

Richard Landon, CMKBD

2007 BEST OVERALL KITCHEN WINNER

By Sean Ruck

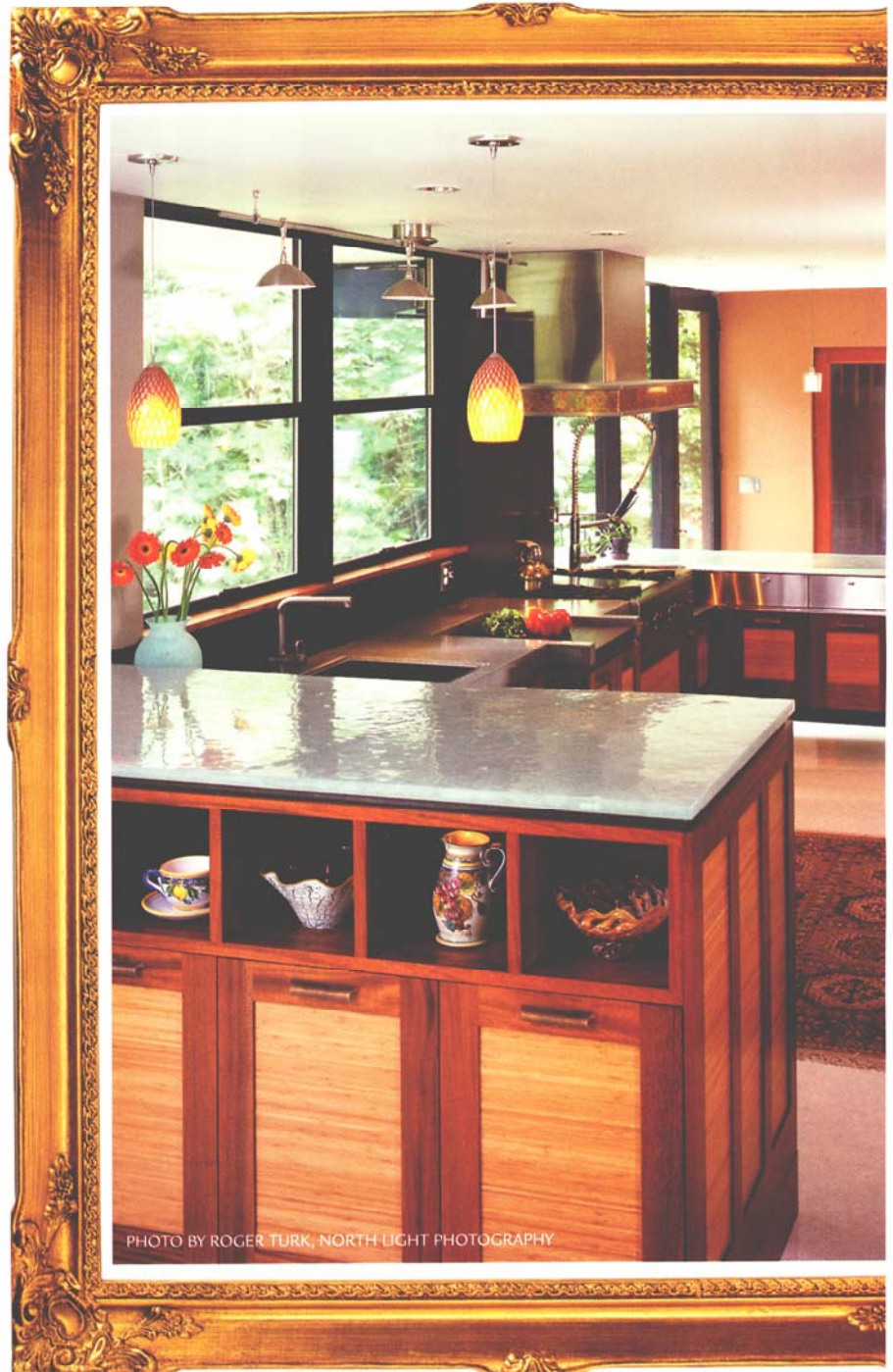
The 2007 NKBA Design Competition's theme was the "Art of the Industry." Our members do create projects and products that could be looked at as works of art. For Richard Landon, CMKBD, his approach to design does result in visually stunning rooms, but Landon actually makes use of a different art background than might be expected to create those rooms.

