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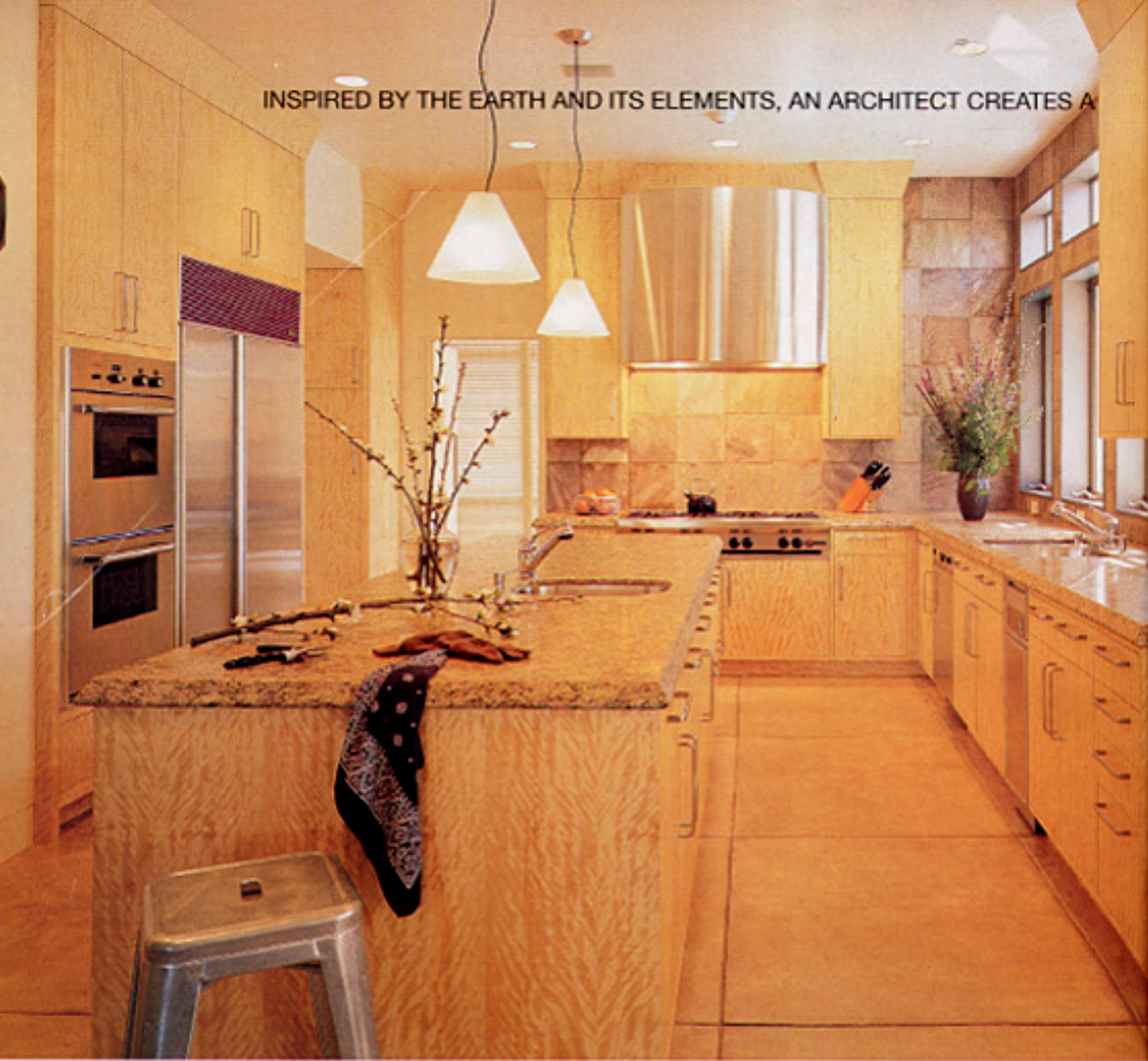
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Innovation Series
Volume X, Number 1
U.S. \$4.50
CANADA \$4.99
Display until
April 11, 2000
AOL Keyword:
Better Living



INSPIRED BY THE EARTH AND ITS ELEMENTS, AN ARCHITECT CREATES A



When it came time to reconfigure the cramped kitchen of a 1960s ranch, architect Dan Phipps, of Dan Phipps & Associates in San Francisco, turned to the neighboring Portola Valley landscape for inspiration. "The kitchen was basically a small, dark space with a nice orientation," Phipps says of the project, located 40 miles south of San Francisco. "We opened it up to take advantage of the western exposure and wonderful view."

