

CONNECTING LOCALLY The new Snaidero showroom displays a relatable modern-but-traditional style



MOST OF THE CLIENTS SERVED by Alexandria, Va.-based Studio Snaidero D.C. Metro live in traditional environments like red-brick colonials, Federal-style row homes and formal Neoclassical architecture. The goal of the showroom design was to relate to the variety of tastes and the traditional preferences of all these locals.

"It's one of the things I love about this area," said designer Shawna Dillon, principal of Studio Snaidero D.C. Metro. "The designs show what people respond to in their fantasies of luxurious European interiors, and it also displays that dichotomy between old and new."

INVITING THE NEIGHBORS IN

To emphasize the city's appreciation for historic preservation and its more transitional palette, Dillon used warm woods and metals to keep the displays inviting and comfortable. White, wide-plank oak flooring sets off the four kitchens in the showroom and relates to what the majority of clients want at home.

"The materials provide a warmth you would expect from a more traditional interior, while allowing the contemporary design to offer an elegant and refined aesthetic," said Dillon.

Her clients value the engineering and simplicity behind European cabinetry, and using warmer design elements alongside the modern cabinets maintains the comfort of traditional design while guiding clients toward more up-to-date styles. Other warm elements include a cantilevered, reclaimed wood top; glass wall cabinets with bronze mesh; and a La Comue range.

"I am always surprised to hear that people feel they cannot embrace a more contemporary aesthetic because their house has wood floors or ornate moldings, when I feel that contrast is the true beauty of contemporary living," said Dillon. "We incorporated traditional design elements, such as a rolling ladder and chandeliers, but with a more modern twist to encourage people to see these elements in a new way."

ABOVE Instead of just placing displays where they would make sense internally, the design team also had to be conscious of how they would read externally. The sidewalk surrounding the showroom became a secondary showroom space because of the windows.

Four pioneering finishing techniques are prominently on display, including a superior quality high-gloss lacquer, luxe mica lacquer, textured melamine, and striking wood veneer.



LEFT & BELOW All four displays were designed as a full working kitchen, complete with live appliances, so the showroom can easily host cooking events and demonstrations.

The goal of the showroom was to appeal to a broader range of clients, from people with more transitional tastes to the ultra-modern clientele.



WINDOW CHALLENGES

The number and size of the displays themselves was manipulated by the amount of windows in the showrooms. Two out of four walls are made up of windows, which limited display space and created a dark corner where the light didn't reach. To solve this issue, Dillon incorporated windows into the actual four kitchen displays that let more light in and help frame the kitchens.

"I treated the window as an aperture and designed each kitchen to 'set up' as if you were looking through a camera lens," said Dillon, adding that the windows naturally helped enhance the residential feeling they wanted to achieve.

The dark corner became the ideal place to showcase more private areas, like storage, the restroom and the office, and the rest of the space remained flexible for hosting events, cooking demonstrations and private dinners.

Support columns also created a challenge for the designer, who designed a wall to bridge two columns and made this feature the heart of the showroom — making each display seem to radiate from the core. Our judges particularly liked this easy circular flow and the consistency of tone and design language in each vignette.

"It became quite a challenge to show as much product as possible and make the most out of the displays," said Dillon. "This dilemma pushed us in the direction of reducing the number of displays but increasing their size and creating full individual kitchens. In the end I think that is what makes the showroom so successful."



SOURCES

DESIGNER: Shawna Dillon, Studio Snaidero D.C. Metro
 PHOTOGRAPHER: Gordon Beal Photography
 MANUFACTURERS: Benjamin Moore, Carlisle Wide Plank Flooring, Circa Lighting, Dornbracht, Franke, Grothouse, HERA, Hope's Steel Windows & Doors, Julien, Knoll, KWC, La Comue, Lightolier, Limestone by R. Brattli Associates, L&S by Halele, Miele, Niche Modern, Reflex, SNAIDERO, Sub-Zero, Waterstone



LEFT/RIGHT The showroom is outfitted with features like invisible speakers; a motorized hood that can rise up when not in use; ceiling integrated ventilation and LED strips.

