

10/17

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ANNUAL LIST • 38

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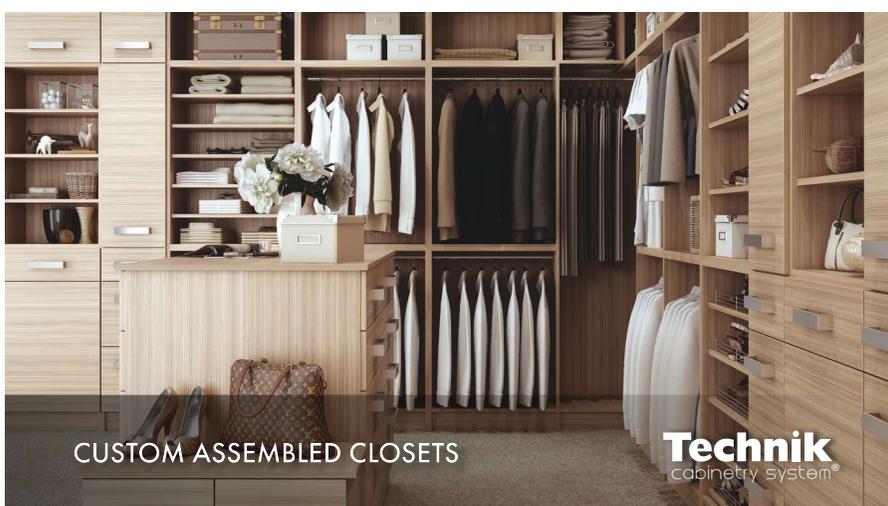
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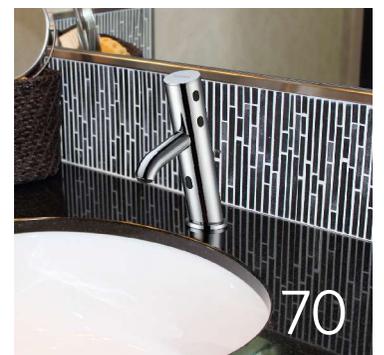


Photo: Raul Garcia, Astoria Inc.

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Pictured is the Abt Inspiration Studio in Glenview, IL, designed by one of KBDN's top 50 Innovators, Mick De Giulio of de Giulio kitchen design. All of the 2017 Innovators can be found beginning on page 38.

*Photo: Dave Burk*

# TOPS ON TOP

Cindy Crawford on Silestone Countertop



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# Getting 'Smart' About the Home

**THE ERA OF** the “smart home” has truly dawned, and the era of the smart kitchen and bath will no doubt follow – evolving from a niche market for tech-savvy homeowners into a mass market impacting every nook and cranny of the design trade.

The evidence for that is both anecdotal and quantifiable.

For a while now, in fact, it's been eminently clear that digital technologies, cutting-edge innovations and smart design are combining to create residential spaces responsive to homeowners' changing needs, product preferences and lifestyles. The market, at the same time, has witnessed a virtual flood of smart-home products – everything from thermostats and locks to security cameras and lighting. Leading visionaries from the

*“With a growing number of clients seeking smart-tech features, it's imperative that kitchen designers educate homeowners, and themselves, about the options and opportunities.”*

culinary, cooking, appliance, retail and technology sectors are reinventing their businesses overnight. Events like last month's CEDIA 2017 Expo and this month's “Smart Kitchen Summit” are providing increased exposure to emerging trends, new technologies and best-business practices in the smart-home market.

And all of it is happening at a pace that's not only dizzying, but shows no sign of slowing.

Indeed, according to a recent report, smart-home household penetration, while currently at only 15%, is expected to rise to a whopping 60%+ by 2021. At the same time, a recent survey by home renovation online platform Houzz found that over a quarter of homeowners *already* consider the integration of smart technology as “very important” to remodeling projects.

All this, of course, has critical implications for kitchen and bath designers.

As smart homes become increasingly popular, home buyers and remodeling consumers will undoubtedly exhibit heightened interest in new technologies and smart-home features. It follows that design professionals must then familiarize themselves about residential technology, so they can intelligently speak to how current and future innovations can help create kitchens and baths that reflect clients' preferences, needs and lifestyles.

