





round the corner

An ordinary kitchen in a new home gets a glamorous makeover that shows off its hot curves

By Lee Ann Murphy

Carmen Vona loves demanding clients. “When people want something simple and plain, I get bored,” he says. So when the owner of this builder-grade kitchen asked for a curvaceous dream room, Vona got excited.

The kitchen started out with a \$4,000 allowance from the builder. It was going to be a standard square space fitted with stock cabinets until the client decided he wanted something different—curves. Vona worked on a plan that took into consideration the client’s desires and his budget. “I’d work on it and get it the way I wanted,” says Vona,

“then I’d show it to him and he’d say ‘Can’t we do more curves?’ Meanwhile he’s working with a \$4,000 budget. I told him it was going to be expensive, and when he said he was fine with it, I went for it.”

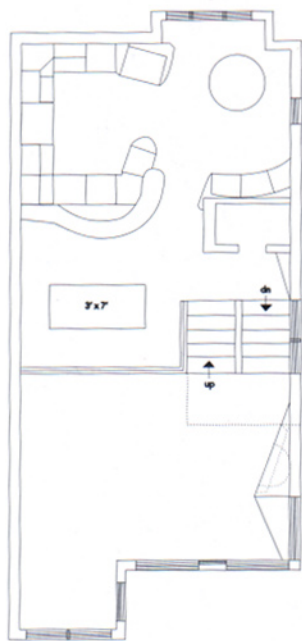
Vona swept the island around the space in a half-circle formation. When he got to the large pantry cabinet on the opposite side, he

The curves in this kitchen were a special request of the homeowner, as was the high-gloss orange finish on the cabinets. The lack of sharp angles gives added depth to this relatively small space. The flyover is an added touch of circular decoration. It is made by Seagrave Coatings Co. with a high-gloss polyester finish and a polyurethane topcoat.

Photographer: Barry Halkin



Circular panels forced Vona to reroute ducts that lay awkwardly on the floor in front of rounded walls. He brought them into the wall and fed them into the toe-kick, through which air is sucked back into the ventilation system.



The curved island and pantry make the most of a floorplan that measures 15' x 20', of which a 6' x 8' chunk was removed to accommodate a powder room.

made that circular and brought it back around to meet the curve of the island.

To accentuate the curves, Vona installed a C-shaped flyover. "It's painted in a high-gloss polyester finish with a urethane topcoat," he says. The flyover becomes a half halo of sorts due to the fact that it literally floats in air. Well, almost. One screw holds the entire piece up. It attaches the flyover to the adjacent wall cabinet. "All I had to do was place the piece where I wanted it and then stop it from going sideways, which is what the one screw does," says Vona. "Once it's in place, it's not going anywhere as long as that screw is secure. I can hang very long pieces this way."

LOST IN SPACE

The client approved a major spike in the budget to pay for the custom cabinets and counters necessary to make his corner-free dream a reality—from \$4,000 to \$69,000. The square

footage remained the same, though. The space was 15' x 20' with one corner taken up by a 6' x 8' powder room. To make matters worse, after the kitchen was drawn, Vona lost 9" side-to-side due to a lack of communication with the subcontractors, who were already busy putting in the standard behind-the-wall equipment for a builder-grade home. "This wasn't a custom home, so the subcontractors were doing their own thing," Vona says. "The plumbers were bringing in pipes all over the place, and I wound up without a place to vent the hood. I had to build the wall out nine inches and make the plumber take out everything he had done so we could vent the hood outside."

After this, the builder, Neil Lansman, Prestigious Homes by Neil Lansman, Rydal, PA, who has worked with Vona on many projects, decided to allow him to take over management of the subcontractors. "I've known Lansman for

specs:

designer: Carmen Vona, Carmana Designs, Ltd., Philadelphia, PA

interior designer: Anna Maria Vona, Carmana Designs, Ltd.

builder: Neil Lansman, Prestigious Homes by Neil Lansman, Rydal, PA

manufacturers:

Cabinets by **Carmana Designs**

Refrigerator by **Sub-Zero**

Dishwasher by **Asko**

Microwave/range by **Thermador**

Cooktop by **Wolf**

Sinks by **Franke**

Faucets by **Franke**

Vent hood by **Zephyr**

Lighting by **Häfele**

Drawer tracking system by **Blum**

cost: Kitchen: \$69,000

Vona ripped out the original stairs and replaced them with the open-slatted set seen here. Vona also designed all the lighting, which includes recessed fixtures, undercounter spots and hanging decorative fixtures.

years, so he said it was OK for me to take care of this. He builds custom homes, but this wasn't one of them, so it was much harder for him to manage all of the custom work we wound up doing. Instead, he smartly let me have an open hand; he just took a commission and it worked out better for everyone."

Unfortunately, this didn't bring back the 9" Vona had lost. To make up for it, Vona reduced the walkway from 42" to 38". He cheated inches in countertop depth and cabinets as well.

One benefit of the smaller space, however, is that it allowed for a tight, highly functional cooking area. "It's a great working kitchen," says Vona. "Everything is right there."

SPRAY ON THE SHINE

The high-gloss cabinetry was created in Vona's custom shop using a polyurethane spray under a polyester sealer,

finished with another polyurethane lacquer. Vona does all his custom finishes using a spray. "The spray goes on very even," says Vona. "If you wipe it, it can get blotchy—that's not what you're looking for when you do a high gloss."

Vona laid up all the curved doors and panels as well thanks to his 23,000 sq. ft. fabricating and finishing facility. Vona applies veneers on curved surfaces by using industrial-strength plastic and compressed air.

Getting the right color matching the client's expectations was a task. "He was very picky, so we kept toning it up," says Vona. "He wanted a very high gloss and a specific orange tone."

For his part, Vona had no problem with his client's fastidious demands. Vona liked the challenge—and the referral—for that matter. The client is now building a new \$2.5 million home with the help of Carmana Designs. *kbb*

