

k + b studio

kitchen: speaking volumes

Architect Bradford C. Walker, AIA, LEED AP, calls this Boston penthouse loft “Urban Living XXL.” And with 18-foot ceilings and nearly 5,000 square feet of floor area, it lives up to the name. “It’s a true loft,” Walker says—“a big, open, light-filled space, not just a studio apartment being marketed as a loft.” On his first tour of the unfinished premises, the architect decided, “We should play that up ... make it feel empty in some ways.”

The resulting build-out celebrates sheer volume with a kitchen/living/dining room Walker describes as resembling “a big Italian courtyard. Everything opens off of that space.” A long wall clad in Koto wood panels forms the inboard boundary of the room. “The kitchen kind of embeds itself into that wall,”



says Walker, who set the area apart from its wood surround with a grayscale palette of stone counters, laminate cabinets, and stainless steel appliances and accents. Dark-stained bamboo floors underscore the room’s scale.

The island—a folded plane of figured Ice Flower soapstone that wraps a bank of laminate cabinets—offers a dramatic stage for entertaining at home, and its 20-foot length accommodates ensemble productions. “You can have three or four people helping you prepare a meal if you want,” Walker observes. But the island’s scale doesn’t overwhelm its setting. “It’s a big thing in a big space, and it allows the

kitchen to work very informally in this loft setting.”

Informally, yes, but with a hidden assist when necessary. A panel in the sink wall hinges for access to a butler’s pantry with its own sink, refrigerator, and dishwasher. “When it’s closed, you don’t understand it’s a door at all,” which makes for seamless party service, he notes. “You can actually do catered things out of that back pantry.” A second secret door opens from the kitchen into the wine cellar.

project continued on page 18



project: Urban Living XXL, Boston

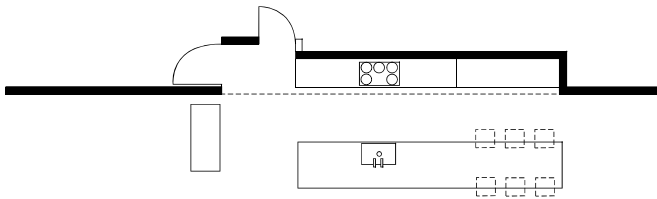
architect: Ruhl Walker Architects, Boston, with Arclinea Boston

general contractor: Sleeping Dog Properties, Boston

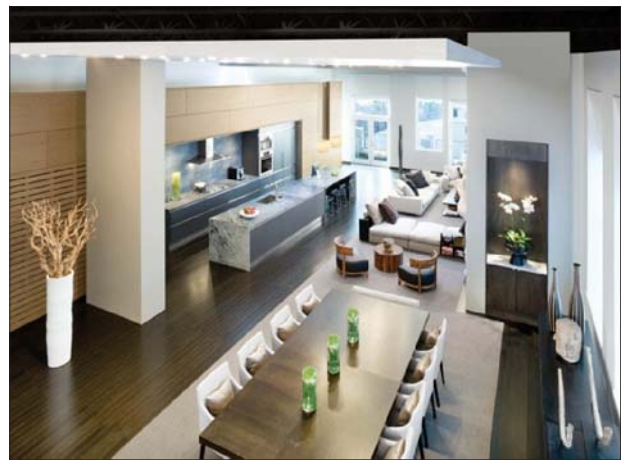
resources: bathroom fittings: Hudson Reed; bathroom fixtures: DuPont (Corian), Duravit USA, WETSTYLE; cabinets: Arclinea Boston; countertops: Cumar; dishwasher and oven: Miele; kitchen fittings and fixtures: Blanco; lighting fixtures: Cooper Lighting (Halo), LBL Lighting, Progress Lighting; paints/stains/wall finishes: Benjamin Moore & Co.; refrigerator: Sub-Zero



Photos: John Horner



The centerpiece of a 5,000-square-foot urban loft apartment, this kitchen offers a dramatic stage for entertaining—along with discreet “backstage” access to a butler’s pantry and a hidden passage to the master suite.





Photos: John Horner

Bird's-eye maple cabinetry connects the master bedroom and bath. A pocket door closes against the wall-height cabinet. A skylight over the shower and toilet compartment (below) provides ample, even lighting.



bath: hidden glow

If the great room of Urban Living XXL is a courtyard, its master bath is a private walled garden. “This bathroom was positioned to be directly under the skylight,” says architect Brad Walker, AIA, LEED AP, who designed a splayed skylight shaft to light the windowless space. Reflective white fixtures and wall surfaces give the room a diffuse glow.

With its pocket door open, the bath extends the visual theme of the master bedroom. Bird’s-eye maple cabinetry seamlessly bridges the two spaces, topped in the bath with a ghostly white, room-width counter of sanded acrylic with a Corian undermount sink. Opposite the counter and slightly elevated stands a porcelain vessel tub, behind which a ceiling-height panel of etched glass encloses twin marble-lined compartments for the shower and toilet. The plumbing had been roughed in before he took on the project, Walker explains. “We couldn’t move the locations of the shower and toilet drains, so we decided to take the wet area and put it up on this little, floating, white marble platform.”—*bruce d. snider*

