

# MAD ABOUT MARBLE

*A huge slab tops the kitchen island, there's more on the counters and don't forget the floors*

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STYLING MARK ROSENBERG

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*A trip to Turkey where roads made of marble date back centuries convinced Mark Rosenberg and his wife Janice Fox that the hard-wearing rock would be ideal to top their big new island. The couple found a piece 13 feet in length for the centerpiece of their renovated kitchen.*





**IT'S NO SURPRISE** kitchen islands are such an enduring design trend. They make life easier for home chefs and turn culinary production into a social event—if you add a couple of stools, the party can start long before dinner is served.

When designer/builder Mark Rosenberg began planning the kitchen for his new home in the Toronto Cricket Club area, a big island was a must. “My wife is a fantastic cook. We wanted a space where we could cook and entertain, all in one,” says Mark.

Mark wanted to build his dream island out of marble, but he hesitated. “People are paranoid about it because it stains. I guess that kind of rubbed off on me,” he says. But all doubts were dispelled during a holiday in Ephesus, Turkey, with his wife, Janice Fox. “We saw streets made out of marble, built thousands of years ago. You can still see the chariot grooves in them! I thought, seriously, how bad can marble be?”

The builder didn't anticipate how big marble could be. While scouting for a slab, Mark and Janice stumbled upon a single piece of pale marble, 13 feet long. “It was so spectacular,” says Janice. “It would have been a shame to cut it up!”

Mark decided to keep it intact, and capitalize on the extra length to add open shelves for dishes at each end. He continued the marble theme with honed marble floors that carry out to the front hall, and acid-washed, black Nero Marquina marble countertops. “It turns out marble is really functional, easy to maintain. Whatever spills you have to wipe, but then you seal it once a year. And it ages well,” he says.

Mark's kitchen is faithful to the trademark style he has cultivated over his 30-year career building high-end custom homes in Toronto. “My designs are always traditional, with injections of contemporary.” In his kitchen, the black countertops, paired with dark-stained wood and white cabinets, and integrated appliances produce a look that is clean, but not sterile.



Warmth being one of Mark's essential ingredients, he added a few touches to make the kitchen more inviting for both cooks and guests. “The island has some scratches that make it look a bit banged up, like we've lived here for awhile,” he says. The six-burner built-in Viking range “gives the kitchen an almost industrialized feeling, like you're in a restaurant. It makes you want to get in there and cook.”

Though the couple's collaboration in building the kitchen was “seamless”, there was one wrinkle: where to put the coffee maker. Mark had spotted a Miele built-in cappuccino/espresso maker at a home design show. “I had to have one,” he says. “We're coffee junkies in this household.”

The problem was, there was no place for it in the kitchen's original plans. Janice was willing to head back to the drawing board and rethink the entire space. “We needed 36 inches of counter space for it!” she explains. “We started getting magazines and cutting out pictures, but I couldn't find an idea that fit. It was really a puzzle.”

The couple sought a third opinion from a designer, who sketched out a whole piece of furniture, like a buffet, to house the system. But there was one caveat: the kitchen had to grow to accommodate the new piece.

Mark resisted but Janice insisted. “I told him, now's the time to do it, not later,” she says. Mark ended up extending the whole room by 25% and adding a breakfast bump with French doors.

“The builder has to listen to the client,” says Janice. Especially when she's the cook. ▶

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