What kind of spaces do people want their kitchens and baths to be? What lifestyle trends and other factors will drive purchase decisions for cabinets, countertops, hardware, appliances, lighting, plumbingware and other products? What are the options? What are the opportunities? What are the most effective ways to compete?

What we've seen thus far is, quite literally, merely the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, the possibilities seem endless: appliances that allow for remote operation, connectivity and innovative new cooking options; cabinets and vanities that raise and lower based on settings controlled through fingerprint recognition; high-definition displays mounted in backsplashes; countertops with built-in wireless charging capabilities; smart mirrors that control essential bathroom functions; all-in-one water stations; flooring that illuminates when it senses motion, and notifies caregivers when it detects slips and falls.

As the smart-home concept evolves, manufacturers will no doubt have to push the envelope on product innovation while trying to connect diverse kitchen features under a common software umbrella – in some cases partnering as never before with leading “smart home” brands. And, as with other products and design options, dealers and designers will need to be the “go-to” experts in helping clients add smart features to their kitchens and baths.

Homes are evolving. Technology is advancing. Consumers are changing the way they live. Competing in this rapidly changing market will mandate that specifiers keep pace with all this change. More than ever, it will require kitchen and bath design pros to understand technology and the ways it can assist homeowners in an expanding, exciting digital age. ■

**Editor's Note:** In this month's issue, *KBDN* proudly honors “The Innovators” – 50 extraordinary kitchen and bath professionals who are changing the industry right now. Read more about these dynamic and talented movers and shakers on pages 38-53.

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# Designers Discuss Creative Evolution

**Q:** *People often say the best thing about the design field is that it's never static; new products, trends, technology and creative ideas mean the industry is always evolving. How are you evolving as a designer from both a creative and a business perspective?*

**"ONE OF THE** first questions most prospective clients ask is: "What is the current trend?" Our clients expect us to be able to provide both the most current styles and the most current technology for our projects. In terms of style, today we do much more work with clean, simple lines and a heavier weight of construction. We have also evolved the finishes that we showcase. From a design technology perspective, we continually evaluate the latest hardware and accessories so that we can recommend with confidence what we view as the best products for our clients. Our business has moved quite far to embrace technology in our office. From online catalogs and order management processes to digital portfolio displays and online collaboration with our clients, digital technology has taken us in a whole new direction with our clients from where we were as recently as five years ago. Moving from hand-drawn work to AutoCAD, we have substantially increased the precision of our work and flexibility to explore design options with our clients."

*Charles Heller, owner  
Kitchen Classics  
Wilmette, IL*

**"THE RECESSION OF** 2008 and 2009 changed many businesses, I believe. It is no longer good enough to be just a good, creative designer. You now have to be smarter about the type of client you work with. More care is given to the screening process, and qualifying the client has become even more important than the design itself. A great design with a client that is a poor fit with the business is now no longer an option. We have also taken the time to completely overhaul our online presence and how we market to our target customers. Social media has exploded and we find ourselves trying to find a way to keep up with those changes. We have to find ways to stay in front of our prospects and even more ways to keep our pipelines full of prospects for the future. All of the fabulous advancements in products, technologies or creative ideas will mean nothing if we don't have a client to share them with."

*Mark Anderson, managing member  
Persona Kitchen & Bath Solutions, LLC  
Wichita, KS*

**"EVOLUTION FOR ME** is a confluence of many things: people, ideas, interests, etc. I make it a point to listen in order to ensure I incorporate as much as I can to make my customers happy. It's a habit cultivated over time with growth. When that's accomplished, it's an impetus to many things to follow like referrals and just a genuine overall positive experience."

*Dana Souksavanh, designer/sales  
ABC/Bradco  
Washington, DC*

**"I HAVE STARTED** going to more shows (KBIS, COVERINGS, Stone Expo) to try to stay up on new trends. In the past I would go every four to six years; now I have started going every year. I have also brought younger people into our company. This has brought a new perspective on designs. I feel it's a very fun time for our industry in that there's a more open-minded consumer out there now willing to go outside the box on design. I have also started putting more responsibility on my staff, asking them to add their ideas to a project rather than guiding them every step of the way. It has given me a little more time to enjoy myself and start taking a few vacations, which helps me get new ideas for designs. I still love what my company can create! I hope I am setting it up to continue long into the future."

