

Residential refinement

Calacatta Saturnia marble was favored to reinvent an antiquated kitchen in a Massachusetts estate to a stunning living space that functions for gourmet cooking and social gathering

BY JENNIFER RICHINELLI





When the time came to select the material for the kitchen countertops and backsplash in a palatial home in Weston, MA, there wasn't much hesitation before the decision was made to use Calacatta Saturnia marble, which was quarried in Brazil. From the start of the kitchen remodel project, the homeowners sought a stone that would be the showpiece of the living space. Collaboration between the architect, interior designer and the kitchen design team at Downsvew Kitchens of Boston, MA, was instrumental in realizing the kitchen design, and "without the installation crew from Hall, Dudley Builders and United Marble Fabricators the execution would have been impossible," according to designer Erica Brady of Downsvew Kitchens.

Brady describes the previous kitchen as outdated and dark, and explained it didn't optimize the use of the space. "Additionally, the flow of the kitchen, in response to the rest of the home, was a bit disjointed," she said. "There were elements of the previous kitchen that we all loved, such as the built-in pizza oven, and knew we wanted to keep. With that in mind, we opened some walls, kept some, added others and made the kitchen more functional for the family. Our goal was to make all of that happen, while being respectful to the architecture and design aesthetic in other parts of the home."

When recalling the selection choice for the countertops, Brady said, "First and foremost, it's stunning. The palate for the cabinetry in the kitchen is neutral, with a quiet elegance. To complement that, we needed a rich stone to bring together the various materials, including wood, high-gloss lacquer, shiny metals, cool grays and white leather, and make sure that the



Calacatta Saturnia marble — paired with wood, high-gloss lacquer, shiny metals, cool grays and white leather — transformed an outdated kitchen into a chic contemporary living space for a Massachusetts family.

space didn't feel sterile. As soon as we saw the slabs of Calacatta Saturnia, we knew it was the perfect fit."

EDUCATING THE CUSTOMER

Brady worked closely with the homeowners to narrow in on the Calacatta Saturnia marble, which was supplied by MIA+BSI member company Marble and Granite, Inc. of Westwood, MA. "Honestly, it was such a quick decision because it was so right."

While the homeowners initially expressed some concern about going with a white marble in the kitchen, the supplier was able to make them feel comfortable with their decision. "Marble and Granite is great about educating our clients and answering

their questions," said Brady. "Marble is an investment, and it's human nature to care for your investments. When a client chooses to use marble in their home, they must understand that — as well as believing that marble is like your favorite pair of jeans — it just gets better with age. Marble isn't for everyone, and part of my job as a designer is to know my client well enough to steer them toward it, or away."

Downsview Kitchens turned to United Marble Fabricators of Watertown, MA, to fabricate the marble countertops. Echoing Brady's words, John Kilfoyle of United Marble Fabricators described the selected palette of materials as "a very raw combination of modern and industrial woods and metals." "All of the initial stone options

were white marble," he said. "Of all the options, Calacatta Saturnia was chosen to help convey a feeling of warmth in the crisp and striking kitchen. High-gloss, gray, lacquered cabinetry, rich ebony wood, brushed stainless metals and Calacatta Saturnia marble coalesced into a clean, modern, dramatic kitchen that is perfectly suited for entertaining."

In total, seven slabs were needed to complete the design of the gourmet kitchen. Brady and her client made a trip to United Marble Fabricators' shop to view the material before the cutting commenced.

VIEWING THE SLABS

"It's important to prioritize, so in this case there was a big beautiful backsplash — it's



"The undersides of both islands are exposed at the seating areas," explained John Kilfoyle of United Marble Fabricators in Watertown, MA. "These areas are also mitered and fully polished underneath so that no visible area is dissimilar."



an incredible focal point — so we had to start there by selecting the most beautiful section of the best slab," explained Brady. "From there, we talked about things like parts of the slabs we want to avoid — areas that had imperfections, fissures, 'ugly' spots, etc. We made sure they landed in places that would be inconspicuous — preferably a sink cutout. United Marble Fabricators is experienced. It's a team effort; they know their product very well, and I know what I want it to look like when it's done. They help me understand my limitations, while keeping the client's best interest in mind."

According to Kilfoyle, the stove countertop was mitered to 6 inches thick and the center island and perimeter countertops were 2 inches thick. "This is an estate," he said, when explaining the decision to use mitered corners. "The ceiling is over 10 feet high. It's a powerful kitchen. The team was originally looking at 2-inch material, but they were trying to push the limit of how commanding they could make the kitchen look. The cooktop area is where the full-height backsplash was placed. There is a massive brushed stainless hood that is 6 1/2 feet wide and double ovens. It's the whole show. They wanted that one to be extra thick and the only way to do that was by mitering."

The process of mitering involved beveling the edges of each marble slab at 45 degrees so they join to form a corner at a 90-degree angle. The aesthetic has steadily grown in popularity over the years in countertop production, specifically because of the clean, contemporary look it achieves.

Once the cabinetry was installed, United Marble Fabricators manually templated all areas, said Kilfoyle. "A physical layout was conducted with the design team in our shop to discern the overall aesthetic of the kitchen and to highlight the best parts of the slab," he explained. "Once these areas were determined, the kitchen was

A full-height backsplash creates a dramatic focal point in the estate's kitchen.

digitized and drawn in AutoCAD. Scaled high-resolution photographs were taken of each of the seven slabs. The photos were imported into the CAD drawings to create a photo-realistic layout of the entire kitchen, which helped to ensure that all mitered edges flowed correctly. The slabs were cut and mitered on a 5-axis bridge saw, the cutouts were completed on a CNC router and the mitered kitchen was assembled using mitreForma clamps from Integra Adhesives."

"The full-height backsplash is captured on all sides by cabinetry panels and the exhaust hood," Kilfoyle went on to say. "The backsplash was fabricated at the same time as the countertops and was specially back cut and honed to minimize the chances of any damage to the surrounding elements during installation. The undersides of both islands are

exposed at the seating areas. These areas are also mitered and fully polished underneath so that no visible area is dissimilar."

WORKING TOGETHER

Both Kilfoyle and Brady credit teamwork for the success of the kitchen remodel, which recently was presented with the "Kitchen of the Year" Pinnacle Award given by MIA+BSI. The installation of the kitchen was a collaborative effort by all trades working to beat a holiday deadline," said Kilfoyle. "Our installers worked inside of a fully occupied home alongside many other trades, including millworkers, painters, home automation and flooring contractors, to complete the project."

Fabrication and installation of the marble countertops and backsplash were completed in a span of two weeks. "In a

contemporary space like this one, flaws tend to stand out even more," said Brady. "United Marble Fabricators has great attention to detail, and they reworked a few areas because they felt it wasn't up to their standards. I have to say, the space speaks for itself. If it looks easy, it's because it wasn't." ■

Kitchen Remodel

Private Estate

Weston, MA

Builder: Dudley Builders

Kitchen Designer: Downsview Kitchens, Boston, MA

Stone Fabricator/Installer: United Marble Fabricators, Watertown, MA

Stone Supplier: Marble and Granite, Inc., Westwood, MA (Calacatta Saturnia marble from Brazil)

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