



A KITCHEN *love story*

Exquisite cabinetry sparks
love-at-first-sight
romance for homeowners

By Lyla Haggard | Photos by Johan Roetz

THE FIRST TIME MICHELLE ROGERS VISITED HER FUTURE SOUTH Tampa home, the cabinetry for the kitchen was in the process of being delivered. Devonshire Properties director of sales, Paul Wieszorek, laughs as he clearly remembers the day: "The cabinets were lying every which way on the floor, and I was struggling to stand them up vertically so Michelle could get a good look at them." The effort paid off. ♡ "I'm very particular about quality," adds Michelle, "and I noticed that these cabinets were so much nicer than others we had seen in comparably-priced homes. I simply fell in love with them." And those cabinets led Michelle and husband Bob to realize that the size and look of the exceptional kitchen was just one indicator of the high-quality workmanship throughout the home.

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LEFT: A 48-inch commercial dual-fuel KitchenAid range with eight burners and two convection ovens can keep company well-fed and happy.

OPPOSITE: Along with a full dishwasher, a pair of drawer dishwashers in the kitchen's island allow for easy cleanup during and after any size gathering.

Anita Taylor, co-owner of Custom Designs, worked closely with Michelle to ensure that those cabinets she loved so much were ideally positioned and installed. "Anita was very helpful," notes Michelle, "and she wanted the kitchen to be perfect as much as I did."

Working with Custom Designs colleague, Fred Johnson, Taylor develops a custom plan for each client to determine the best place for appliances and pantries for a stunning yet easy-to-work-in kitchen. For the Rogers' cabinetry, all of which is solid cherry, she chose a chestnut stain finished with black glaze for added dimension. All sections are hand-finished, with sanding and staining in Taylor's shop. "We believe in the old-world way of doing it," she points out.

To create additional interest and dimension—both height and depth—throughout the kitchen, explains Taylor, "...we used three different heights on the wall and various depths in the cabinetry." For example, Taylor used crown moulding that has a 30 degree angle instead of the more common 45 degrees. "This small difference in angle raises the crown moulding up and makes the cabinet appear taller. It gives it a leaner look," she continues. Newel posts, in a twisted rope-like design, add vertical emphasis to the work island, and wainscot paneling finishes out the look.

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Since construction was still in progress, Michelle and Bob were able to suggest, where appropriate, modifications to tailor their new home to their specific needs. "The builder was great," raves Michelle. "Since we hadn't moved from Ohio yet, we worked long distance with Lisa Ayers [Devonshire construction manager] to make our selections."

Multi-use space

As in most homes, the Rogers' kitchen is at the heart of family activities. Not only is it a well-designed area for cooking and storage, it also provides Bob, Michelle and their children Emma (5), Donovan (16) and college student Casandra (21) a central place to study, snack, pay bills, store cook books, use the computer and catch up on each other's news. Located between a sunny eating area on one end, a comfy media room on the other and a fully-equipped butler pantry/bar, this beautiful kitchen naturally becomes the gathering point for party guests too.



Open to the large media room, the kitchen features cabinetry of varying heights to create additional interest and dimension.

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LEFT: Vertical pullout spice racks to either side of the range keep ingredients close at hand.

OPPOSITE: Glass-front cabinetry displays the Rogers' elegant stemware and glasses. Beneath the glassware, glass doors with embedded copper wire mesh showcase additional serving pieces.

sink with Moen faucets, an under-counter KitchenAid wine cooler, a small KitchenAid refrigerator and visible stemware suspended from an under-cabinet rack.

Across the room, Taylor repeated the 3-D theme with a triple-tier crown moulding build-up starting at the range hood and continuing up to the ceiling, once again emphasizing height and depth. The dark wood frames the lighter granite tile work that features a diamond-shaped gray medallion.

At eye-level on each side of the range are vertical pull-out spice racks, hidden behind solid cherry hand-carved corbels, which are repeated underneath the breakfast bar. Dark and light, height and depth, vertical and horizontal—these contrasts work together to increase visual interest. A true feast for the eyes.

Keeping it practical

"Beautiful and functional" is the phrase Taylor uses to describe the Rogers' kitchen. In addition to the elegant cabinetry, the couple chose top-end appliances for increased efficiency: a 48-inch commercial dual-fuel KitchenAid range with eight burners and two convection ovens; a 48-inch KitchenAid stainless steel side-by-side refrigerator, two dishwashers (one full, the other with two drawers), two built-in trash drawers and, at the end of the island, a Sharp microwave and warming drawer.

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A place for everything

On the wall facing the island, a series of cabinets—almost-ceiling height—contains Michelle's fine china. "I love that I now have a place to display my good crystal, and I'm using it more since it's available," says Michelle. "The cabinets are lit from inside, so when a guest drops in I can easily grab the right glass."

Mediterranean style glass doors with embedded copper wire mesh showcase special stemware and serving pieces, adding visual interest and, once again, depth to the façade. At the end near the media room, an efficient work station completes the cabinetry installation, allowing the family to multi-task on the computer while cooking or watching TV. By indenting the work surface underneath the cabinetry and hiding the lighting behind a valance, Taylor reinforced her overall concept of multiple dimensions.

Tucked behind the opposite end is the butler's pantry/bar. The rich cabinetry and granite countertop are repeated in this serving alcove, which features a deep Kohler bar

RESOURCES

Builder:

Devonshire Properties, Paul Wlezorek

Kitchen design:

Custom Designs, Fred Johnston (designer)

Interior design:

Dreamland Interiors, Natalie Gaudi

Cabinetry:

Custom Designs, Steve and Anita Taylor (owners)

Range and refrigerator:

KitchenAid

Sinks:

Kohler

Microwave:

Sharp

Flooring:

Floors by DJL

Countertops:

Classic Rock

Wallcovering/paint:

David Helms

Accessories:

Robyn Story Designs



RIGHT: Surrounded by lighter granite tile work, a diamond-shaped gray medallion creates a focal point to the cooktop backsplash.

OPPOSITE: A stainless steel Sharp microwave and warming drawer at the end of the island provide a brilliant contrast to the abundance of dark cabinetry.

All cabinet drawers are self-closing and two under-counter corner cabinets feature lazy-susan shelving, making hard-to-reach items easier to find. A deep stainless steel Kohler sink, also with Moen faucets, is located on the granite-topped island. This past Thanksgiving Michelle served more than twenty guests and "the warming drawers really got a workout," she laughs.

So it seems that Michelle's "love at first sight" of her new cabinetry turned out happily ever after. "This whole experience has been a joy," Michelle concludes. "We've got a casual yet elegant residence with a wonderful kitchen. I felt more at home here after seven weeks than I did after seven years in my former home."