*Rick Beahm, president  
Beahm and Son LTD.  
Evans City, PA*

**"I'M USING TECHNOLOGY** more these days to convey design concepts as well as final designs and implementation. This means my time, the client's and the contractor's is used more efficiently. I have not beefed up my social media strategy because I believe the public is inundated with emails and tweets to the point that they have lost their meaning. I, personally, delete hundreds of vendor marketing emails before opening them. I think we need to take another look at mass marketing so as not to turn off potential clients."

*Patricia Cowger, owner  
PLC Interiors  
Napa, CA*

**"I AM BECOMING** more 'classic' in my design approach, concerning myself first with the bulk and scale of a project before anything else. When I get the massing right, then the rest falls into place. As a business person, I have become considerably more conservative. I used to remodel the showroom pretty regularly, whenever I had a new idea or when one of our manufacturers came out with something new. Now I am much more likely to design a classic display and leave it in place for years to come. Also, we are slow to hire, even though we could use the help right now. I am concerned to staff up and then have to let them go in a year or two."

*Lance Stratton, owner  
Studio Stratton Inc.  
Del Mar, CA*

**"DESIGNERS NEED TO** stay educated about how the industry is evolving. We need to incorporate new ideas into our designs when appropriate for the client's needs. The creativity kicks in when all the elements of a kitchen come together as a cohesive whole. For instance, a charging station, USB port or a monitor needs to work with the overall function of the space."

*Jan Bullard, owner  
JLB Design Studio  
South Salem, NY*

**"I HAVE NO** doubt that the best way to stay sharp and on top of new trends, technology and new products is by attending KBIS. The ability to view, learn and network with our industry's finest dealers, designers and manufacturers is so important. While KBIS is the best way to continue to evolve, it must be supplemented throughout the year through other means, including chapter meetings, industry news publications and other design trade shows."

*John Petrie, owner/designer  
Mother Hubbard's Custom Cabinetry  
Mechanicsburg, PA*

**"EVERY DAY YOU** have to keep yourself open to learning new things and not be afraid to experiment. I work at staying in tune with new products and trends to several markets throughout the country. As a designer in a high-end market, you need to be ready for change and be able to adapt quickly."

*Karen King, showroom manager  
Transitions Kitchen & Bath  
Norwell, MA*

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# Market Advances in Face of Challenges

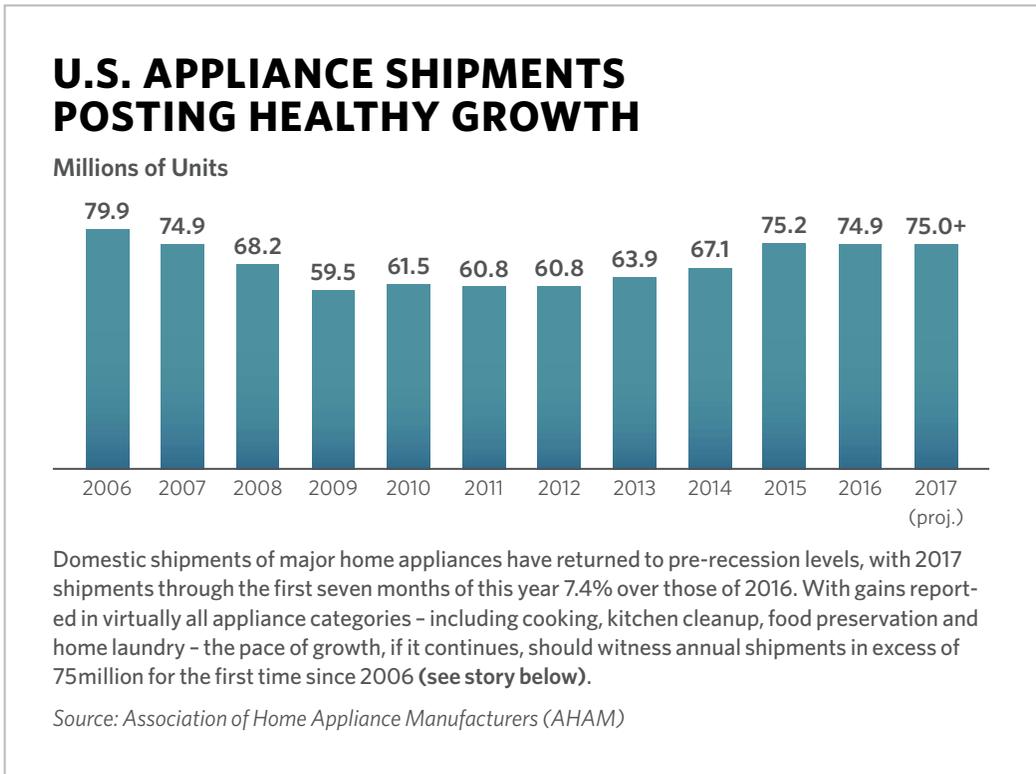
**DESPITE A SERIES** of pesky supply-side challenges, the nation's housing and residential remodeling markets continued to gain ground as the second half of 2017 got underway, according to the latest reports. Among the key statistics and forecasts released in recent weeks by government agencies, research firms and industry-related trade associations were the following:

