

HOUSE SPECIAL

From the front lines of cuisine creation, four professional chefs turn a designing eye to their own home kitchens.

By ELIZABETH RAHE

ANGELO AND DENISE ELIA call it a floating kitchen, a simple yet architecturally dramatic crescent-shaped space that punctuates the living area of their airy Fort Lauderdale home. Wrapped in mahogany and reflected in near-seamless honed limestone flooring, the kitchen pays equal homage to family room, dining room and living room. "We entertain a lot, and we like to be able to cook here and enjoy our guests," says Angelo Elia, chef and part-owner of Casa D'Angelo Ristorante in Fort Lauderdale.

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Denise and Angelo Elia wanted a free-flowing, open kitchen in their Fort Lauderdale home. Thus, the floating kitchen curves out into the living areas. Pneumatic bar stools from Minimalista in Fort Lauderdale allow family and friends to chat with the chef at work.

ANDREW MEADE

CHEF PAUL MATTISON searched through three granite yards before he found just the right giallo stone for his Sarasota kitchen. There was no natural gas service in his area so he buried a propane tank to fuel his Viking stove. And he still talks about redoing his island to incorporate an abandoned idea. "I wanted it to look like a piano bar, rounded at the end, with guests sitting around watching the chef cook. But we ended up squaring it off," he says over coffee in his Tuscan-style kitchen.

This creative, exacting nature has helped Mattison build a small empire in the Florida west coast city, with three restaurants, a catering company, a kitchen outfitting company and his most recent addition — a home kitchen design endeavor. "I think I keep building and opening restaurants because I really enjoy designing them," Mattison says. Now he is helping people create kitchens for the way they live, including clients for upscale builder John Cannon Homes.

His own kitchen grew out of his love of cooking and entertaining, as well as the need for a stage to shoot a weekly TV spot for a local news show. So the oversized island comprises the stove, stainless-steel sink, ample shelves and cupboards, an overhead pot rack and room for 10 would-be sous chefs. "When people come to dinner, I always like to put them to work," he says.

Hardwood flooring throughout creates a unified feel in the free-flowing kitchen, living room, dining room and bay-window breakfast nook. An air-conditioned pantry serves as a wine room. Mahogany-stained cabinetry, textured, earth-tone walls in varying shades and ceilings that follow the truss lines create the feel of a villa in his beloved northern Italy.

The one feature missing from his own house that he would recommend to clients is a caterer's kitchen which, he admits, is somewhat self-serving. "People always end up in the kitchen so we always end up in the garage. My goal is to get everyone to air-condition the garage or to put in a small caterer's kitchen to keep the mess out of the house." Not to mention keeping Mattison and company out of the heat.

KITCHEN DESIGN ADVICE: Consider your entertaining style. If you don't use a formal dining room, blend that space into a larger kitchen.

SECOND THOUGHTS: "I would have added refrigerated drawers ... and rounded off the end of the island to accommodate more guests."

VENTURES: For more information about Paul Mattison's endeavors, visit www.mattisons.com.



Sarasota chef and restaurateur Paul Mattison says he chose granite countertops because it resists staining, cleans easily, won't scorch and even serves as a cold table for working with chocolate or rolling pastry.

MARK SICKLES

"I wanted [the island] sitting around to look like a piano bar, rounded at the end, with guests watching the chef cook. But we ended up squaring it off."

— Chef Paul Mattison

DAVID ZUCKER, chef and former owner of Plaza Café in Delray Beach, wanted everything within reach — stove, oven, sink, preparation areas, even his guests. Thus, the centerpiece of the silver, black and red Poggenpohl kitchen in his Boca Raton home is a bi-level island with a sink and granite countertop surrounded by a stainless-steel bar.

Friends gather around in red-leather chairs, sip wine and watch the chef at work. “It was designed as an entertainment type of place, so you are not alone in a closed-up area preparing the food,” he says.

