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+ *kitchen
of the
year*

SEPT/OCT 2009

\$3.95US



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HOME

50 A PERFECT FIT

A sleek Belltown condo beautifully accommodates a family of three.

56 GLOBAL FUSION

A household of globe-trotters agree there is no place like their Bellevue condo home.

62 CROWN JEWEL

An overgrown garden in Magnolia is transformed into a serenely elegant showpiece.

68 WELL-SCRIPTED

A lakeside Sammamish kitchen gets a digitally inspired update.

72 KITCHEN OF THE YEAR

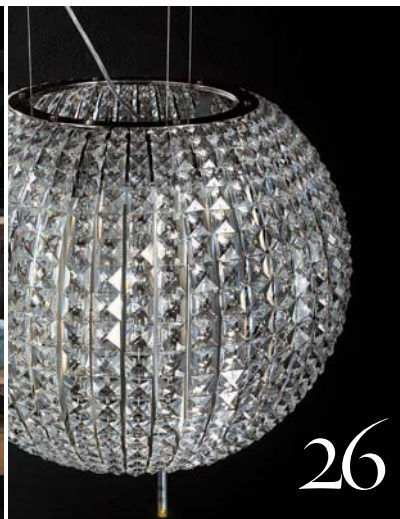
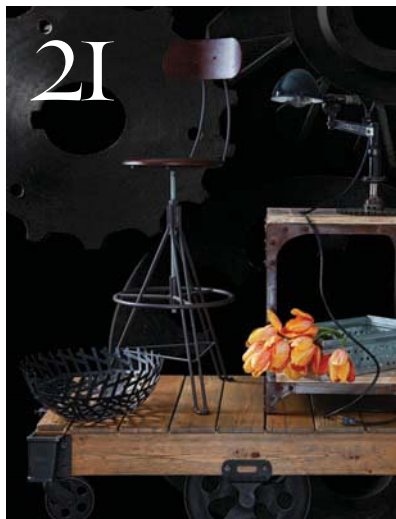
Seattle Homes & Lifestyles' Kitchen of the Year is a northeast Seattle kitchen designed by Susan Marinello ... Plus, great design details from our finalists.

77 REAL ESTATE

What's selling in the city? Why certain urban projects rise above the rest.

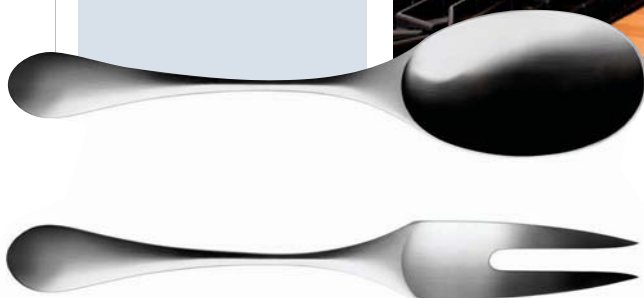
80 ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

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“Living in cities is an art, and we need the vocabulary of art, of style, to describe the peculiar relationship between man and material ...”

—JONATHAN RABAN,
 BRITISH WRITER



} 40

- 12 UP FRONT
- 15 CONTRIBUTORS
- 16 OUT & ABOUT
- 79 RESOURCES

STYLE

21 TREND WATCH
 Join the industrial revolution with salvaged style.

26 SHOPPING
 Outfit your kitchen with stylish new hoods, tile and more.

28 GOING TO MARKET
 What's new from the High Point Market in North Carolina and the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York.

LIFE

35 IN GOOD TASTE
 Randy Altig shares his recipe and serving suggestions for a classic San Francisco seafood stew ...
Plus, everything you need to enjoy cioppino at home.

42 CALENDAR
 Our calendar of events for September and October is full of seasonal fun, including harvest festivals, plant sales and the start of a new theater season.

ON THE COVER:
 Interior designer Lena Fomichev created this stylish condo for her Bellevue clients (see page 56).
 Photograph by David Papazian.

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kitchen
of the
year

CENTER OF attention

FOR A BUSY FAMILY OF FIVE,
THIS AWARD-WINNING KITCHEN
IS COMMAND CENTRAL

WRITTEN BY **STACY KENDALL**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ALEX HAYDEN**

LEFT: The cast-glass backsplash fashioned by local artist Peter David was implemented to be a reflective element “almost like another window,” Marinello says. She suggested they choose a polished finish, rather than the brushed one used for the drawer pulls, on all of the faucets to add another dimension of shimmer, which is balanced by the subtle gray cabinets and honed marble.



