

Kitchen and Bath

A playful design was created in the home of an Austin, TX, residence with brightly colored glass tile from Interstyle's Glasstints collection, Artic White subway tile from Daltile and a vibrant glass vanity top fabricated from Vetrazzo.

Photos by Jake Holt



Personalizing a living space

The kitchen and bathroom designs of an Austin, TX, residence reflect the homeowners' fun-hearted nature, as well as accommodating their requirements for a spacious living environment

by Jennifer Richinelli



The colors, shapes and textures of the tiles in the bathroom shower bring a crisp and lively atmosphere to the space.



Set in the Texas hillside on the outskirts of Austin, TX, a newly constructed residence reflects its surrounding habitat with regional limestone featured extensively on the exterior design. And while the native material is also the showcase of several interior applications, the retired homeowners opted to diversify the palette by incorporating additional materials into their living space – making it unique and colorful.

A whimsical design was achieved in one of the bathrooms with vibrant colored tile and a Millefiori Vetrasso vanity top. Bright aqua glass tile in a brick pattern from the Glasstints collection by Interstyle forms the shower accent wall in the 60-square-foot space. The striking glass tile was paired with 3- x 6-inch Artic White subway tile with a matte finish from Daltile for the adjacent shower walls. With the striking contrast between the shades and texture of

the tiles, and open-air shower concept, the bathroom exudes a fresh crisp appeal. The glass tile also ties in well with the electric flecks of colored glass in the countertop.

“We wanted the shower to feel almost like an al fresco experience, so the blue glass tile and the slot window and no door all aid in that ‘open air’ vibe,” explained Heather McKinney, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, RID, principal of McKinney York Architects in Austin, TX. “The inspiration started with the fun



For the open-concept kitchen design, Indian Noire soapstone slabs were chosen for the two large islands, which both feature a waterfall edge for a dramatic aesthetic.

Millefiori Vetrazzo countertop, which was a favorite choice by our client. It just always made him smile. We called it ‘confetti,’ which of course makes you think of celebrations.”

The vivid colors of the tile and vanity top are grounded by the flooring, which consists of American Olean Elemental Canvas tile. This tile also runs as flooring throughout all of the home’s bathrooms.

“The blue tint of the glass tile ties to the festive blue in the confetti counter,

while the floor tile provides a neutral base for all that color,” said McKinney. “It was also designed to allow the two ‘extroverts’ — the Interstyle glass tile and the Vetrazzo counter — in the room to take prominence. In other bathrooms throughout the home, we used a variety of glass tiles by Lunada Bay Tile to give each one a unique accent.”

The architect explained that bathrooms are extensively customized to each client’s

tastes. “We look to a good combination of natural and artificial light to breathe freshness into the space and to provide optimal lighting for a variety of activities,” said McKinney.

When it came to designing the kitchen, the homeowners desired a space where family and friends could gather. “We wanted to have a very open kitchen — using upper and full-height cabinetry only at the perimeters,” said the architect. “The unusual dou-



Complementing the soapstone countertops is a backsplash made from Lunada Bay Tile's Tozen collection.

ble islands provide great opportunities for zoning different activities within the space and allow the clients, both good cooks, to socialize with their guests. We had always been drawn to the option of using a soft gray soapstone for the counters as it tied into the earthy neutral color palette which worked well with the textiles and artisan objects in the clients' collections. However, when we went to look at soapstone with them, we all fell in love with these white and gray Indian Noire soapstone slabs. To offset the dramatic sweep of the soapstone, the client selected a diminutive Tozen glass backsplash from Lunada Bay Tile."

The large kitchen islands feature a dramatic waterfall edge. "There is a lot of movement in the soapstone, which we felt was accentuated by turning the stone vertically and book-matching it," said McKinney. "Carefully planning the pieces so that the dramatic white veins align and flow over the corners makes the whole island feel more monolithic — as if it's one giant block of stone that was hollowed out to slide cabinets into. The same technique is repeated in the floating stone hearth at the double fireplaces and the entry room ledge."

McKinney went on to say that while the kitchen measures 350 square feet to the outside of the second island, the space is open to the living area where people can congregate at the island and around the cantilevered breakfast table. "If you created a wall to contain this social space, you would need to add another 100 square feet to the kitchen," she said. "Let's face it, the kitchen is the hub of the house, so it is important to understand how open or contained it needs to be. In this kitchen, we wanted to downplay the 'kitchen' character and make it feel more like a social space. It is also important to understand how the client(s) are going to occupy the space and how much room they need for circulating easily. Functional storage and counter 'real estate' needs to be assessed, and then we try to find the optimum layout which flows beautifully and is comfortable for each unique client."

Speaking in general about kitchen design, McKinney said she is finding more requests in her team's work for two dishwashers — especially when there is a butler's pantry or zoned bar/kitchen areas. "If we can accommodate stor-

age with limited use of upper cabinets, we feel that the kitchen has a cleaner more modern look," she said. "For both kitchens and bathrooms, smooth-faced cabinetry, both stained and painted, are also more popular with our clients now than paneled or shaker-style cabinetry. We have also started seeing an interest in unsealed brass and black fittings for plumbing and cabinet hardware. Natural wood with beautiful grain is showing up more — and the natural woods of Texas certainly resonant with our clients here in the Lone Star state. Why? Texture and natural materials serve to soften more contemporary architecture." **CSTD**

Private Residence Austin, TX

ARCHITECT: McKinney York Architects,
Austin, TX

TILE MANUFACTURERS: American
Olean, Dallas, TX (Elemental Canvas);
Daltile, Dallas, TX (Artic White subway
tile); Interstyle, Burnaby, British Co-
lumbia, Canada (Glasstints collection);
Lunada Bay Tile, Harbor City, CA (Tozen
glass collection)