"I had three years training in musical theory and composition. I feel that a well-designed kitchen needs to be in harmony with the rest of the home. Instead of working with notes, I get to work with shapes to provide the structure," Landon explained.

GREAT COMPOSURE

His first foray into working with shapes to create the masterpieces he now offers occurred many years ago when he was working as a second grade teacher. "I started through my desire to help the family of a girl I taught. She had lost her father in an industrial accident and I was helping her mother move into a new home. This was back in the days when some cabinetry literally was cardboard. One of the cabinets fell off the wall when they were moving in. So I told the mother that if she could afford to get the materials, I'd build her some cabinets that would at least stay on the wall. At the time, I had built nothing more than a tree fort. I spent a day watching a fellow build cabinets in a shop. When I got down to it, I realized cabinets were a set of rectangles put together in a certain way, so if you figure it out, you're good."

That seems to be an understatement as Landon not only received a call from someone three months later asking if he could make cabinets for their kitchen as well, but he has also gone on to be recognized as one of the best among the best by having his work ▶▶



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receive high honors in the NKBA Design Competition with his entry, "Floating On Air."

FINE TUNING

To make this kitchen work, Landon had to face a few challenges. "Entering the kitchen, I discovered that the client had already torn out the 1958 kitchen. He had purchased a full suite of Sub-Zero/Wolf equipment. His main problem was that the space was too small to contain it," he remembered.

The secondary problem wasn't much better. "He had also torn down a wall so he could open the kitchen to the impressive view, only to discover that he did not want his kitchen to be part of the dining room and vice-versa," Landon said.

He approached this project with an initial consultation that utilizes the "Design By L.I.F.E. Process." At its basic level, all designers use this process. But Landon does it with some very intentional results in mind. The process takes into account four needs. "Designing with this process incorporates Lifestyle factors, Interior flow, the Feelings created by these relationships and your home's Exterior connections (how it interacts with the world outside).

By doing this, Landon says you will more readily create a design that "Looks great, works well and feels right." Those three goals are precisely the promises that he delivered for his client when he provided this award-winning kitchen.



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"I grew up in a home of that same vintage," Landon said. That aspect may have contributed to an even deeper connection to this design. As far as the interplay of the kitchen with the rest of the home - or as part of the L.I.F.E. Process, the Interior Flow - the basic shapes of the kitchen echo the home's architecture. "I cantilevered out a section of counter in the middle of the main countertop run, just as the living room juts from the home's center. Plus, the wenge chop block reverses to reveal the nice side when entertaining!"

Landon continued, "By raising one peninsula, I separated the kitchen and dining room. This also raised the fully-integrated Miele Dishwasher and gave dish storage right beside it. The repetition of the display niches reflects the repetition of the home's windows and lights up the mid-zone. This same element is reflected in the three glass countertops."

The second peninsula showcases a stainless steel drawer section that ties in with the Wolf range top. An L-shaped cabinet section is similar to the L-shape of the hood, both giving a nod back to the dominant first peninsula.

The five remaining appliances hold a strong presence in this kitchen, floating visually off the floor. Window elements are repeated in the glass panes and drawers. The toe kicks provide much needed storage in the kitchen which lacks extensive wall cabinetry. Landon utilized line by line CAD to design the project. "There are several layers in this kitchen, and in many places, I'm overlapping layers, so it's necessary to work line by line," he said.

Regardless of how he went about creating this kitchen, it's easy to imagine that if this design could somehow be converted into a musical piece, it would provide a sweet symphony. ■