central island, is topped with South African wengé hardwood. Stainless-steel accents add a contemporary touch.

The floor plan for the 300-square-foot kitchen was based on fundamentals of Asian architecture. "The golden rule is that everything be divided into certain mathematical proportions," Dinner explains. "Here we used simple rectangular and square shapes that repeat in the cabinets and windows, as well as horizontal elements, such as the porcelain tiles on the backsplash, the transparent panels of the Japanese shoji screen, and the complementary high chair backs."

Modular ceilings are low over the work space, so that it is defined, and higher in the center space. Casings around the windows and doors and crowns above the upper cabinets unify the room.

Windows are another focal point. The shoji screen slides open to reveal a wall of glass looking out to the backyard (and soon-to-be Japanese garden). A matching window, its center panel replaced with a wall of mosaic tile, wraps around the commercial-style stove. "Both windows go all the way to the floor, to let in optimal light and help bring the outside in," Parker says.

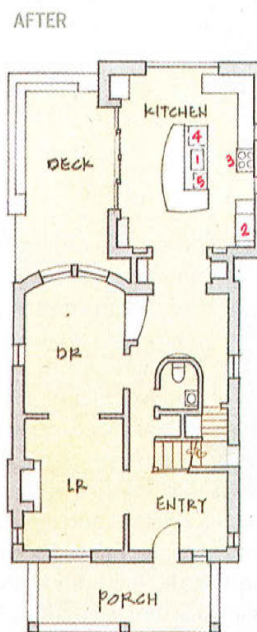
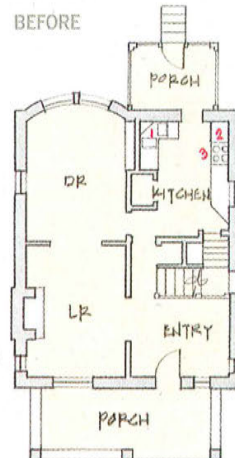
In the end, a defining concept combined with a strong relationship between the designer-architect team and the client brought overwhelmingly positive results. "It was a Zen experience," Dinner says.

Linda Hayes writes about the mountain lifestyle for SKI, Sunset, Estates West, Robb Report, and other national publications.

Architect Nest Architectural Design
Interior design kd design consultants
Builder Canady Construction



On the previous page, the Asian influence is evident in the simple repeating geometric forms of the cabinets and windows. Clean-lined built-ins, above, provide space for the owner's collectibles.



- Legend
1. Sink
 2. Refrigerator
 3. Range
 4. Dishwasher
 5. Microwave

A large center island is the focal point of this carefully organized space. Opposite, shoji screens provide the quintessential Zen touch and slide back to reveal an oversized window.