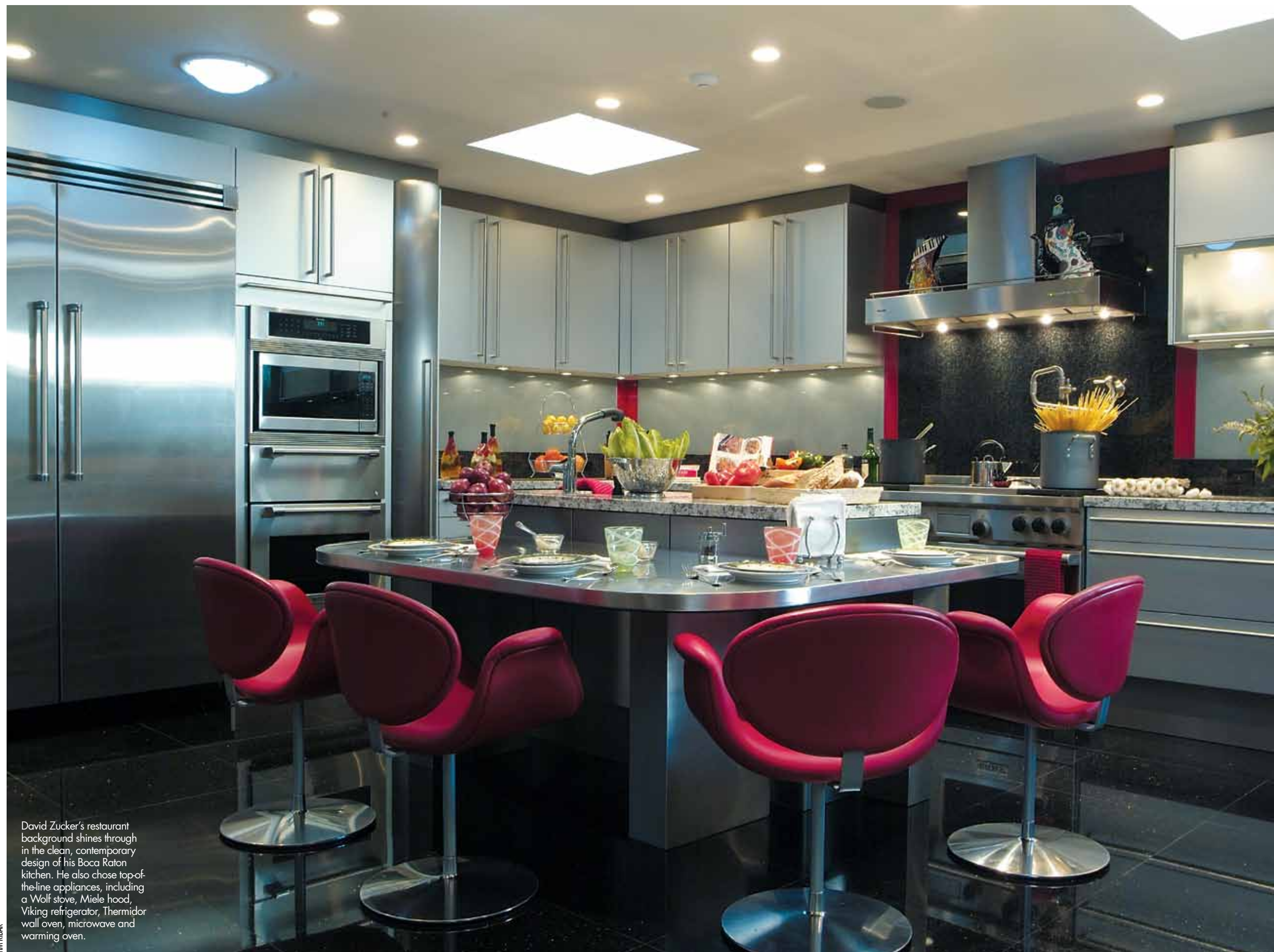
Like most chefs, Zucker does not cook from recipes but adds ingredients as the spirit, and the palate, moves. Conveniences, such as a floor-to-ceiling, pull-out spice pantry and an above-the-stove, pot-filler faucet, help keep the creativity flowing. Stainless-steel sinks and appliance fronts, aluminum and glass cabinets and Azul Aran granite countertops provide durability and ease of cleanup, Zucker says. Although very utilitarian, the kitchen bears a modern elegance — the sheen of stainless steel contrasting with the Black Galaxy granite floor as well as the backsplash, which is framed in striking red and silver painted glass panels. The paint is applied to the back side of the glass, providing clean, seamless lines of color.

Although Zucker is not currently involved with a restaurant, “something is in the works,” he says. In the meantime, he creates dishes at home, specializing in pasta, fish and sauces. “I love to work in my kitchen.”

KITCHEN DESIGN ADVICE: You don’t want to be running all over your kitchen. Figure out how you are going to use your kitchen and work with your designer to achieve your goal.

SECOND THOUGHTS: “I would have moved the refrigerator closer to the stove, and I would have added an indoor grill.”

DESIGN EXPERTISE: Cecil Hayes, Cecil’s Designers Unlimited, Coconut Creek, Poggenpohl DCOTA, Design Center of the Americas, Dania Beach.



