

APRIL 2009

# House Beautiful

*it's time to get*

*COZY!*

the  
**WHITE  
HOUSE**  
DECORATOR  
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"Cozy, for me,  
is very tactile.  
It's about the  
way things feel  
to the touch."

MICHAEL S. SMITH

\$4.50



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# KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

Kitchen by MARGUERITE RODGERS

## LOVELADIES, NEW JERSEY

A Zen simplicity, with watery green marble counters and handcrafted wood cabinets modeled after traditional Japanese storage pieces

Interview by  
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Photographs by  
ERIC PIASECKI





Compact and efficient: A slim pull-out pantry is just to the right of the refrigerator. Cabinetry designed by Marguerite Rodgers and fabricated by Pappajohn Woodworking. Pine Valley granite from Doyle Gerlach. Altar hanging light with electrified candles from Holly Hunt.

**CHRISTINE PITTEL:** *A Japanese-style kitchen for a beach house in New Jersey? Please explain.*

**MARGUERITE RODGERS:** When you arrive, you open a gate and walk through a courtyard to get to this very compact one-story house, where all the rooms flow into each other. The spirit of the place reminded me of a Japanese teahouse.

*Cooking, dining, and living all happen in one big room. How did that affect the design?*

I didn't want it to scream, "Kitchen!" So the island and the cabinets look more like furniture. We modeled them on a Japanese *tansu*—a storage chest that often has slatted doors. They slide open, as opposed to swinging out, which allows you to have larger openings and works really well in a small kitchen. If two people are cooking, one doesn't have to move out of the way every time the other opens a cupboard.

*No seats at the island?*

No. Too kitcheny, and if people are sitting around the island, it really limits the chef when he's trying to work. He can't spread out. Instead, we put a slim counter against the window where you could sit and have a cup of coffee and look out at the bay. The counter is cantilevered, so you still see glass above and below. And it's another strong horizontal, which is very typical of Japanese architecture and makes the space feel wider than it actually is.

*What's on the counters?*

A watery granite that's the color of the sea grass outside, and the bay on a cloudy day. Polished to bring out all the greens and grays and even a tick of terra-cotta that picks up on the walnut. It would have looked a little dull if it were honed. Another great finish for granite is to sandblast it and acid-wash it, which we do with black granite all the time. It gives it a little texture and nothing seems to show on it.

*You set up the furniture concept*

*and then you put a big stainless-steel top on the island. How come?*

To be modern. It looks so pure and simple when the counter and the sink are molded out of one piece of stainless steel, and it's actually easier to clean—no crevices to collect dirt. If I'm not doing a custom sink, I'll often use a brand called Blanco. They make a sink with the kind of perfectly square corners I like.

*Why did you want the steel on the island to look so thick?*

I wanted the wood part of the island to be the same height as the Nakashima dining table, for a consistent line, and then the stainless steel brings it up to a better height for chopping. In some way, for me, the stainless steel just disappears—it's almost like glass or a mirror. You look right through it.

*What's the best way to care for it?*

Wipe down the sink after using it, so you don't get that drippy, drainy look, and buy one of those cleaners made specifically for stainless steel by 3M or Miele or Mrs. Meyer's. But you have to accept how it's going to patina. I look at that Nakashima table and see all the age and character in the wood, but if you can't stand any imperfection, certain materials may not be for you. I've studied woodworking, and when we started this project, I suggested that we look at Nakashima furniture. My client and I bought that walnut table and chairs at auction and chose walnut for the cabinetry. A space feels calmer when you don't have a million different woods.

*Any other tips?*

I like pull-outs in lower cabinets, but that doesn't mean you have to do them all as drawers. Here, I installed pull-out shelves behind sliding doors, but only after my client had unpacked all his stuff. Then we knew that one had to be 14 inches high to accommodate a certain pot—and you can easily adjust them if things change. It's much more efficient. >>

**KITCHEN OF  
THE MONTH**



Stainless-steel sink and countertop fabricated by Barry's Commercial Installations. Sliding Brazilian cherry cutting boards by Old World Butcher Block. Mythos faucet in satin nickel by Franke. OPPOSITE. The George Nakashima table and chairs were bought at auction. The hanging system for utensils on the backsplash is from rosleusa.com.



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ABOVE LEFT: Japanese stools from Liao Collection. ABOVE RIGHT: The table is set with handmade ceramic plates by Alice Goldsmith, through Barneys. Linen napkins from Crate and Barrel. FAR LEFT: Iron hardware from Hida Tool & Hardware has an antique Japanese look. Moon pull (far left). Warabi

pull (middle) on Fisher & Paykel dishwasher drawer with custom front. LEFT: One of Nakashima's signatures is the butterfly joint, as seen on the dining table. He was a master of traditional Japanese woodworking techniques and was also influenced by American Shaker furniture. >>

## KITCHEN OF THE MONTH



"I wanted to bring the outside in, and looked for a granite in a color that felt like the landscape. When you sit at the window and look out at the seagrass and the bay, it's very soothing and calming. It almost feels like an extension of the room."

MARGUERITE RODGERS



### GET THE LOOK...

Custom cabinetry fabricated by Pappajohn Woodworking: 215-289-8625.

Pine Valley granite from Doyle Gerlach: 856-218-4500.

Stainless-steel sink fabricated by Barry's Commercial Installations: 570-674-9016.

Mythos faucet from Franke: 800-626-5771.

Dishwasher drawer from Fisher & Paykel: 888-936-7872.

Hardware from Hida Tool & Hardware: 510-524-3700.

ABOVE LEFT: The breakfast bar by the window has a water view. ABOVE RIGHT: Cabinet doors slide open instead of swinging out, which takes up less room.

PRODUCED BY  
WHITNEY ROBINSON  
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