After bumping out a wall and annexing space from an adjacent dining room, the original 11½-foot by 15-foot room nearly doubled in size. The expanded U-shaped design easily accommodates a 3½-foot by 10-foot island, designed to provide an additional work surface and serve as a spatial divider between cook and

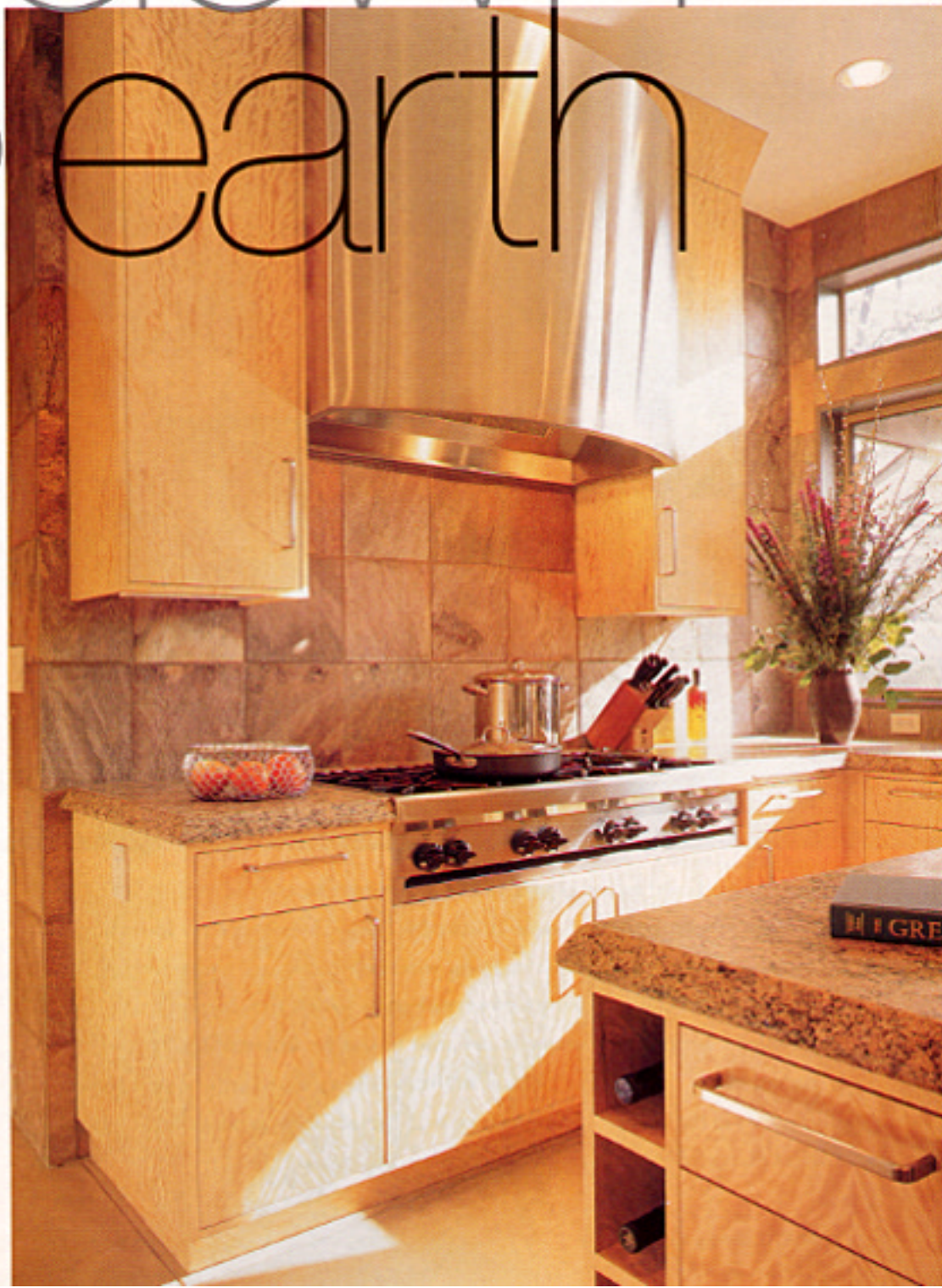
ABOVE: An island prep area features a stainless steel sink, pull-out storage drawers and a separate warming compartment. A trio of transom-topped casement windows overlooks nearby coastal mountains.

RICHLY TEXTURED KITCHEN THAT BLURS THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN INDOORS AND OUT.

down to earth



RIGHT: Fabricated of brushed stainless steel, the range hood functions as a kind of abstract hearth, according to Phipps. Scored terra-cotta-hued concrete floors, a slate-tiled backsplash and granite counters complement the room's natural palette.





guests. Anchored by an expansive pedestal table sheathed in aodire—a highly figured African hardwood—the 10-foot by 11-foot breakfast nook offers a sunny gathering spot. Five rectilinear casement windows wrap around both sides, providing abundant light and a stunning view of the Portola Valley. To maximize space, Phipps installed a streamlined banquette designed to seat six with ample storage drawers tucked below. “Guests can sit here and enjoy the view and still be part of what’s going on in the kitchen,” he says. Hung with curved cables, pendant lamps featuring clear glass globes lend a touch of informality.

ABOVE: Upholstered in a durable chenille fabric, the built-in banquette easily accommodates six for informal dining and friendly conversation. Designed primarily for outdoor use, galvanized aluminum chairs provide additional seating.

At the client's request, a small desk and a tall cabinet were installed just beyond the work triangle "I needed a place to pay bills," says the homeowner. Both desk and cabinet are crafted of thin avodire veneers, which Phipps selected because of their mellow hue and unusual grain. "Avodire has a golden shimmery quality similar to that of the natural grasses outside," he says. A coordinated color scheme, scored concrete flooring and honed granite counters, coupled with the figurative wood cabinetry, create a natural aesthetic that blends seamlessly with the surrounding terrain.

—Theresa McTammany

BELOW: A compact office niche serves as a convenient spot to plan menus. The architect designed the generously proportioned built-in cabinet as a space-saving alternative to a walk-in pantry.

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