





KITCHEN CONFIDENT
Blender worked with the Italian kitchen outfitter Arclinea to create a highly functional space.

COUTURE COMFORTS
For the main entry vestibule, Blender balanced concrete panels and an open-tread wood stair.



EAT, PLAY, LOVE!
In a former Bucktown funeral home revamped by Blender, the Max Alto dining table from Luminaire and Hans Wegner chairs from Design Within Reach provide the setting for many a convivial party.

PARLOR MADE
The living room, with its original decorative molding along the walls and cove ceiling, expresses the homeowners' appreciation of Asian design. (Vintage Shanghai Deco club chairs; sofa by B&B Italia.)

BUCKTOWN BLISS
The simple, ecclesiastical façade of this former funeral home gives little hint of the lively, contemporary abode within.



ON A BLENDER
A Knoll buffet cabinet from his own home gives a glimpse into Blender's personal style.

MIX MASTER AND COMMANDER

Architect Richard Blender is all smiles at his Bucktown project. The Plexiglas and bamboo screen at right speaks to the client's Eastern style.



Richard Blender

"We are always in search of what makes a place, a project and a client special," says Richard Blender, 46. For a decade, he and his partner, Michael Wilkinson, have made Wilkinson Blender Architecture the go-to firm for out-of-the-box, occasionally out-there design.

Their projects include the headquarters of Smog Veil Records and The Dailey Method workout studio in Bucktown, and they are currently renovating homes in Hyde Park, Wilmette and Wisconsin, not to mention adding a green roof to a house in Lincoln Park. "Architecture comes from looking at the particulars of any

given project," explains Blender, "and the design really is born out of the specifics of that particular place." And how. His transformation of a former funeral home (shown above) into a lively environment for a young family is nothing short of artful, scrupulously attentive to both the historic quality of the building and the new owners' taste for contemporary Asian design. Blender retained the original plaster molding that gives the home a graceful touch while executing a relatively minimalist strategy. He enhanced the essential openness of the home while hinting, ever so indirectly, at a non-Western organization of space (flanked fireplaces clad in gray-toned concrete panels, sleek shelving composed of large overlapping planes of dark-stained oak, an open-tread stairway and a slender skylight, natch). Not exactly Zen, but why should it be? wbarch.com