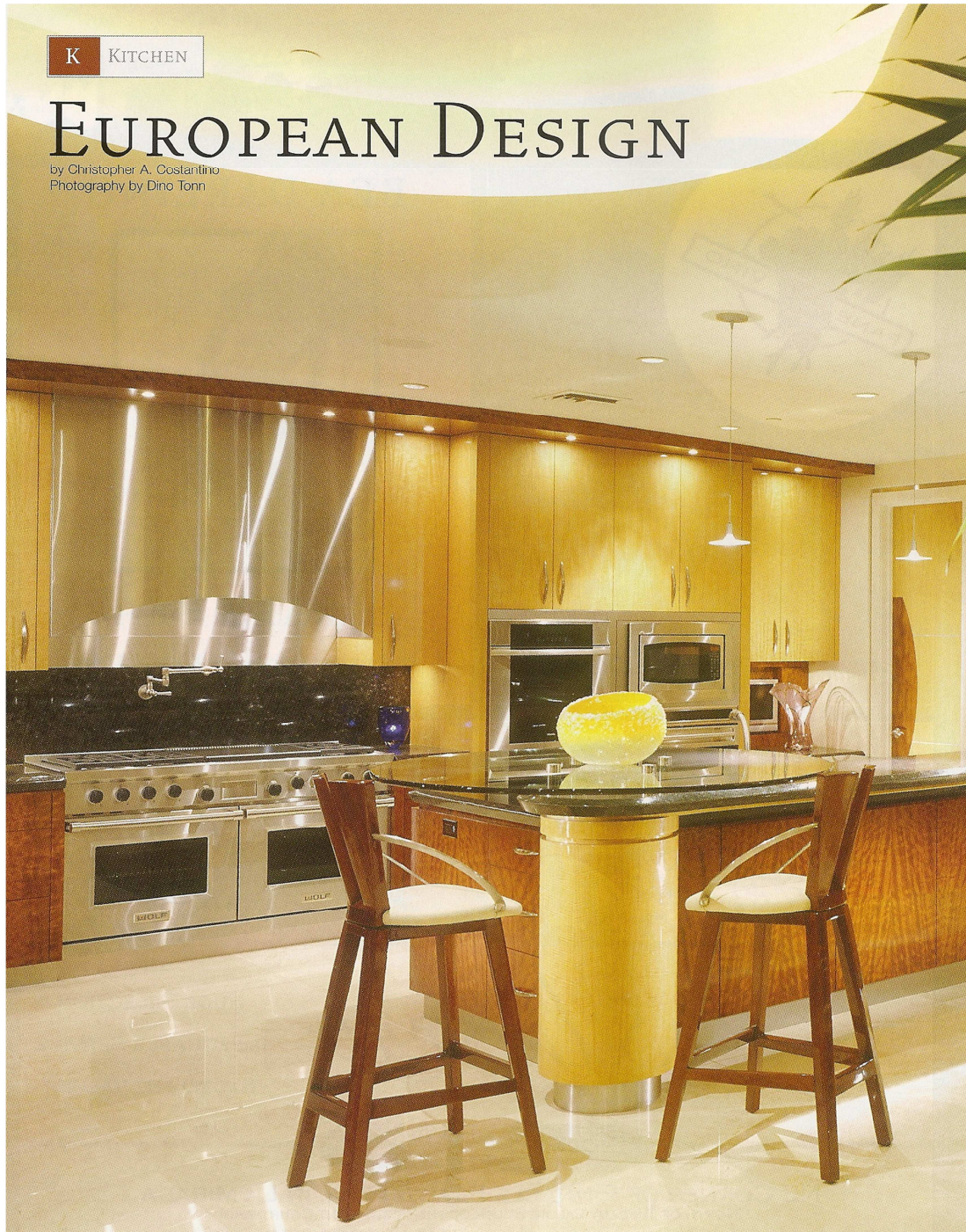


EUROPEAN DESIGN

By Christopher A. Costantino

This article appeared in the January 2005 issue of AZ Food and Lifestyles Magazine. As such, it is the property of them and cannot be reprinted without their express permission.



There are some things in this world that, upon seeing them, leave you speechless: Michelangelo's Cistine Chapel, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, and this kitchen. Yes, you heard me right. When I saw this kitchen, I was speechless, and anyone that knows me realizes that this is no small feat.

