

KITCHEN OF THE MONTH

Design by MARK EGERSTROM

Mammoth Lakes, California

The stainless steel glows in the cool northern light, but it's the fireplace that keeps you warm.

Interview by
CHRISTINE PITTEL

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The rough wood of Ralph Lauren Home's North Atlantic Coast dining table offers a rustic counterpoint to Boffi's sleek stainless-steel system in this northern California kitchen. A banquette built into the hearth is the coziest place for a cup of coffee on a cold winter morning. Acquatinta pendants from Plug Lighting are made of handblown Murano glass. Custom antiqued hickory floor from Dutko Flooring. >>

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CHRISTINE PITTEL: *What a combination for a house in the Sierra Nevada mountains—cool minimalism and cozy rustic.*

MARK EGERSTROM: That's all thanks to the owner, Sherry Anselmo. She would show me French magazines with images of old barns and farmhouses that had been redone with a contemporary twist. I'd be like, 'Yeah, but those are 200 years old. We're building this house from scratch.'

So you designed this as if it were old-meets-new.

The driving thought when we were looking at kitchen systems was that the functional aspects like lighting and faucets would be super high-tech. And the other aspects, like comfort, would be kind of taking a step backward.

Such as having a fireplace in the kitchen.

That's something you would find in an old French farmhouse, the big hearth fireplace that you can see from anywhere in the room. I wanted to create that feeling, but with the contemporary twist of concrete and a raised hearth, softened by seat cushions and pillows. It's a cozy place to snuggle up.

That island really is an island—all alone without the usual ring of perimeter cabinets.

It's almost as if this futuristic kitchen had been dropped into the middle of an old house. Of course, Boffi kitchens are very minimal.

So the island is your only countertop. How big is it? It's about four by nine feet.

And what's on top?

Stainless steel. It's all stainless steel, with a solid sheet on top that morphs into the sink and has a cutout for the cooktop. No seams anywhere. I love an integrated sink. It seems cleaner both visually and hygienically—fewer crevices for dirt to collect in.

What about scratches on all that stainless?

If you try not to scratch it, you'll drive yourself crazy. After the first few months it develops a nice patina. And it's pretty easy to take care of. This stuff called Bar Keepers Friend cleans it up like nothing else. I use it on my Corian, too. It'll take a blueberry stain right off.

My favorite thing is that floating shelf.

That's in lieu of uppers. They would have changed the whole look. We gave Boffi the specs and it was fabricated in Italy to fit their hood. It can be a display unto itself. You can let the objects shine, whether it's a pitcher or a bottle of olive oil.

It echoes the floating glass top on the table.

I wanted to make things disappear. You might not even notice the shelf at first. Same with the glass on the table. And the island may be huge, but the stainless steel has an ethereal quality.

The wood floor is a nice contrast to the steel.

I felt like we needed some wood to warm up the house. I've sat at that trestle table when we were snowed in, with 10-foot drifts against the door. I can't think of a better place to be stranded in a blizzard. >>



The Boffi WK6 system incorporates a stainless-steel sink and counter into an efficient island that's packed with storage, as well as Miele's Futura dishwasher. The sink, paired with KWC's QBix Series faucet (discontinued), faces Miele's 36-inch gas cooktop. Flat Cap hood and integrated shelf by Boffi. The appliance wall to the left includes a 36-inch Sub-Zero refrigerator, Boffi's pull-out pantry, and Miele's steam oven with a warming drawer.



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WHAT'S COOKING?

MAMMOTH STEAK SOUP

"This really warms you up after a day on the slopes."

Serves 6 to 8

- 2-3 pounds Niman Ranch sirloin or flank steak (cut into 1" chunks, seasoned heavily with Whole Foods' Toronto steak seasoning and rolled in flour until white)
- 1 stick of butter (plus more for browning the steak)
- 1 cup flour
- 1 large can diced tomatoes
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 4-5 carrots (sliced or diced)
- 4-5 celery stalks (sliced or diced)
- ½-1 bag frozen vegetables of your choice
- 2½ 32-ounce cartons of beef broth (not low-sodium)
- ½ box of brown-rice pasta
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Water as needed

Brown the steak in butter or high-heat oil (or a combo thereof). Over medium-low heat, add a stick of butter until melted. Add the flour a little at a time until a thick paste forms (the consistency will be dry). Over medium heat, add the beef broth a little at a time, stirring constantly until the lumps are gone and the mixture is well blended. Add the can of tomatoes and the onion, carrots, celery, and frozen vegetables. Simmer with the lid ajar for one hour, or until the vegetables are tender. Add the pepper as needed; add water to achieve the desired consistency. Add the pasta during the last 10 minutes of cooking. Serve with crusty French bread and a garlic-olive oil dipper and Parmesan cheese as a topper. (For the best results, and as an alternative to cooking on the stove top, transfer the entire mixture to a slow cooker and cook on low for several hours. The steak will be ultra-tender.) ●



1. Boffi's wall system combines various appliances for a unified front. On the island, an industrial-size spray attachment serves as "a punctuation point," designer Mark Egerstrom says. 2. A pull-out pantry makes all your supplies instantly visible. 3. The high-rise spigot on the faucet makes it easy to wash tall pots, and the sprayer comes in handy for scouring. 4. "Out here in the mountains, it can be a trek to get a good cup of coffee, so it's a real pleasure to be able to make one at home," Egerstrom says. Miele's CVA 4062 coffee system also grinds the beans to your personal setting and froths the milk.

GET THE LOOK...

Boffi WK6 system: boffi.com.

Refrigerator: subzero-wolf.com.

Cooktop, oven, dishwasher, coffee system: miele.com.

QBix Series faucet (discontinued): kwc.com.

Dining table: ralphlaurenhome.com.

Pendants: pluglighting.com.

Flooring by Dutko
Flooring: 310-546-3153.

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