ABOVE: “People say to me that they wish they had this room,” Karen says of her butler’s pantry. In addition to offering storage space for baking supplies, dried ingredients and serving accoutrements, it is essentially a miniature kitchen, where dishes can be washed and food prepared. The family uses it most when entertaining, when they can assemble meals here and put guests’ dishes in the extra fridge, while the kitchen island stays free of everything but hors d’oeuvres.

When Socrates wrote “know thyself,” he probably wasn’t talking about designing a kitchen, but when a family in northeast Seattle decided to build their dream home, they endeavored to create a kitchen that functioned perfectly for their lifestyle—by knowing exactly what they wanted.

Planning took more than a year, and interior designer Susan Marinello and architect Craig Stillwell credit the homeowner for being fully engaged in the design process. “Before the kitchen was built, Karen knew where everything was going and the purpose of every drawer,” Stillwell says.

Karen always knew that she would use Marinello for the design of her family home—the two women have known each other since they were both 14. “There’s no way I was going to work with anyone else, nor would she let me,” the homeowner jokes. The process was a true collaboration, and the result is a blend of Karen’s taste and Marinello’s creative suggestions. “Susan was able to visualize the house as a whole and how everything flowed,” Karen says.

Functionality and organization keep school lunches, soccer parties and family gatherings from being arduous undertakings. Karen made sure the real reason people are drawn to the kitchen is because of its inviting atmosphere. “We wanted our home to be peaceful, but also a retreat where everyone would feel welcome,” she says. Therefore, a sense of tranquility and balance was no design afterthought—Stillwell wove it directly and purposely into the layout. Symmetry and spatial alignment achieve what he calls “a subconscious level of order.”

The harmonious effect of the architectural elements is continued in the design details, which display a dynamic tension between modern and traditional. Although both Karen and Marinello set out to design a traditional home, the last thing they wanted was fussy or florid. “It is truly what I call ‘modern classic,’” Marinello says. “We were striving for timeless yet fresh.”

Architect, interior designer and homeowner were three parts of a four-cornered partnership that was completed by contractor Andy Constan. The foursome worked together to build a home that is light and open while still being classic and composed.

In the kitchen, rather than subscribing to the conventional “work triangle” rule, the designer and homeowner created zones: Food prep, cooking and cleanup are relegated to specific areas of the kitchen where they make the most sense. “I’m OK with walking two or three steps,” Karen says. “The most important thing was that the kitchen flowed.”

“This is the textbook example of a successful project,” Marinello says. “The design team worked beautifully together, and Karen was fully committed to the entire process.”

She and her family now have a kitchen that unites the most lived-in spaces of the home, where Mom can conduct the family’s comings and goings. “It’s never just one or two of us in here,” Karen says. “The kitchen is really command central.”

Another key indication that it was a successful project is that the homeowner loves the result. “It’s a great sense of accomplishment,” Karen says. “When we took this on, I felt a huge responsibility to my family to give it my best—and we got exactly what we wanted.” Socrates would approve. ■

Professionals who worked on this project include: Interior Design: Susan Marinello, Susan Marinello Interiors, 119 S. Main St., Ste. 300, (206) 344-5551, susanmarinello.com; Architecture: Craig Stillwell, Stillwell Hanson Architects, 7601 Greenwood Ave. N., Ste. 101, (206) 297-1504, stillwellhansonarchitects.com; Construction: Andy Constan, CDB General Contractors, 614 N.E. 41st St., (206) 706-3154, cdbuilt.com

For resource information, see page 79.



"IT IS TRULY 'MODERN CLASSIC.' WE WERE STRIVING FOR TIMELESS, YET FRESH."

—SUSAN MARINELLO



ABOVE: Behind the cabinets' serene façade lies the organization that makes this kitchen work for a busy family. Ventilated drawers (**NEAR LEFT**) keep dry goods at their best, and a compost and recycling center is conveniently located under the prep sink. No space was wasted: Toekicks hide pullout step stools (**FAR LEFT**) to access the upper cabinets, and central vacuum system openings carry away swept-up dirt.