



# DESIGN PORTFOLIO 2008

In its 15th year, the entrants in this year's Design Portfolio Awards competition have once again impressed and amazed the judges with their complex designs and expert craftsmanship. All the projects were beautiful, and it was a tough call for the judges to choose winners. But in the end they awarded coveted top honors to five companies and Honorable Mention awards to 18 companies. The top five winning entries are:

**Residential Furniture, Freestanding Category and Overall Winner:** Kinloch Woodworking Ltd., Unionville, PA, for "Charleston sideboards."

**Kitchen/Both Cabinets:** Bright Wood Works Inc., St. Petersburg, FL, for "Kitchen for Condo Conversion."

**Residential Furniture, Built-in:** Bright Wood Works Inc., St. Petersburg, FL, for "Man Space."

**Architectural Millwork:** Bailey and Son Woodworking, Thonotosassa, FL, for "Paneled Study."

**Specialty Products:** Wood & Wood Inc., Waitsfield, VT, for "American Girl Display Ribbon."

CWB congratulates all the winners for their originality in design and excellence in craftsmanship. Full coverage is on the following pages of this special section.

## Thanks to the Judges

The Design Portfolio Awards competition saw a number of outstanding entries, making the job of picking the final winners a tough — and time-consuming — challenge. CWB expresses its deep gratitude to this year's judges, who spent the better part of a day reading entry forms, viewing accompanying images and discussing the merits of the projects submitted. We congratulate and thank them for their hard work and thoughtful consideration of all the entries. This year's panel included:

2008 judges were: left to right, Romy Schaefer, Gerald Finch, Scott DeGenova, Tom Gleason and Robert Kleeman.

• Gerald Finch, who recently retired as an instructor at Fox Valley Technical College in Oshkosh, WI, which offers a one-year vocational diploma designed to prepare graduates to be shop-level woodworkers. He developed the department's curriculum and served as its head for 22 years. He was selected as the Woodworking Machinery Industry Assn.'s 1996 "Educator of the Year" and has served on the WoodJNKUSA Board. He currently is doing woodworking education and training services as a consultant.

• Tom Gleason is the founder of Gleason Woodwork in Chicago. The firm specializes in ultra high-end custom cabinets and architectural millwork. He is a past president of the Chicago chapter of the Architectural Woodwork Institute and active in A&M at the national level. Gleason also is an active supporter of the Fabrizio Children's Foundation, assisting with a carpentry program in Cusnago, Nicaragua, that produces furniture for the local market and small household decorative items for sale in the United States. He was named Fabrizio's Volunteer of the Year for 2007.

• Romy Schaefer is executive editor of *Furniture Style* magazine and its supplements, *Home Fashion Forecast* and *The Retail Experience*. During the past 20 years, she has worked for a number of business-to-business publications, covering industries as varied as horticulture and customer service. Since joining *Furniture Style* in 2001, Romy has covered a number of home furnishings categories for the magazine, include bedroom, motion, hospitality, RTA, home entertainment and home office. The latter categories take her annually to such trade shows as the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas and NeoCon® World's Trade Fair in Chicago, as well as numerous furniture industry markets.

• Robert Kleeman has been a full-time woodworker since 1975, beginning as an apprentice in a violin shop, before moving on to furniture conservation and historic reproductions in 1986. He is currently employed at Payne Steer Imports in Skokie, IL.

• Scott DeGenova is the General Manager at Warrpach Woodwork Inc. in South Elgin, IL. Warrpach produces custom cabinetry, countertops and other architectural millwork for business and residential buildings. He is a past president of the Chicago chapter of the Architectural Woodwork Institute.

Special thanks also go to Jerry Finch and Mark Lorge at Fox Valley Tech for providing the beautiful butternut plaques for the top winners this year.

# It's a Man's Room

'A visual feast of texture' is how judge Rob Kleeman describes this winning entry from Bright Wood Works.



*"Outstanding veneer work and joinery. Excellent adaptation of modern techniques and processing to achieve a classical design form."*

**- Jerry Finch, judge**

*"Just a stunning example of as complete a design of a room in wood that I have seen."*

**- Tom Gleason, judge**

## By Brad Walseth

Michael Bright says that putting this "man space" study together was not unlike putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Working from an initial design by Urban Innovations, a frequent collaborator, Bright Wood Works created a room that combines functional use and storage with unmistakable warmth and beauty.

