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Architectural Woodwork Institute

# design solutions

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**n**ew Style Cabinets, Inc. (NSC), an AWI manufacturing member firm headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, wanted new showroom space at Chicago's Merchandise Mart to showcase its cabinetry and woodworking capabilities. The space was to be a complete room design. To accomplish this, NSC engaged its designers, Hubert Dziedzic and Piotr Przybylko, to create an amazing space.





# Dark Pearl.

Showroom Kitchen Blends Art and Function.





## at a glance

AWI MANUFACTURING  
MEMBER:

**New Style Cabinets, Inc.**

LOCATION:

**Chicago, Illinois**

ESTABLISHED:

**2009**



“The designers are a part of the New Style team which allowed for a productive and efficient working relationship,” explains NSC President Mike Tracz. “Because we are all located in the same office space, the communication was direct and instantaneous.”

The goal of the project, he continues, was to create a line of kitchens that would exemplify NSC’s craft and increase its brand recognition. “We’ve set out to create a kitchen design that emphasizes the warmth of wood and showcases the possibilities that can be achieved with today’s technology combined with the craft of woodworking.”

Dziedzic adds, “Our primary objectives were space planning, functionality, aesthetics and styling. Defining zones for prepping, cooking and entertaining as well as maximizing efficiency was a big part of space planning.”

“With our creative design capabilities, advanced technology and craftsmen’s dedication to perfection, we are able to craft any kind of wood product.”

– Mike Tracz, President





The art deco concept for the display kitchen, known as Dark Pearl, was shaped long before he and Przybylko were asked to design it, continues Dziedzic. “The idea was to design aesthetically pleasing space without compromising functionality. People need more space and storage and we thought about that while designing. We knew from the beginning that NSC’s experience in planning and building kitchen cabinets would allow us to provide solutions desired by every homeowner. New Styles’ cabinets are not only visually attractive but most of all functional. I like to think we achieved a balance between these two objectives.”

### Dark Pearl

All of the elements of the Dark Pearl kitchen including the cabinets, floor and soffit were fabricated specifically for this project, explains NSC’s Alina Guzowska. “All of the woodwork was crafted and installed by New Style, including the island, main kitchen and appliance consoles.”

The main kitchen cabinets are painted, creating a feeling of luxury and elegance. All cabinet interiors including drawers and drawer inserts are made of American Walnut. Appliance consoles are a combination of painted wood, Walnut and metal. Both lower cabinets on the main wall and the island are made of figured Australian Walnut, book matched for this specific project.

“This design connects a classic style that can be seen through the in-set style of our cabinetry and traditional crown moulding with Old Hollywood glam,” says Dziedzic. “The island’s back panel, the mosaic and geometric lamp fixtures are strong artistic statements that bring all of the elements together, for a wholly unique look.”

The Dark Pearl is oozing with intricate details. Subtle, angular motifs along the island’s back panel give a jewelry-like character to the design. It is a uniquely shaped combination of mathematical and robotic precision created with a craftsman’s dedication to perfection. The handmade Moroccan clover ornaments in the back of the cabinetry represent hope, optimism and beauty, and add another layer of sophistication to the design, points out Guzowska.

The central part of the kitchen combines wood with stone and metal, “an example of the creative and innovative spirit of our company,” she adds. “Lastly, our uniquely shaped finger-pull reveals with polished nickel background define the sensuous, sleek and clean form of the design.”

Australian and American Walnut were selected for this project because of the quality of these species, notes Tracz. “Their medium texture with a moderate luster and shallow open pores makes it attractive to work with these species. Grains are close and even, usually interlocked and commonly wavy which make them a great material for cabinetry.”



WALNUT

### Challenges

Before the design stage began, goals and objectives for the showroom were set. “From inception of the project to the very end, our team was working within a rigorous timeframe. Identifying tasks and quantifying the resources needed ahead of production, allowed us to better manage schedule and meet budget objectives. The design team would meet daily with the production team to make sure that the designers’ vision was translated into the final product and delivered and installed on time,” says Tracz.

“Figuring out a way to bend polished nickel to match the designed shape of wood pieces was a process which we needed to master in order to complete this part of the design,” recalls Dziedzic. “In the end we were able to make these two materials work together but it required technical knack and more time than initially expected.”

One of the major goals of the project, which was beautifully met, was to inspire guests and visitors at Merchandise Mart by drawing their attention to the artistic beauty of the kitchen and its details. “The subtle geometric patterns along the island’s back panel, inspired by Hollywood’s iconic El Capitan Theater, sparks everybody’s interest into learning more about Dark Pearl,” he says. “The combination of mathematical precision and wood craft make this panel noteworthy. The curved forms of metal and wood are unique, different and unlike any other piece. Creating functional pieces made of wood and porcelain in the center part was equally challenging and rewarding.”

Dziedzic concludes, “it is always challenging to translate a vision into reality and this project was no different. The level of technical difficulty was high. It was one adventure to draw this project and another to build it. Timing, negotiations, production calculations were some of the obstacles that needed to be successfully addressed. But because this kitchen was such a dream to design, it was an opportunity for us to showcase our talents, increase New Style’s brand recognition and set a new trend in kitchen design.”



**PROJECT:**  
**Showroom Kitchen**  
Chicago, IL

**PROJECT OWNER:**  
**Mike Tracz, New Style Cabinets, Inc.**  
Chicago, IL

**WOODWORKER:**  
**New Style Cabinets, Inc.**  
Chicago, IL

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