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THE ART & DESIGN ISSUE

ON THE COVER

SERENDIP COVE: THE ULTIMATE BAHAMAS RETREAT

INSIDE

Young, gifted, collectible—how to buy the work of emerging artists

A-frames: the timeless charm of an architectural classic

More than 140 exquisite properties from around the world



Bespoke living

Pantry staple

New York's St. Charles—maker of coveted kitchens since the 1930s—has now branched out into a new world of customization thanks to the enduring vision of its principal, Karen Williams

Words **STEPHANIE JONES**

There are kitchens, and there are kitchens. There are kitchen designers, and there is St. Charles. The company, founded as cabinetmakers in 1935, stands for taste, heritage—it was the choice of titan architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe—and commitment to innovation.

Chief among its innovations was the appointment of Karen Williams. The company's youngest and first ever woman designer, she joined in 1979, and remains the driving force behind St. Charles's continuing success and standing.

Williams has drawn from this impressive history—St. Charles was one of the first tenants in New York City's prestigious Architects & Designers Building—to launch an own-name collection, the first in the company's history, of three designs numbered one to three. "It is a curated assembly of predetermined choices," she says. "We want to make it simple without sacrificing quality."

The designs—STC No. 1, STC No. 2, and STC No. 3—are versatile and unique, tailored to fit into a range of architectural spaces. They echo the quality of masters Van de Rohe and Lloyd Wright, with customization for a more bespoke feel. Clients can choose from four palettes, five metal finishes, and four woods—walnut, paldao, oak, or eucalyptus.

"Clients are very involved and not locked into a particular style," Williams says. "We have followed the idea of a complete kitchen that can be personally accessorized to the very highest quality."

As a trailblazer, how does Williams see the future of kitchen design? "We're designing new kitchens for the world as it is today. There's been a change already with larger pantries and larders, and now clients want appliances for preserving, sealing, storing—for a healthier way of living. The challenge is 'how can I design a kitchen, a functioning kitchen in a beautiful envelope, with all this new information we have?' It's a wonderful opportunity."

stcharlesnewyork.com



Easy as one, two, three: "Collection one (opposite page, bottom) is a contemporary style with lots of glamour," says Karen Williams, pictured far left. "The second leans toward the traditional with moldings and hinges that lends itself to architectural homes (this page), and the third is more casual, chic, and timeless (opposite page, top and center)."