

Bathrooms+Kitchens magazine



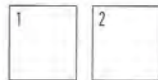
Bathrooms+Kitchens magazine Industry Awards Souvenir Brochure FREE with this issue

Bathroom Industry Safety Campaign

Last days of laminate worktops?

Worldbeating kitchen design

Surveying space



1 Before: The basic kitchenette featured a fridge freezer, sink and oven.

2 After: This stylish kitchen scheme has been designed as a functional and socialising area



Reaching new heights

Frank Valdes, of FJV Design in Massachusetts, scooped the International Designer Award for Kitchens for his loft living scheme in Boston.

NOT MANY UK KITCHEN SPECIALISTS are offered the opportunity of a blank canvas to create a scheme. However, this formed part of the brief presented to Frank Valdes, who, as part of a remodelling contract, was asked to create a kitchen in the loft apartment of a converted Power Plant. But, as we reveal, even an empty space can be full have hidden design issues.

OPEN SPACES

The client's brief requested a kitchen that would be conducive to entertaining and socialising. They expressed a desire to maintain an open space, with limited use of walls to encourage natural light. If new walls were needed, the client preferred they be limited to the master bathroom.

Frank Valdes explains: "The main problem was in the loft space itself. The new kitchen was to be part of the whole loft space, yet separate, without using walls to enclose the new kitchen."

The kitchen had to create its own boundaries in its design, so Valdes

replaced the single run of appliances and cabinetry with an enclosed U shaped design. He included a large worktop in the scheme, to function as a cooking and working surface, as well as an eating counter and entertainment area. And he ensured the worktop featured a 12-inch cantilever to accommodate the legs of someone sitting at the breakfast bar. The worktop was turned in to keep the kitchen open to the rest of the living area.

MIXING MATERIALS

A mixture of materials were combined to create the kitchen area. Cherry Wood and steel plate complemented the granite of the worktop. While the walls consisted of painted bricks. A splash of deep red, found in the tiles, created a vivid contrast to the blue and gray colour scheme.

A line up of four metal stools and a tiled floor completed the look.

HIGH FASHION

And unlike many kitchen designs, it wasn't the floorspace, which presented

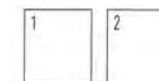
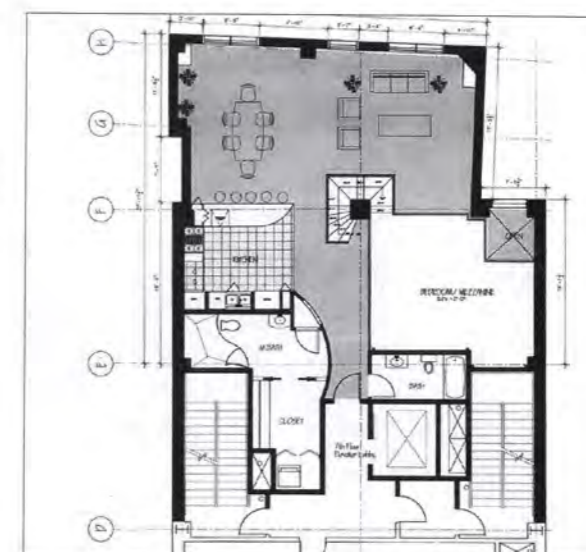
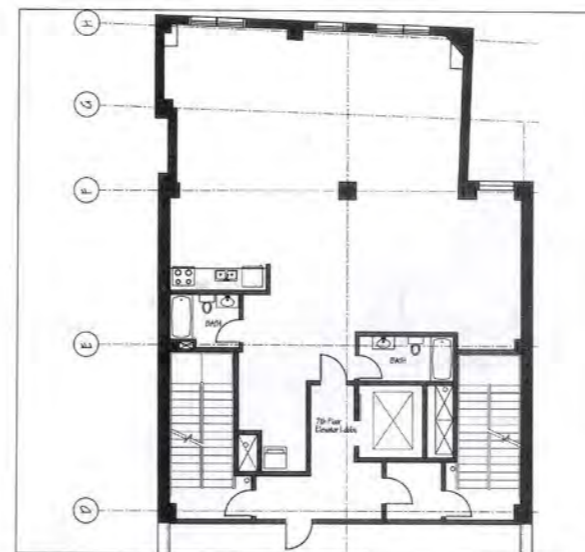
a challenge to the kitchen design. It was, in fact, the 17 foot high ceiling which created difficulties in creating a dimensionally pleasing design.

Valdes comments: "The loft's height imposed a problem of scale for the kitchen; it was simply impractical to use the full height for the kitchen. The challenge was making the space work and having it not appear out of place".

Valdes used a soffit, nine foot above the ground. This prevents the eye from continuing to look above the soffit and so acts to end the kitchen vertically. Lights were recessed beneath the soffit to illuminate the worktop and also into the top of the soffit to provide illumination upwards and emphasise the wall above. In addition, he cut three large openings above the kitchen wall, bringing natural light into the master bathroom, situated behind the kitchen.

Valdes continues: "The three windows above the kitchen soffit allow natural light into the bathroom space, and are mimicked in the tile splash-back above the sink area. This creates a consistency and language in design."

Surveying space



1 Before: Floorplan shows empty warehouse space

2 After: Floorplan of finished kitchen, complete with wrought iron staircase, mezzanine bedroom, extended bathroom and walk-in closet

LEGALISING LAYOUT

But this kitchen scheme wasn't simply a matter of aesthetically pleasing design; it also had to meet the City's stringent regulations.

Valdes had chosen a kitchen cooktop, which required an exhaust hood above it. But the city of Boston would not allow an exhaust out of a window for any residential apartment complex.

Because of this, Valdes selected a recycling hood to filter the air and incorporated it within the wood soffit, so it didn't appear to be floating in space.

The design is inclusive, as not only does it resolve issues from overwhelming room space to legal regulations but it also offers the consumer an aesthetically pleasing design. And above all, it meets the client's brief to function as a cooking and socialising area.

COMPLETING THE PICTURE

Although Valdes scooped the International Designer Award for his kitchen scheme, it is worth taking a look at the entire project and how the designs worked together. In addition, to creating the kitchen, he was also given the challenge of creating a 'unique' bedroom area and enlarging the bathroom to incorporate a walk-in closet.

Since the loft room boasted such a high ceiling, he decided to raise the

bedroom off the floor and installed a mezzanine floor. Valdes explains: "It removed the bedroom from the public area below, both visually and physically, without needing wall partitions".

To reach the mezzanine floor, Valdes installed a staircase circling around the central masonry column. He adhered to his client's demand for an open space by cantilevering the stair treads, so they didn't touch the ground, or each other.

Valdes continues to explain the central staircase: "The stair's design was achieved by encasing half of the masonry column with 1/2 inch steel plate and welding the 3/8 inches steel treads to the vertical steel encased, with additional movement supports underneath each tread.

"To continue the language of the steel stair, 3/8 inch steel plate was used for the mezzanine finish floor with a steel tubular rail".

However, the staircase design wasn't plain sailing, due to the apartment's seventh floor locations and the dimensions of the building's staircase, the steel plates and supports for the mezzanine floor had to be distributed in segments. These were carried into the loft space and later assembled and welded accordingly.

This apartment truly shows the skills of kitchen specialist Frank Valdes and is an excellent representation of American interior design. □

Frank Valdes from FJV Designs won the International Designer Award for Kitchens 2003

Maytag UK is sponsor of the International Designer Award for Kitchens at the Bathrooms+Kitchens magazine Industry Awards.

