

# CHICAGO

## HOME & GARDEN

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### THE PATTERN of our Traditions



The center island was the starting point for the new kitchen. Spacious aisles, plenty of storage, and a two-level bar were the owners' only requirements. The artisan carpenter then had free rein to create a one-of-a-kind design.

tiny space into a sunny, clean-lined kitchen uniquely their own. Original cabinetry, vivid artwork, and a 250-square-foot addition overlooking the garden combined to make an openhearted kitchen now enjoyed by the entire family. Extra-wide walkways, more than five feet wide, ensure that several people can work in this kitchen at the same time without fear of colliding.

The custom-crafted cabinetry



# KINDRED SPIRITS



**Angela** and Fred Graefenhain of Naperville know the secret to a successful kitchen-remodeling project. It's as simple as finding a mix of professionals who work cooperatively and play off each other's creativity. In the Graefenhains' new kitchen, it took an artisan carpenter with a unique vision, a builder who could translate that

vision, and resident artist, Angela, who painted a meaningful mural, to fabricate an artful, fun, and functional kitchen perfectly suited to the Graefenhains' lifestyle.

Before the remodeling project, which took about six months from conception to completion, Angela says her kitchen was uninspiring. "It

was too crowded for six people," she says. "There was no eating area and every time the refrigerator door was opened it hit someone."

All of that changed a little more than a year ago when the Graefenhains collaborated with Zenon Michalow, a master carpenter, and Patrick James Builders to transform the too-

The artist-owner's imprint can be found in the personal mural that she painted to depict each member of the family as well as in other vibrant artworks displayed throughout the kitchen. The moveable dining table is another original design executed by the carpenter in maple and walnut.

BY CAROL

#### KITCHEN

defines the kitchen and sets its imaginative tone. Inlaid maple on the sides of the pantries and the island blends with American walnut veneers in elegantly curvilinear plant-like shapes. Left unstained to showcase the wood grain, the cabinets and drawers give a modified Shaker feel to the contemporary setting.

Adding furniture-like appeal to the mix, storage drawers line up below the countertops. Not only do the drawers give "a streamlined, horizontal flow to the area, but it makes finding the right pot easier," Angela explains. Brushed-steel drawer pulls and cabinet handles mirror the clean lines of the cabinet and room design.

After seeing Zenon's work, Angela had him build bookcases for the family room before the kitchen project was planned. "He is really an artisan in the old-

world sense, unequivocally. From Zenon was more than we expected. Graefenhains told him what they wanted, and he did sketches. From there they gave him the design. "We had to see his work," she re-

Zenon explains that much of his creativity does not do a lot of things. I can work on a tectural plan, but I need freedom to come up with a design. It doesn't matter how many days that you have. By designing during the work, I see exactly what I want to be good."

Zenon brings his creativity to his work. He received a carpentry degree from a native Poland after a study and subsequent