

From Seattle Homes and Lifestyles Magazine, May/June 2001 Issue:

In a brand-new home, anything goes. So when general contractors Jeanne Koruga and Peter Tiersma of West Tier Development & Homes were building their own Adirondack-style house near Woodinville, the couple selected some distinctive materials for the kitchen.

The result? A room Jeanne calls "sophisticated, but not too serious." It's also a functional space where their daughters, Maaike, 6, and Keenae, 4, can cavort and help cook.

Working with architect Elizabeth Manger of ENM Architecture, the couple selected bamboo panels to adorn the lower cabinetry (and match the floor in the nearby dining room). Jeanne hails the exotic material as "renewable, beautiful and durable as all get out." She likes the earth-friendly fact that bamboo grows to maturity in less than six years.

Translucent reed-glass doors grace the upper cabinets. They are framed with a plastic laminate that looks deceptively like stainless steel, but hides bothersome fingerprints. The same laminate covers the backsplash and under-cooktop drawers, while genuine stainless steel shines on the sinks and GE appliances.

The room's focal point, a teardrop-shaped glass breakfast bar, hovers above the island's black honed-granite counter top. It adds levity, but also provides extra eating space. Small amber-shaded lights dangle above, clipped to a MonoRail track that Peter bent to follow the flow of the glass. "We introduced the curve so you'd have a little surprise here and there," explains Manger.

The large 5-by-6-foot island, raised on legs to look less imposing, offers plenty of space for cooking and gathering (and for canning eight dozen jars of "Jeannie's jammin' jam"). Radiant heat permeates the German limestone floor.

Now that Jeanne and Peter have built their own home, they have a better appreciation for what their clients go through. "I understand those who have panic attacks when they can't make a decision," chuckles Peter.