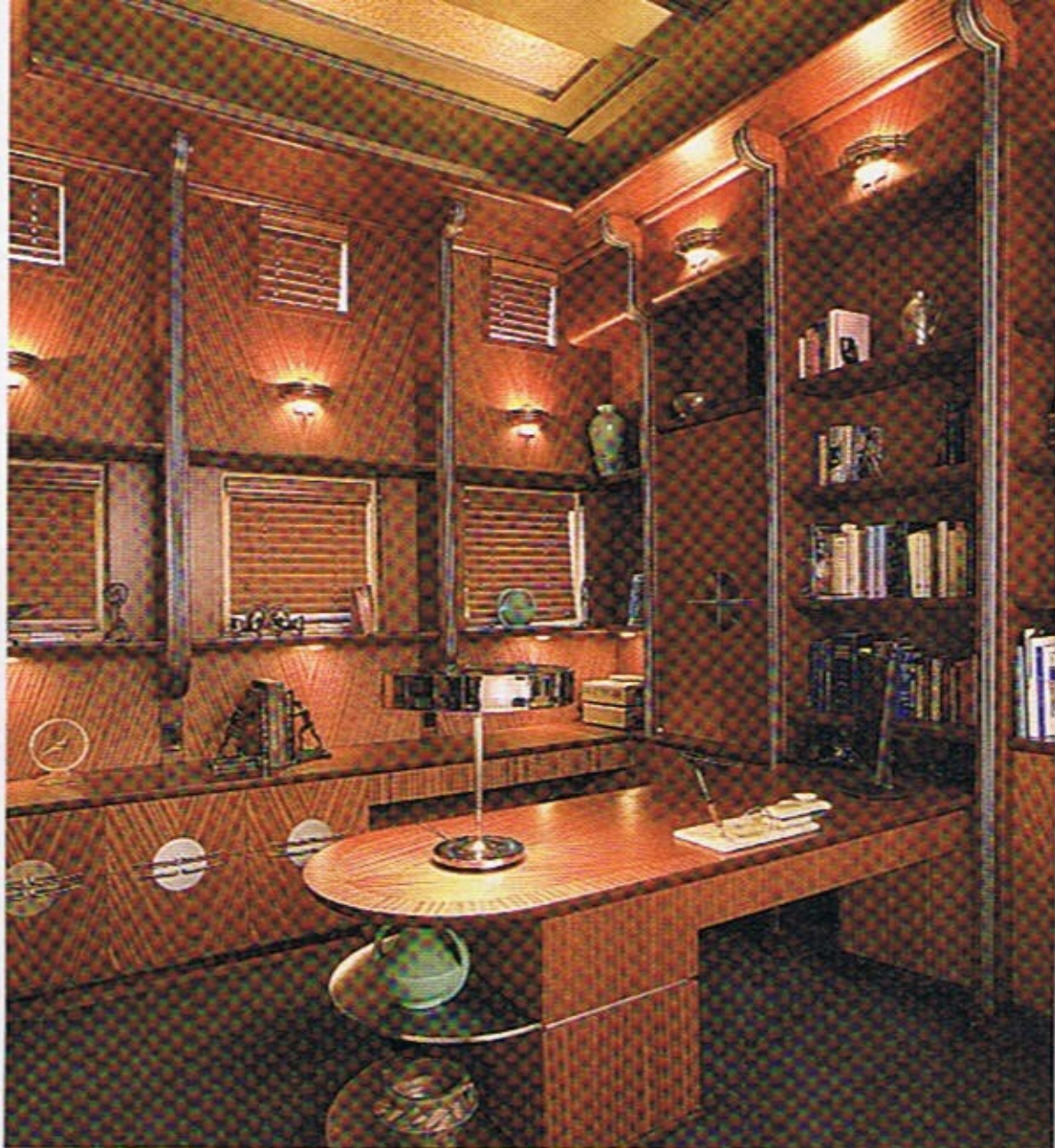
Bright Wood Work's specialty niche is custom high-end residential kitchens, with the company winning the top spot in CWB's Design Portfolio Kitchen and Bath category in 2006, as well as again winning the top award in this year's competition. Featured in the February 2007 issue of CWB, Bright was touted as having a "bright future" for its work in the luxury kitchen niche market. Michael Bright says that in many cases, the kitchen work can lead to more.

"When we do a kitchen, oftentimes it can evolve to doing the entire house — vanities, study, what-

ever other entertainment built-ins that there are," he explains.

In the case of this study, built in a luxury waterfront home in St. Petersburg, FL, space was an immediate issue. "We put the proverbial 10 pounds of potatoes in a five-pound bag," Bright says with a laugh.

More challenges were overcome on this job during the 3-1/2 to 4 months it took to complete. Not all of the tradesmen involved were part of the initial planning meetings, so many important questions lingered unanswered. On the shop side, custom jigs had to be cut. Almost all pieces had to be pre-assembled in the shop and then brought on location for field assembly. The amount of detail involved was staggering, according to Bright, who notes that the detail in each piece interacts with the other pieces. Like a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, the pieces had to be methodically put together.