TIM RIBAR

David Zucker’s restaurant background shines through in the clean, contemporary design of his Boca Raton kitchen. He also chose top-of-the-line appliances, including a Wolf stove, Miele hood, Viking refrigerator, Thermidor wall oven, microwave and warming oven.

ANGELO ELIA FROM PAGE 95

Indeed, the curving mahogany bar, topped with Ceara White granite and edged with contemporary white stools, creates a theater setting for the kitchen. It also provides the cook with a clear view of the family-room's 64-inch flat-screen TV as well as the infinity-edge pool and canal beyond floor-to-ceiling windows. A wet bar with a large sink also serves as an extra prep area, and stainless-steel backsplashes provide a high-tech, low-maintenance backdrop.

At the restaurant, Italian-born Angelo features Tuscan-style specialties, but at home he likes to entertain simply, often grilling outside or on his 62-inch Wolf stove. Denise, who is of Brazilian descent, likes to prepare roasts or rice and beans or simply to assist her husband. "I chop and clean up," she says. They choose wines from a state-of-the-art, 1,000-bottle wine

Mahogany encases the wet bar and, to the left, a 1,000-bottle wine room.



room that separates the kitchen from the dining room. A glass door and picture window make the collection, artfully displayed in triangular, stainless steel-trimmed shelves, visible from both areas. The wine room is Angelo's favorite feature in the newly rebuilt home, but the Miele built-in coffee/espresso maker runs a close second. Soon the back patio may take top honors as the Elias plan to install an outdoor kitchen, which will include a wood-burning oven for lamb roasts, pizza or just a warm touch on cool evenings.

KITCHEN DESIGN ADVICE: "Take your time and make sure you keep the design simple and easy," Angelo Elia says.

SECOND THOUGHTS: "We should have done the outside kitchen earlier," Denise Elia says. "We really would have enjoyed it this summer."

VENTURES: Casa D'Angelo Ristorante, 1201 N. Federal Highway, Fort Lauderdale, 954-564-1234, www.Casa-D-Angelo.com

DESIGN EXPERTISE: Apex Woodworking Co., Fort Lauderdale; Wendy Costa, Wendy Costa Interiors, Fort Lauderdale; Robert Tuthill, Tuthill Architecture, Fort Lauderdale.

"I LOVE MIXING the old and the new," says Palm Beach food writer Victoria Amory. She creates Old World recipes drawn from her Spanish heritage with modern ease. She serves them with casual grace on blended-era china and pottery. Her multigenerational philosophy is reflected in the kitchen of her recently renovated 1916-era home, which this year earned the Robert I. Ballinger Award from the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach. Amory's goal was to preserve the essence of the original kitchen while providing the conveniences to accommodate her busy family and considerable recipe-testing. It was here that she developed the updated classics for her first cookbook, *Delicious!*, a fund-raiser for a new athletic and fine arts complex at 80-year-old Rosarian Academy in West Palm Beach.

The original Dade County pine flooring, which had been hidden under layers of linoleum and gently restored, forms the foundation of the kitchen. A 1954 Garland stove, similar to the model Julia Child donated to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, is the centerpiece and Amory's favorite feature. "There are no bells and whistles. It just works beautifully," she says. To complement the look of the Garland, she chose stainless-steel fronts for the modern appliances, including a Sub-Zero refrigerator and GE dishwasher. Two Sub-Zero freezer drawers with white wood façades provide convenient storage.

Amory's extensive collection of antique and contemporary china is encased in 12-inch deep, ceiling-high, white wood and glass custom cabinets. A stainless-steel double sink in the kitchen and one in the bar provide ample space for hand-washing vintage dishes. White Corian countertops, chosen for stain-resistance and durability, preserve the clean, classic look of the kitchen. "I don't like a lot of fluff," she says. The result of her simple approach is a true cook's kitchen that retains the flavor of an Old Florida home.

KITCHEN DESIGN ADVICE: Really think about your storage needs. "I did not need a large freezer because I go to the supermarket every other day ... I needed that space for dishes."

SECOND THOUGHTS: "I should have added drawers for pots and pans so I could reach them easily."

VENTURES: *Delicious!*, the 160-page, full-color cookbook by Victoria Amory with Evelyn Hopkins, may be ordered through www.victoriaamory.com.



GARY VANCE

Cookbook author Victoria Amory tests recipes on an historical treasure: her 1954 Garland stove. The grand old appliance sets the tone for the kitchen of her award-winning 1916 Palm Beach home.

SOURCES

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