

Elegance For The Handicapped

Rich materials, curving shapes, and soaring space create a sophisticated kitchen for a handicapped client



According to Erika Khader, a designer affiliated with Design Studio in Staten Island, N.Y., the client definitely did not want the look of a typical kitchen. "He wanted it to have the appearance of a library, with fine wood pieces," she said. "Perhaps the fact that he is wheelchair-bound made it especially important for him to have a room without an institutional look."

Located on Light House Hill, a beautiful wooded area on Staten Island, the client's house is a handsome contemporary structure with a Spanish flavor. Khader said she worked closely with the architect, Elwira Pniewski of Pace Development Corp., who designed the home.

The kitchen, a space approximately 18' long by 9' wide, occupies a wing with a cathedral ceiling soaring to 20 feet at its peak. Overlooking the ground floor, a gallery provides a setting for numerous plants in the light-filled space.

Made of mahogany in a rich red/brown finish, cabinetry resembling fine pieces of furniture was selected. The Allmilmo line from Germany features raised-panel doors and a number of arched wall units.

Granite tile covers the counters and dining table, matching the same material used on the floor. Fitted into space beside the tall windows at the end of the room, the dining table is supported by a leg from Allmilmo,

The bottoms of the base cabinets (opposite) are recessed to allow room for the footrest of the wheelchair. The units below the sink and cooktop are recessed even further so the client can easily pull up beneath them. The refrigerator and ovens (above) are enclosed in cabinetry.







Allmilmo's mahogany cabinetry (left) has the look of fine furniture with the rounded shape of the arched wall units repeated in the elegant, suspended light fixtures. The dishwasher (above) was raised to counter height, for ease of loading and unloading while seated.

while the top was custom fabricated in this country. Wine cabinets flanking the windows and the chairs also are from Allmilmo.

According to Khader, Allmilmo has a special program for the handicapped, so obtaining cabinets to fit her client's needs was no problem. The bottom portions of all base units were recessed to allow room for the footrest of the wheelchair.

Khader incorporated several other special features into her design to accommodate her client. The dishwasher is raised to counter height so he can load and unload it while seated. Deeper recesses in the base units below the sink and cooktop permit him to pull up under them. The controls of the glass-surfaced cooktop are mounted on a wood panel in front of the appliance.

Ample aisle space between the two cabinet-filled walls of the kitchen work area provide sufficient space for him to maneuver in his chair.

On the wall opposite the sink and cooktop, the wall ovens and refrigerator are enclosed in cabinetry, giving them a built-in look. A counter between these appliances serves as a landing spot for hot or cold items.

Other special touches contributing to the room's elegance are glass fronts on the arched wall units and dome-shaped light fixtures echoing their shape.

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Major resources:

Cabinetry, chairs: Allmilmo
Cooktop, dishwasher: Miele
Sink, faucet: Luwa
Refrigerator: Sears
Wall ovens: Thermador