



mixed media

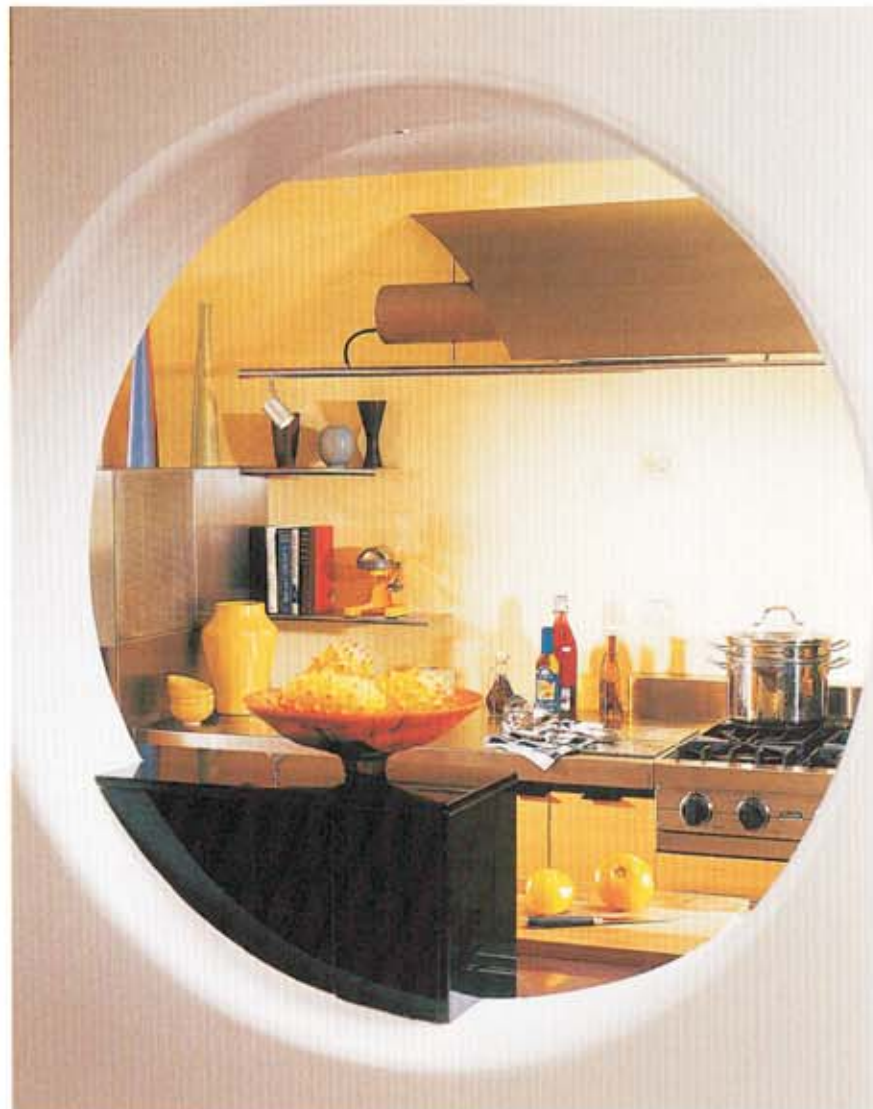
Designer Fu-Tung Cheng is renowned for using ordinary materials, particularly concrete, in ways that bring out the warm, human side of modern architecture. "People associate 'contemporary' with 'cold,'" he says. "It doesn't have to be."

Homeowners Marie Tartar and Steve Eilenberg couldn't agree more. Cheng visually opened up their 33x9-foot kitchen and added his distinctive artistic elements. "It's very understated," Marie says, approvingly. "He uses many beautiful materials, but it's not busy."

To take advantage of the breakfast nook's ocean view, Cheng limited the height and number of upper cabinets. He veneered the slab doors with golden, clear-grain hemlock as a warm contrast to the cool concrete and stainless steel. The grain of the wood is mismatched to emphasize graphic qualities. Cheng kept the cabinet design blocky and left the faces clear for aesthetic reasons. Tab-style pulls mounted to the top edge of doors and drawers are fittingly streamlined.

Convenient pullout shelves increase cabinet accessibility. A walk-in pantry (not shown) boosts storage. Open space

Left: Designer Fu-Tung Cheng contrasts rectangular cabinets with a circular cutout in the wall. An attached piece of butcher block provides a chopping surface next to the sink he designed.



Opposite: The curved end of the concrete peninsula cantilevers to form a breakfast bar. Cheng designed the aerodynamic, asymmetrical ventilation hood.

Left: A distinctive, circular cutout by the sink integrates the space with the rest of the house. A granite-covered ledge is a display pedestal.

above upper cabinets displays the homeowners' contemporary pottery and glass collections.

The stacked wall oven and microwave oven are outside the main galley-style work area to allow for ample counter space, especially between the refrigerator and cooktop. Stainless-steel, professional-grade appliances include a six-burner gas cooktop and a dishwasher.

Cheng chose stainless steel for the double-bowl sink because it can withstand the heat of pots and pans straight from the cooktop. The peninsula near the sink curves out to form a breakfast bar.

The peninsula's top is made of one of Cheng's hallmark materials, thick slabs of cast concrete he calls "Geocrete." During the casting process, rich plum-color pigments are mixed in for smoky color. For added interest, Cheng embedded fossils and other found objects in the concrete. Stools with simple, wood-slat seats make comfortable perches at the bar for guests who want to chat with the chef.

The kitchen is a work of contemporary art that Cheng hopes will prove timeless. "I like to integrate the hand of an artist in the kitchen's design," he says, "making it crafted rather than manufactured." **DK**

DREAM COME TRUE

To make your mark on a kitchen, turn to concrete for countertops. You can add favorite objects—and some of your personality—to concrete poured on-site. Designer Fu-Tung Cheng typically embeds fossils and cast-off car parts in the countertops he

designs. Homeowners often ask him to include a memento, such as a special coin. Concrete, similar to marble in durability and porosity, should not be used as a cutting surface or resting place for hot pots. Penetrating sealers and wax protect the surface. ■

