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Every inch of Jemie and Ed's space was planned according to the couple's wish list. They needed room for entertaining, lots of storage, a highly functional workspace, and a clean, unadorned aesthetic. "The whole kitchen had to be easy to clean and practical," Jemie says.

The raised slab that is part of the work island is a piece of exotic wood from the Philippines; it sits on stainless steel supports and is carefully notched into the wall. Not only does it bring in an element of Jemie's heritage, it provides a beautiful contrast to the high luster of the granite.



A FINE FUSION

Art and function meet
in this serene
kitchen and living space

Homeowners Jemmie and Ed are numbers people: She's an accountant and he's a banker. It's no surprise, then, that the couple, who live in San Francisco, would take a practical, methodical approach to their kitchen remodel.

Designer Gioi Tran, owner of Applegate Tran Interiors, immediately understood that the couple's ultimate kitchen was all about precision and the organization of space. "For them, everything had to have a certain rhythm—it had to line up and make sense," Tran says.

The challenge was to keep the space casual, but free of excessive ornamentation. "I don't like a lot of clutter," Jemmie says. "I just wanted the kitchen to look simple, but still elegant with very structured lines." To that end, Tran limited the materials to the basics: wood flooring and wood cabinets with glass and stainless steel accents, granite countertops, and textured red fabric for the seating area. All of the appliances are built in or hidden. "I didn't even want the trash to be seen," Jemmie says.

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opposite: Jemmie and Ed wanted a space to properly display their glass and carved wood pieces from Paris, Thailand and Indonesia. Tran had a wall built of Venetian plaster in the living room (adjacent to the kitchen), with lighted niches cut out for displaying the couple's treasures.

right: Jemmie wanted a bit of color to warm up the dining area, so Tran had the bench covered in a soft red fabric; he then painted three matching red canvases to hang above the bench.



In fact, every element was calculated for its appearance and functionality: The couple even picked out the Doussie wood (an exotic species from Africa) because they liked the simple grain and warm, honey color.

"I like clean and tailored looks, with a hint of modern and Asian influence," says Jemmie, who is from the Philippines. In fact, one of the things on the couple's wish list was an elegant display space for their substantial art collection which Tran accomplished by building a Venetian plaster wall with alcoves in the living room.

Although Jemmie wanted a purposeful feel in the kitchen, she frequently hosts her family

from the Philippines, so the space still needed to feel warm, friendly and open. That's why Tran tore down the wall between the kitchen and the old dining room and created a banquette. It's large enough to seat 10 people, but because the bench is tucked along the wall, it still feels cozy.

Finally, to keep the kitchen and dining spaces connected and provide extra storage, Tran extended the line of cabinets all along the wall. "I'd rather have a lot of smaller cabinets than cabinets that are too deep—you can't see what you have if cabinets are too big," Jemmie says. "I'm all about what's practical." ■

beauty through restraint

For many homeowners, there is a fine line between creating visual interest and overwhelming the eye. Jemmie and Ed are a perfect example: They wanted a clutter-free, contemporary kitchen that felt both sleek and warm. Here are a few tips for striking that balance.

- Choose subtle patterns. Instead of solid red, designer Gioi Tran used a tone-on-tone red floral pattern for the dining bench. It adds dimension, but it's subtle enough not to produce sensory overload.
- Go for texture. To echo the floral pattern, Tran had the glass panels of the cabinets etched to look like oak leaves; the cabinets are also backlit. "The glass becomes a piece of artwork," he says.
- Add a wow factor. In the dining area, the chocolate-brown light above the table is the eye-catcher. It's iridescent, so it plays with the light and adds great movement and color to the space.