

Eco-Friendly Eye Candy

After this Upper Rockridge home was burned down in the 1991 Oakland firestorm, its previous owners restored it on a larger scale that reflected the original home they loved. Over the course of a decade and a half, however, the home fell into disarray, until it was purchased and rehabilitated by its current homeowners, Kim and Terry Watson. The Watsons saw great potential in the house as a whole, and the kitchen in particular, for their three teenagers.

Enter the Custom Kitchens' design team helmed by Joy Wilkins and project manager Nader Feidy. "They wanted a practical, teen-friendly house where friends and family could easily gather, cook, bake and do homework," Wilkins says.

The team immediately tore down the wall separating the kitchen from the dining room's ample light and remarkable views of the bay. By creating a low-rising pony wall, the rooms became visually divided without being physically detached.

Stocked with lots of eco-friendly amenities—bamboo cabinets; a durable, Merlot-hued, recycled paper countertop by Richlite on the pony wall; recessed fluorescent lighting; and an energy-efficient 36-inch induction cooktop by Electrolux—the kitchen was designed with

energy conservation and charisma in mind. Vibrancy abounds with the kitchen's rich jewel and earth tones. A golden maple butcher block tops an exotic dark jarrah wood island; a CaesarStone counter complements a curved custom-designed eating bar;

a one-of-a-kind one-piece stainless steel sink and counter is orbital-finished to craftily mask scratches; and a colorful mix of toffee, plum, gold, purple and cinnamon-colored glass tiles, handpicked from Tilesoph and Walker Zanger, create a colorful backsplash.

Two computer desks were added to the kitchen's common area so that homework time and dinner prep are a fluid family affair, pleasing the homeowners to no end.

"My favorite part is cooking at the stove with a view of the Golden Gate Bridge, being with the kids and being surrounded by the vibrant colors inside," says Kim Watson. "It turned out just the way I wanted it to." ▶▶

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Lisa Sze

Designer/Builder: *Custom Kitchens by John Wilkins Inc., Oakland*
Designers: *Joy Wilkins, Nader Feidy, Heidi Weeda*
Staging: *Cynthia Taylor, Cynthia Taylor Interiors*

