



This open concept by Architect Adolfo Perez earned him a New England regional win in the International Sub-Zero and Wolf Kitchen Design Contest.

Creating the Palette

STORY BY **ROB LEVEY** | KITCHEN DESIGN BY **ADOLFO PEREZ**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RICHARD MANDELKORN**

FOR ADOLFO PEREZ, EVERY design decision comes down to space and how each element within the home flows into one another. While sounding somewhat abstract, Perez is an architect, and so when approaching any project he conceptualizes it spatially and within the context of the entire home.

For this kitchen he had carte blanche. “It was new-construction, so I was creating the palette,” said Perez, who also drew the plans for the home itself. “The [homeowners] didn’t really know what they wanted, so I had a lot more flexibility.”

In creating this palette he said he looked at the materials that were to be used throughout the home and found ways to integrate them into the kitchen. For instance the stone backsplash behind the sink wraps around and connects with the fireplace on the other side, while he noted the choice of concrete floors in the kitchen

naturally led to concrete countertops. For cabinetry, he selected several materials throughout the kitchen, including gray laminate, oak, and blackened steel.

Perhaps most conspicuous may be the stainless steel appliances throughout the kitchen, although for Perez such items serve as more of an accent. “For me, it’s about the blending of materials — the oak, gray laminate, concrete, stainless,” he added. “It is an eclectic kitchen, but it’s a real reflection of the clients and particularly the wife — it really captured her spirit.”

In trying to reflect her spirit and that of her spouse, he said he believes the kitchen reflects a “modern” aesthetic, although not in the classic sense of the word. “It’s modern, but without the capital ‘M,’” he said. “It’s certainly of its time.”

Mindful of the need to design a kitchen space as functional as it is “visually stimulating,” Perez said his role as architect

and designer is to listen to what people want and give it physical form. “I’m a good listener and synthesize what clients might want and filter it through my sensibilities,” he said. “I don’t dictate to clients — often, solutions present themselves.”

In designing this kitchen the blending of seemingly disparate materials creates a style he describes as “simple and sophisticated in a knowing way.” It was not, however, a solo effort, as the fabric and furnishings throughout the home reflect the sensibilities of interior designer Andra Birkerts. “She helped blend these elements throughout the home — she was great,” he said.

With the eye of an architect, Perez said he approached this kitchen with the intent to integrate its functionality with that of the entire house. If he were to distill what he believes he has achieved in its design, however, his concept could be simply explained.

“It invites use,” he said. *