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4/14

CYGNUS
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Trend Spotting | 29

**INDUCTION
COOKING
HEATS UP**

KBIS Roundup

**51 | MODERN AMENITIES
TAKE CENTER STAGE**

Product Trend Report

**44 | JETTED TUBS
& SAUNAS**

34 | DESIGNER'S NOTEBOOK

**CHALLENGING
BATH SPACES GET
HOLISTIC MAKEOVER**

By Kim Berndtson

Photos: Jim Tschetter



NATURAL STONE COLUMNS

Frame the cooking center to create a strong focal point

TRANSITIONAL-STYLE CABINETRY

Juxtaposes with rustic charm to provide a timber lodge feel

OVERSIZED ISLAND

Provides additional work space



TRANSITIONAL STYLE MEETS RUSTIC CHARM

↑ The apron-front sink from Whitehaus Collection is highlighted with a chrome faucet from Delta Faucet, juxtaposing rustic elements with transitional features. "I wanted the home to feel transitional with rustic charm, clean lines and a 'fresh' feel," says Thelen.

Kitchen Offers the Best of Both Worlds

Chicago designer creates a space that combines suburban luxuries with a big city location, while juxtaposing transitional style with rustic charm.

Located on the north side of Chicago, Lincoln Square offers its residents the feeling of living in a small town with advantages of being within the bustling, big-city limits. The 'Windy City' neighborhood's aura isn't that much different than the atmosphere Linc Thelen wanted to create in this home's kitchen. "I wanted to give it suburban luxuries with a city location," says the designer and principal of Linc Thelen Design in

Chicago, IL, who worked with home builder Meder Inc. to construct the home.

The new, 6,000-sq.-ft. home sits within a family-friendly neighborhood where all the kids play together. "This home embodies that feeling," he says.

Although most homes in the neighborhood feature interiors less than 20 feet wide, on lots that are 25 feet wide, this home boasts an interior in excess of 25 feet on a 35-

foot lot. "It gives us a bigger, wider footprint with a different layout than other homes in the area," he says.

LIVING EASY WITH SUBURBAN LUXURY

The extra space gave him the latitude to include a spacious kitchen with features that make living easier for a family that includes two teenagers. A 30" Viking refrigerator and a separate 30" Viking freezer combined with

a generously sized floor-to-ceiling pantry with pull-outs provide plenty of food storage. Two waste containers – one by the prep sink in the island and a second one near the main sink – offer convenience and capacity for the amount of waste teenagers can generate when they entertain friends. Another special element is the built-in Miele coffeemaker. "These are all luxuries that go back to a suburban home," he says.



SUBURBAN LUXURIES

↑ The Miele coffeemaker as well as the 30" Viking refrigerator, separate 30" Viking freezer and floor-to-ceiling pantry make life easier for a family that includes two teenagers. Another 'luxury' feature is two waste containers, one of which is located near the prep sink in the island, offering convenience and capacity for the amount of waste teenagers can generate. "These are all luxuries that go back to a suburban home," says the designer.

Another luxury of the large space is the nearly 10'x5.5' island, which features maple custom cabinetry from Orchard Hill topped by Yellow River Brushed Granite. One of the biggest challenges Thelen faced was choosing the countertop, he relays.

"Most countertop slabs can't accommodate this size of island," he says. "So I selected the stone first, then finalized the cabinetry order."

The island serves as a second work space and features seating for in-kitchen dining, a wine refrigerator and a prep sink that is fittingly positioned near the Viking range and ventilation hood. "Having a prep sink next to the range is convenient," he says. "And I intentionally located the refrigerator away from the main cooking area to help with the traffic flow of kids coming and going."

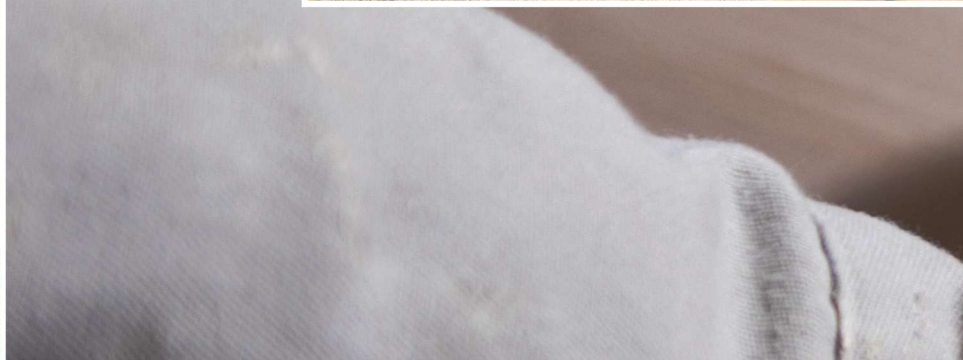
TIMBER LODGE FEEL

Thelen highlighted the kitchen with a strong focal point of natural stone columns that frame the cooking area. Working with the stone – which came from a quarry across the border in Wisconsin – proved to be challenging, given each piece's individuality.

"Each stone has a different thickness and overall size," says the designer. "The installation took quite a bit of time and patience, and I worked closely with the stone cutter to ensure accuracy. There were a lot of details in achieving the finished look."

Thelen accented the stone with a reclaimed timber beam – salvaged from a Wisconsin home – above the range that matches the ceiling beam over the nearby breakfast area.

A complementary detail to the cooking area is the rect-



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FOCAL POINT FRAMING

⇒ Thelen created a strong focal point in the kitchen with the use of natural stone – from a quarry in Wisconsin – that frames the Viking range and ventilation hood. “Each stone has a different thickness and overall size,” says the designer. “There were a lot of details in achieving the finished look.” He accented the stone with a rectangular backsplash detail that includes crackled porcelain tile and a travertine chair rail.

angular backsplash, which features 3"x6" crackled porcelain tile outlined with a travertine chair rail that ties into the stone columns. “I used a combination of shiny and rustic finishes to balance the space,” he says. “It’s this use of materials that helps to define the kitchen.”

Thelen juxtaposed rustic


finishes and elements with an overall transitional theme, as seen in the kitchen’s clean lines and uncluttered appearance. “I wanted the home to feel transitional with rustic charm, clean lines and a ‘fresh’ feel,” he says, noting the cabinetry and trim/moulding as well as the chrome fixtures support the transitional side

of the transitional/rustic equation. “I wanted to give the home a timber lodge feel... something you don’t usually see in Chicago.”

A coffered ceiling draws visitors’ eyes upward while custom-stained red oak anchors the floor. Because of the ceiling details and focal point cooking area, Thelen

intentionally eliminated the usage of pendant lights above the island. “I didn’t want anything to obstruct the focal point range or interfere with the ceiling,” he says. “Many homeowners think they need pendants over the island. But I think they should be used in discretion, according to each design. Sometimes it’s just as

important to *not* use them.”

Thelen balanced the pendant lighting omission with plenty of task and undercabinet/above cabinet lighting. “There is plenty of light,” he says. “There is also a lot of natural light that comes in from the window above the sink as well as windows in the breakfast area.” 

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