The genius behind this work of art is Allan Rosenthal, owner of European Design, and his staff of 26 talented employees. Established 15 years ago locally, they have been designing all-original, one-of-a-kind pieces that combine furniture and cabinetry with fine art.

Not limited to kitchens, this team also designs bedroom sets, side tables, audio-visual units, bathrooms, dining room tables, home theatres and powder rooms. If it's made of wood, they can do it extremely well. In fact, the company started out building primarily wall units. Twelve years ago, Allan was asked to do an entire house by a client who was impressed with his work. The client was thrilled with the results and thus was born a new specialty niche... the whole house solution, which they're expertly filling. European Design has done over 100 houses in the valley, including local sports celebrities. Rosenthal's philosophy is simple: "Do what you say you're going to do. Treat people that way you want to be treated." That's a golden rule that has really paid off for this artist.

Quality control standards are exacting at European Design. "Either it's perfect or it doesn't leave – period. There is no in-between for us." Though they do contract a few suppliers, 99.9 percent of what they sell is made in-house. Rather than sticking with traditional (dare I say, boring) woods, exotic woods such as Sycamore, Amarillo, Carpathian elm, Chestnut burl, Movingue and Zebrawood are utilized.

Such talent runs in Rosenthal's family, for three generations now. His father was a master woodworker from Europe who survived the holocaust in Auschwitz. Allan didn't immediately take to the business; he made a brief attempt as a manager of an ice skating rink. Lucky for us, he changed his mind and embraced his obvious talent.

This kitchen is 700 square feet of elegance. In collaboration with C.P. Drewett of Drewett Works, Inc, Sonoran West Development Inc. and Robin Grant of Grant Design, European Design created a warm, inviting kitchen that makes cooking dinner for the family extra pleasurable. European Design's lead designer, Charlie Scott, was instrumental in bringing this masterpiece to life.

Many kitchens lack ample cabinets and storage – not so in this design. Space is maximized – even under the island – utilizing a two-tone effect of exotic woods: "plane-sliced Bubinga" and "fiddleback Anigre." (Far more fun to say at parties than "pine") Originating in places like Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Uganda, you won't find this wood in the homes or showrooms of average cabinetry companies.

Crème marfel Travertine provides peerless flooring, while polar blue granite elevates the elegance of these countertops. The ceiling effect, called a "free form light bridge" and the low pendant lighting complete the dramatic effect of the room. A Sub-Zero refrigerator-freezer

combo was paneled to perfectly match the surrounding cabinetry, resulting in a much warmer feel than stainless steel. The latter element, however, was not omitted; it was used sparingly as accents in door handles and the vent hood. In addition, a large circle of glass at the end of the island becomes a striking focal point.

Remarkable beauty aside, this is an extremely functional space. With two Meile ovens, a 60-inch Wolf range and a GE Profile microwave, it's every home chef's (or wanna-be gourmet chef's) dream kitchen. Extra touches like the trash compactor (a rare appliance in Arizona kitchens) and SubZero wine cooler that chills vintages properly (slightly higher than a refrigerator) add to the pervading practicality.

With breathtaking views of the valley below, the dual basin stainless steel sink sits beneath a visual respite. In the corner of the room is a small nook with a desk and a flat-panel screen. Being a tech gadget junkie, I love this innovation – it's a computer and a TV combo unit with closed circuit camera access.

Another artistic masterpiece graces the living room – a beautiful wet bar. Complete with beer taps and Vodka dispenser, plus a commercial soda gun, it removes the need to go out to a bar – everything you need is here. Repeating the kitchen wood patterns, the bar is also comprised of stainless steel and bent-neon lighting on the pillar. It's apparent that this house was designed with entertaining in mind.

European Design aims to please and Rosenthal is passionate about this principle.. “I think it reflected exactly the client's personalities and that's always what we aim for. We try to tap into them and learn what they love.” From the humble beginning of a 1200-square-foot shop in Tempe, they have expanded and grown to a 15,000-square-foot facility in Scottsdale. Part of this new facility includes an inspiring showroom. Whatever your woodworking needs, Allan and his brilliant design team will take your project from start to finish, delivering something that is not only functional – but also a work of art.