

KITCHEN PROFILE | 7

LET THERE BE DARK

Lighting and a show-stopping island bring out kitchen's best

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"We love dark spaces," says owner-designer Tim Johnson. The kitchen's minimalist design palette draws out splashes of colour from mortar and pestle, pomegranates and cookware.



"It's a beautiful stone, and unique – I love it!"

A SIXTEEN-FOOT ISLAND TOPPED IN NOIR Saint-Laurent marble from Ciot takes centre stage in the dramatic kitchen of Tim Johnson's new King West condo. The interior designer and his partner Doug Rienzo called in Chris Lloyd of York Fabrica to realize the show-stopping piece. Working with dark marble requires a deft touch: cutting and even polishing are a challenge, because it's largely composed of calcium and is easily damaged. "But it's a beautiful stone, and unique – I love it!" Lloyd said.

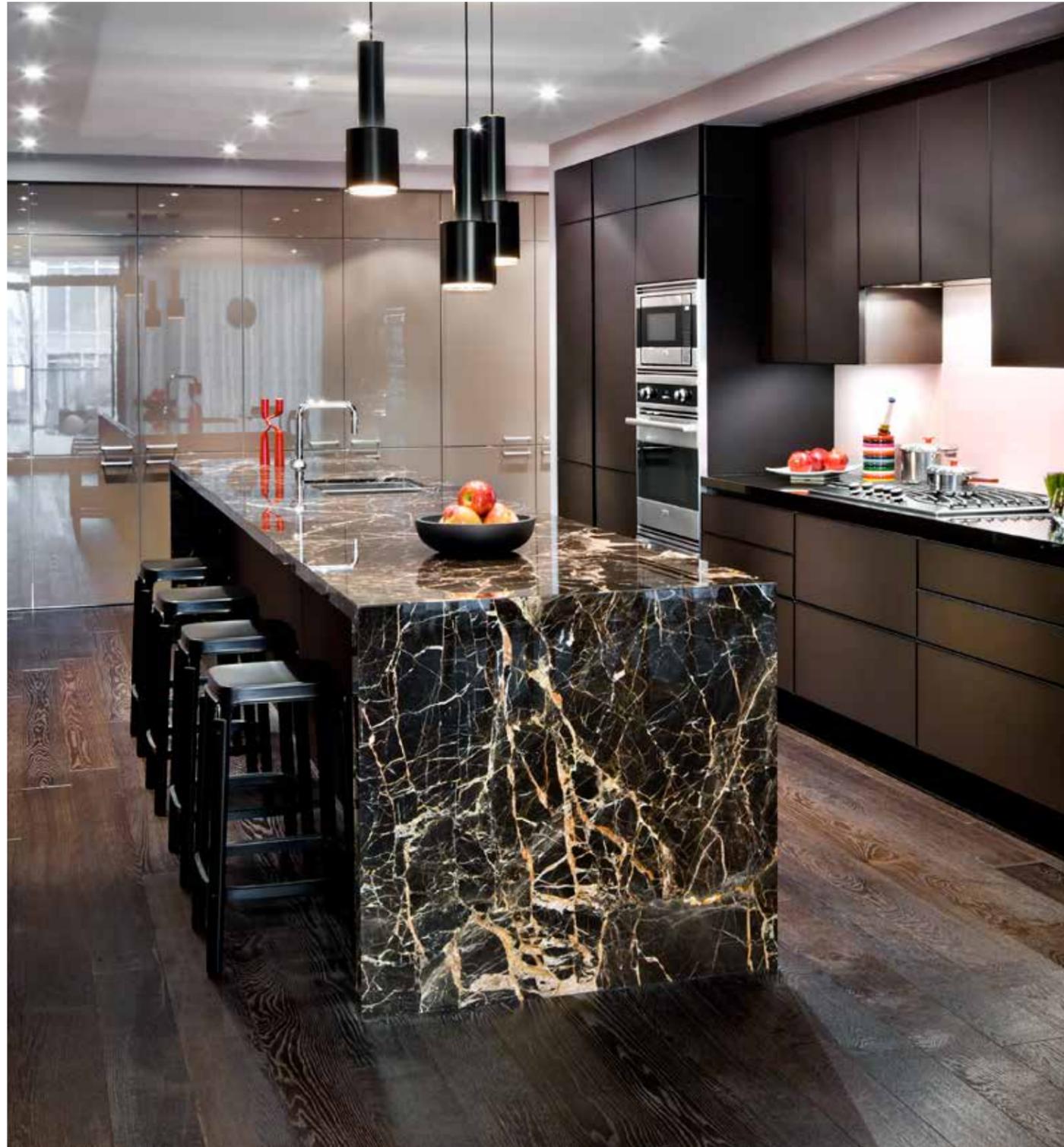
The mitred island was created from six-foot slabs of marble, although complicated cuts and assembly give the appearance of seamlessness. It has a classic horizontal workspace with double sink, beneath which cleaning products are stashed in pullouts. The piece also houses a wine fridge and a seating area with marbled underside.

From Studio B, Johnson selected simple, black backless metal Herman Miller stools. "I wanted those to recede; it had to be all about the countertop," he said. Although there's a formal dining set just off the kitchen and a smaller table with mid-century modern chairs to the side by the patio, the couple prefer dining casually at the island most days.

The main kitchen lighting – three staggered powder-coated black metal pendants by Tom Dixon, from Klaus – is understated so as not to detract from the spherical statement pieces in the adjacent dining and living spaces. During installation, Johnson's electrician held each of the pendants at different heights, while the designer moved around the condo, checking how they looked from every perspective. ☞



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The dark marble of the kitchen island is striking, so much so that Johnson repeated it in the bathroom and entryway floor tiles, creating flow in the home.



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Ceiling pot lights create a warm, complementary glow and enough brightness for longer stretches of food prep. Illumination is in fact one of the most important elements in Johnson’s design. “We love dark spaces, and we’re mostly home in the evening, so it’s nice to see our place come alive at night with lighting,” he said.

Glossy lacquered taupe Dekla cabinetry by Scavolini creates ample storage space for everything from a freezer to groceries to a stereo system. Along the back wall, there’s smudge-resistant dark chocolate-brown glass cabinetry, custom built by the same company. A simple push system means the doors just need a nudge to be opened, eliminating handles or pulls. The two fridges—one for drinks, one for fresh foods—are both Liebherr, and the gas stove, electric oven, microwave and warming drawer are all Viking.

“They’re pretty standard appliances that came with the condo, but we didn’t feel the need to upgrade; they work well and look good,” said Johnson. The couple did splurge, however, on a top-of-the-line Miele dishwasher for efficient cleanup.

While the kitchen is a clutter-free space, eclectic art choices keep it warm and homey. A quartet of off-white pieces by Claude Vermette, from Decorum, hangs serenely on one wall in contrast to the scarlet piece diagonally opposite: a silk-screen work by Russian artist Kosso Eloul from Artwork, an Avenue and Davenport dealer specializing in 20th century art.

A framed black-and-white photograph sits on the back countertop. “It’s my dad and his cousins as children; my dad grew up on a farm,” said Johnson. “I like to look at this one every day.”

An antique hardwood cabinet housing a Nymphenburg porcelain bird collection and platters creates a gentle transition between contemporary kitchen and mid-century modern dining space.

