



KITCHEN

WHEN FU-TUNG CHENG was brought in to design a client's San Francisco penthouse, he had very little to work with. "There was a roof and floors, but no walls," says the Berkeley designer. "It was pretty raw."

His client wanted intimacy in the kitchen without sacrificing the openness of the space. Cheng started by giving her a choice of seating areas: a small surfboard table and bench by the windows, chairs around the center island.

He then created a sense of drama with his own Tidan hood ("the Lamborghini of hoods," he says)—12 feet of handmade stainless steel canopy with lights, an exhaust fan, and a glass platform ("like wings") for hanging pots.

Cheng, who has made his reputation with his sculptural concrete forms that look like stone, had the plum-colored island poured on-site; embedded in the concrete is chrysoprase, a semiprecious mineral from Australia. Even the two stainless steel sinks, one with a giant KWC Domo faucet, received intense attention to detail from Cheng's

FLORIAN GILBERT

design/build team: The water drains in two directions toward the center. The cabinets were faced with bamboo. The appliances include two Gaggenau pizza ovens and a wok burner, two Sub-Zero refrigerators, and two Fisher & Paykel dishwashers.

The kitchen's finishing touches include a ceiling raked with plaster in two colors, one sponged off to give a soft, corduroy look; a floor of lightweight concrete given a terrazzo finish with diamond grinding pads; pieces of turquoise inlaid around the stove; and trapeze lighting

over the sinks. Cheng fell in love with the crackle-gaze pottery of Berkeley ceramist Gary Holt and had him fire the crackle-gaze tile in white bisque for the sink backsplash. The roof that juts into the living room is an air-frame of honeycombed aluminum sandwiched between fiberglass that is translucent but strong enough to walk on.

This was, Cheng says, "the ultimate tenant improvement."

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