*"Very well executed veneer work. Great care was taken in the planning and installation stage of this project. Note how each veneered panel is precisely centered in its space."*

**- Scott DeGenova, judge**

The project uses Columbia Forest Products plywood, custom laid-up veneered panels from Veneer Source, Blum hinges and drawer slides, and Chemcraft finishing products.

Quartersawn sapele was milled and laminated into the beams. Then the coffered ceiling, with its metallic finish, was installed. Subsequently, the ceiling was protected by plastic as the base cabinets and panel systems were put in place. The parts were blind-fastened and captured with the next sequentially-placed piece.

Bright credits the shop's Martin T-73 sliding table saw for much of the project's success.

"There were lots of layout, joinery and precision cuts that needed to be done repetitively," Bright says, "and that saw came through with flying colors."

The layout of some of the veneers was done using a Vac-U-Clamp 5-foot by 10-foot vacuum table.

In an unusual final step, after everything was installed, Bright turned the room itself into a field spray booth using plastic and fans. Applying the fin-

ish in this way required more labor than expected, but Bright believes the results speak for themselves.

With the limited space available, one goal was to maximize what space there was. Bright succeeded in this with, as Design Portfolio judge Romy Schafer notes, "ample hidden storage, open display space and functional workspace."

Another goal successfully met was to make the Deco-inspired room a warm and inviting interior. "You can feel it when you walk into the room," says Bright. "It has an energy."

Bright's future in building high-end kitchens and custom cabinetry seems "bright" indeed. "We have been lucky to work with people who have good taste," he notes. "We have been moving from one project to the next and they are all equally challenging. It's just another day at the office for us."

So how does it feel to be a double winner in this year's CWB Design Portfolio Awards?

"I am on cloud nine," says Bright.



**Bright Wood Works Inc.**

[www.brightwoodworks.com](http://www.brightwoodworks.com)

**Project:** "Man's Space" study with period Deco theme.

**Year Established:** 1981

**# of Employees:** 7

**Shop Size:** 11,000 square feet

**Specialty:** High-end residential kitchens, libraries, custom furniture and cabinetry.

**Project Notes:** The room itself was converted into a field spray booth after everything was installed.



# Retro Style Meets Modern Innovation

'Green' products and new hardware were used in the fabrication of this winning kitchen.

*"The integration of the stainless steel into this piece was done almost seamlessly. Clean, smooth design."*

— Scott DeGenova, judge

*"Extremely well-executed combination of materials achieves the 'retro' design."*

— Jerry Finch, judge



## By Michaele Bradford

Retro has never looked more exquisite than in this winning entry for the Kitchen/Bath category. This kitchen was based on a 1920s design of a bar in Africa.

According to Michael Bright, owner of Bright Wood Works Inc., located in St. Petersburg, FL, "The design was conceptualized by a magazine clipping the client had of a very classy African bar. It was very Art-Deco inspired. They came in with [the clipping] and there was an architectural firm, Clemmons Architecture, which overall spearheaded the conceptual design. Then we tweaked it with what could actually be built."

The building itself was also retro in style. Bright says that it was built in the 1920s and that it is one of the only buildings in downtown St. Petersburg

that has any real architectural significance. "It's very 'Ghostbuster-like' on the outside with lots of embellishments and gargoyles and things. So it's kind of neat that the interior of this build-out was so clean and the opposite, juxtaposed with the outside," he notes.

Materials used in fabrication include: Richlite countertops, Metalfab custom stainless steel countertops, Häfele interior compartmentalized storage, Blum drawer slides and hinges, Kercore/Timberflex bendy-ply curved plywood and Trupan MDF.

Bright says that he chose Richlite, a recycled paper product, because of the growing green awareness in the industry. "I have been reading a lot of stuff about green, so I thought anything



green that I could bring to the table would be worth pursuing. The homeowners were very receptive to creative input," says Bright. Also, in keeping with the green theme, the doors are MDF with a clear finish on them.

In fabricating the project, Bright says that he started with skeleton parts of the island by outsourcing the plywood ribs to a local shop with a CNC router. Then the outside was skinned with bending plywood and was finished with 14 coats of paint for the final gloss finish.

The final finish was originally supposed to be Oxblood red, but it was changed at the last minute to a custom color.

"I was disappointed when they came up with the other color," Bright says. "But, in the end, it came out great. The color is Java. It was short-listed to three different colors and they were all coffee-related. Java is the one that won. It was a custom mix."

One of the unique challenges of this project was the fact that the island is one piece, and Bright had to come up with a creative way to get it into the building.

