



SHAPING UP

Craftsmanship flows through this kitchen's extraordinary curves, which echo the unique contours of the house itself

Contrasting dark and light tones and fine veneer work are defining features of this remarkable scheme.



The kitchen connects to several other areas, including a living room and a dining space with floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook the newly created lake.



DESIGNER

Martin Holliday,
founder and design director,
Chiselwood, 01522 704446,
chiselwood.co.uk.

Can you tell us about the project?

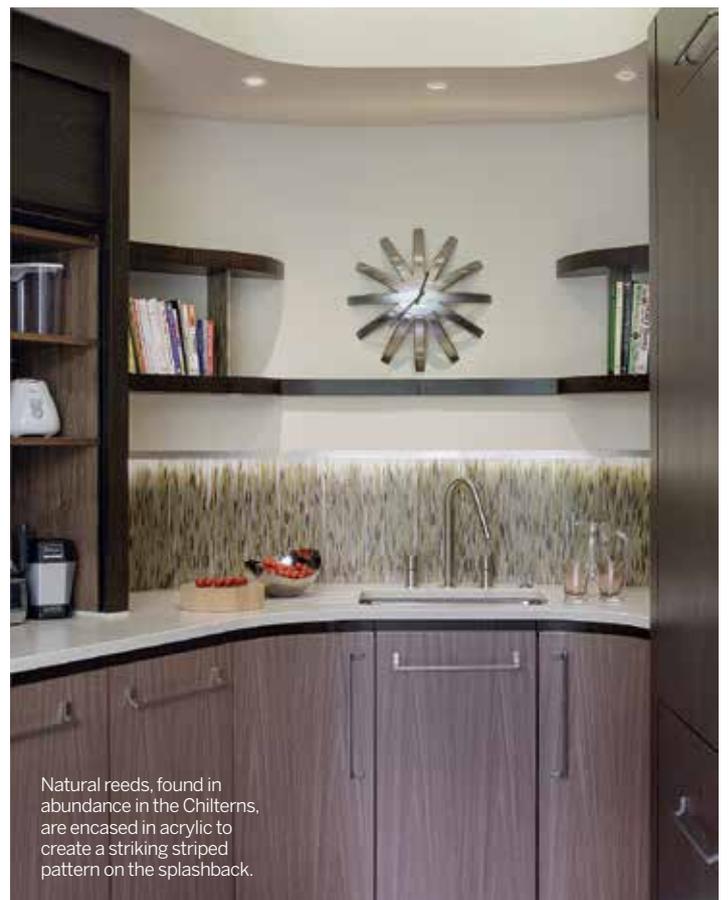
Aptly named Incurvo, this house in the Chilterns has recently won several awards for its unusual, rhythmic shape and impressive eco credentials. It has been a real labour of love for its owners, who had always lived in the area and wanted to create a genuinely welcoming home – not just a showpiece. They approached us three years before the foundations were laid, after seeing one of our projects in a magazine and appreciating its individuality. Their kitchen was designed and signed off before the house was built.

What inspired the kitchen's style?

We originally started down quite a traditional route for the cabinetry. The owners' previous kitchen had been classically designed, but for here the architects, Adrian James Architects, pushed for a more contemporary look that would go with the property's curves. The resolution is actually perfectly pitched between warmth and modernism.

How did you arrange the layout?

There's barely a straight wall in the house, so a curved layout was fundamental. The shape of the island evolved on plan and reflects the form of the building, in microcosm, but it also



Natural reeds, found in abundance in the Chilterns, are encased in acrylic to create a striking striped pattern on the splashback.



TOP A substantial bow-fronted larder cabinet offers easy-access storage for dried and tinned foods. **ABOVE** The adjoining utility room provides top-to-bottom storage, plus an extra sink and refrigeration. **BELOW** The award-winning Incurvo house.



works to create an intuitive and ergonomic flow through the kitchen area. Adjoining the kitchen is a fully fitted utility room, which allowed us to keep this space open and inviting.

Which materials did you choose for the cabinetry?

The doors feature specialist multi-laminate veneers by an Italian company called Tabu. They are tinted to achieve a precise, uniform colour and are incredibly stable, which is particularly important on the rounded doors. The stainless-steel plinths co-ordinate with the steel appliances but they are also a practical feature – fine veneers should never go right down to the floor as a wet mop might damage them.

And for the rest of the surfaces?

Selecting the worktops was a tough process. We started with the round breakfast bar surface, for which we sourced an interesting riven granite that picks up on the browns of the veneer work and provides texture. The feature splashbacks are made from natural reeds encased in acrylic with LEDs behind that glow through at night. The rest of the worktops and splashbacks are plain composite stone in a muted shade.

Can you tell us about the lighting?

The owners particularly dislike downlights and, apart from a few carefully positioned statement pendants, they didn't want to see any light sources at all. The solution involved creating drop bulkheads, precisely shaped to the curves of the ceiling, with a concealed lighting channel around the perimeter. Thankfully our computer-controlled machines can achieve millimetre-perfect templates, while VBK Lighting Design worked out the complex electrics and control panels. The carefully managed light levels play a pivotal role in this house's success. It is a dynamic, even ground-breaking, property but inside it just feels like a nice, comfortable home.

WHERE TO BUY

- CABINETRY** Bespoke cabinetry in Lati and Ecozero 022 timber veneers. Kitchens, from £35,000, Chiselwood, chiselwood.co.uk.
- SURFACES** Blanco Capri composite stone worktop with Suede finish, £400sq m, Silestone, silestone.co.uk.
- Pegasus granite breakfast bar top with riven finish**, £3,000, Chiselwood, chiselwood.co.uk.
- Similar flooring**, Light Jerusalem tumbled limestone tiles, from £42sq m, Floors of Stone, floorsofstone.com.
- APPLIANCES** H6660BP oven, £2,749; H6600BM combi-microwave, £2,649; DGC6600 XL combi steam oven, £3,549; KM6629 induction hob, £2,299; G6660 SCVi dishwasher, £1,199; KF1901LH Vi fridge-freezer, £8,499; all Miele, miele.co.uk. Libra E Ion extractor, £1,870, Falmec, falmec.co.uk.
- SINKS AND TAPS** Icerock single bowl undermount 3332W sinks in stainless steel, £365 each, Kohler, kohler.co.uk. T45 E three-hole mixer taps in brushed steel, £984, MGS, mgstaps.com.
- ACCESSORIES** Varier Eight bar stools, from £1,299 each, Varier, varierfurniture.com. Allegretto Gold 816640-2GU oval pendant, £8,360; 816850-2GU wall sconces, £1,740 each; 787540-2GU round pendant, £3,980; all Fine Art Lamps at Shoore Lighting, shoore.co.uk.
- Lighting**, VBK Lighting Design, vbklighting.co.uk.
- Architecture**, Adrian James Architects, adrianjames.com.

WORDS LINDA CLAYTON PHOTOGRAPHS MARK BOLTON