



## Luxury Living - Spring 2005



### ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

On a bright, sunny morning, nothing is as appealing as fresh-brewed espresso, served in a kitchen awash in natural light.

Marc Thee, principal of Marc-Michaels Interior Design in Winter Park and Boca Raton, Florida, visualized such a morning as he was creating a custom kitchen for a South Florida family. His objective was to create a vibrant space that made the occupants feel upbeat and ready to tackle the day. It had to be as inviting as it was functional.

Because the builder, Courchene Development, allotted plenty of space to the kitchen, Thee had the opportunity to design something special. His “idea kitchen” began to take shape around the gourmet warming center, an element Thee says, that was central to the design. This high-tech station has heating lamps and warming drawers and trays, so the family can graze as their schedules allow.

“We truly thought this would be new and exciting,” says the designer. “Whether dinner is home-made or take-out, the food is kept warm for multiple eating times.”

Another of the family’s favorite features is the Miele coffee system. It instantly brews fresh espresso and cappuccino, and keeps cups perfectly heated in a warming drawer. You program it, press a button and get the most amazing cup of coffee, as you like it—your level of strength, and your preferred amount of sugar and milk,” explains Thee.

Purposeful elements abound. Off the main kitchen is a dedicated caterer’s kitchen, which features everything a personal chef needs. This space contains full refrigeration, cooktops, an oven and a message desk for the chef. The cabinets stretch up to the ceiling—good for storage, not so good for aesthetics. Thee’s solution was to incorporate glass transoms on the top portion of the cabinets to avoid a heavy wood look. He also lightened things up with a striking pantry tower, which has wood cabinets on the bottom and etched-glass doors on top. The effect is reflective and transparent, infusing the space with light.

Light was a big consideration when creating this kitchen. A big proponent of bright, buoyant spaces, Thee called for a large skylight commanding the ceiling center. The skylight floods the kitchen with natural light, while suspended-cable lighting, stretched across the glass ceiling, provides illumination on cooking surfaces.

Thee also believes in user-friendly colors and finishes that suggest an “up experience” to further enhance the room’s weightlessness. For the walls, he chose a low-luster painted finish in a fresh, clear color he calls “vapor blue.” The color, he notes, looks particularly attractive in daylight, which is important in “such a morning space.”

To offset the coolness of the walls, the designer chose cherry wood cabinets with a rich finish more akin to mahogany, and a subtle grain. “We didn’t want anything too figurative,” he says. “We were going for a less-is-more type of thing.”

Overall, this kitchen strikes an ideal balance between contemporary style, purposeful design and old-world warmth. For the family, it is a joy to gather here—morning, noon and night.