"We had to do it by using a crane that we parked in the alleyway. We got it up on the roof of a common area in the building and then snaked it through the back door of the loft. That was kind of a head scratcher, because there was a lot of stress on that day," Bright laughs.

Other unique aspects of the project include the stainless steel embellishments, which required the entire skeleton of the island to be shipped to a metal shop.

"The [stainless steel] countertop, which I helped oversee, had its own set of challenges," says Bright. "It was very unique in that it is 3 inches high and stair-stepped. There was a bunch of diecutting, template and laser cutting and all kinds of unique things that had to happen."

Also, there is a ventilation system above the cooktop that required some creative work. The wall is approximately 2 feet thick, and Bright says he had to "create ductwork that would go through the wall and then put in the inline blower and also figure out how to make a cover that didn't draw attention to it."

The cabinets above the stove were "let into the wall. We didn't want to waste that space, so we got into the cavity of the wall and created the doors with new Blum Aventos hardware," Bright says. "This particular product was new to the market, so once it came out, they air freighted it to us and we were trying to research and develop and figure out how to get it to work."

Bright says that he felt gratified by doing this project despite the challenges, and once installed, the project gave the "appearance of being an original fixture in a landmark building."

## DESIGN PORTFOLIO

**Bright Wood Works Inc.**  
St. Petersburg, FL  
[www.brightwoodworks.com](http://www.brightwoodworks.com)

**Project:** Kitchen condo conversion  
**Year Established:** 1981  
**# of Employees:** 7  
**Shop Size:** 11,000 square feet  
**Specialty:** High-end residential.  
**Project Notes:** The island is one piece and had to be craned into the common courtyard area of the building.

# Honorable Mention Award Winners



## Irwin Solid Surface Services Inc.

British Columbia, Canada  
[www.irwinsolidsurface.ca](http://www.irwinsolidsurface.ca)

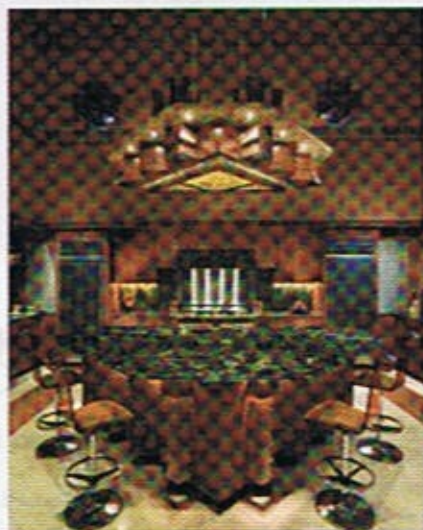
Category: Solid Surface Material

Project: Theme Room/Home Office

Materials: This piece is constructed with Avonite in Amber and Saffron and with maple, Meranti, Italian Flexiform and irragony plywood.

Construction: The client wanted a pumpkin-inspired theme for the room. After creating a mock-up, the countertop was constructed of Avonite with two sheets of Saffron and two sheets of Amber. More than 250 individual pieces were used to create the edge and border of the countertop. Flexiform plywood was used to create the desk and lighting valance.

Project Notes: There are no two curves on this two-unit desk that are the same. The flow of the desk front reflects the pumpkin shape throughout.



## European Design

Scottsdale, AZ  
[www.europeandesign.net](http://www.europeandesign.net)

Category: Kitchen/Bath Cabinets

Project: Kitchen with hanging island fixture

Materials: This kitchen was fabricated with bubinga, Chemetal copper laminate, Mappa but veneer, custom copper pieces, glass countertops by Rafael Gevorkian and Hafele aluminum roll-up doors.

Construction: Bubinga veneer was pressed in a Joos hot press and other pieces were routed with a Biesse CNC machine. According to the company, one of the most difficult challenges was working with the builder to ensure that the ceiling would support the weight of the hanging light fixture.

Project Notes: The most unusual aspect of this project is the large hanging light fixture above the island.



## Bright Wood Works Inc.

St. Petersburg, FL  
[www.brightwoodworks.com](http://www.brightwoodworks.com)

Category: Kitchen/Bath Cabinets

Project: La Cuisine - Galerie

Materials: This kitchen was fabricated with Teragren bamboo panel products, 3-Form plastic, M.L. Campbell finishes, a Salice touch hinge system and Blum hinges and drawer slides.

Construction: Not knowing if traditional joinery techniques would be sufficient for a five-piece door fabricated with the new bamboo and Salice touch products, Bright Wood Works conducted in-house tests. Proper hold-down clamps and the right mixture of epoxy kept the glue joints "keen and clean."

Project Notes: The project contains green materials like bamboo. The homeowner selected bamboo because the warm color tones matched some of the earthy furniture in the rest of the house.