## HOUSING STARTS

In a sign that the housing sector is continuing to make "broad-based gains," nearly 300 U.S. markets posted an increase in economic and housing activity from the first quarter to the second quarter of 2017, according to the latest National Association of Home Builders/First American Leading Markets Index (LMI). "This report shows that the housing and economic recovery is widespread," said Granger MacDonald, chairman of the Washington, DC-based NAHB. "However, the lagging single-family permit indicator shows that housing still has a ways to go to get back to full strength," he noted. "Builders continue to face persistent supply-side headwinds, including rising material prices and a shortage of buildable lots and skilled labor," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz.

## EXISTING-HOME SALES

A recent rebound in pending sales of existing homes "is a welcoming sign" for a market that saw the first half of 2017 end with a nearly identical number of contract signings as one year ago, even as the economy added 2.2 million new jobs, the National Association of Realtors said last month. Limited supply remains a significant stumbling block to more robust market growth, noted Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the Washington, DC-based NAR, which reported that existing-home inventory is some 7% lower than a year ago. "Demand is as strong as it has been since before the Great Recession, but the severe housing shortages inflicting many markets are keeping a large segment of would-be buyers on the sidelines," Yun said.



The NAR is forecasting that existing-home sales will finish 2017 at around 5.56 million units, an increase of 2.6% from 2016. The national median existing-home price this year is expected to increase by about 5%. In 2016, existing sales gained 3.8% and prices rose 5.1%.

## CABINET & VANITY SALES

Sales of kitchen cabinets and vanities advanced modestly in July compared to sales for the same month last year, the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association said last month. According to the Reston, VA-based KCMA, manufacturers participating in the association's "Trend of Business" survey reported that July sales of cabinets and vanities gained 1.8% over July of 2016. Sales of stock cabinets rose 4.5%, while semi-custom cabinet sales increased 0.6% and custom cabinet sales declined 3.4%,

the KCMA said. Year-to-date sales through July were up 3.7% compared to the same seven-month period in 2016, the association added.

## APPLIANCE SHIPMENTS

Domestic shipments of major home appliances rose again in July, while continuing to pace well ahead of 2016 totals through the seven months of 2017, according to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. The Washington, DC-based AHAM reported last month that July appliance shipments totaled 5.68 million units, up 7.3% from the 5.29 million units shipped during the same month in 2016. Year-to-date sales through July were 7.4% higher than the same seven-month period last year, with gains reported in virtually all product categories, including cooking, kitchen cleanup, food preservation and home laundry (see graph above).

## MARKET ANALYSIS

# Remodeling Growth Seen Easing, but Remaining 'Healthy & Stable'

**CAMBRIDGE, MA** — "Healthy and stable" growth in home improvement and repair spending is anticipated for the remainder of this year and into the first half of 2018, according to the Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity (LIRA) released last month by the Remodeling Futures Program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

The latest in a quarterly series of LIRA reports projects that annual increases in

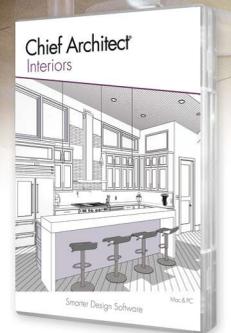
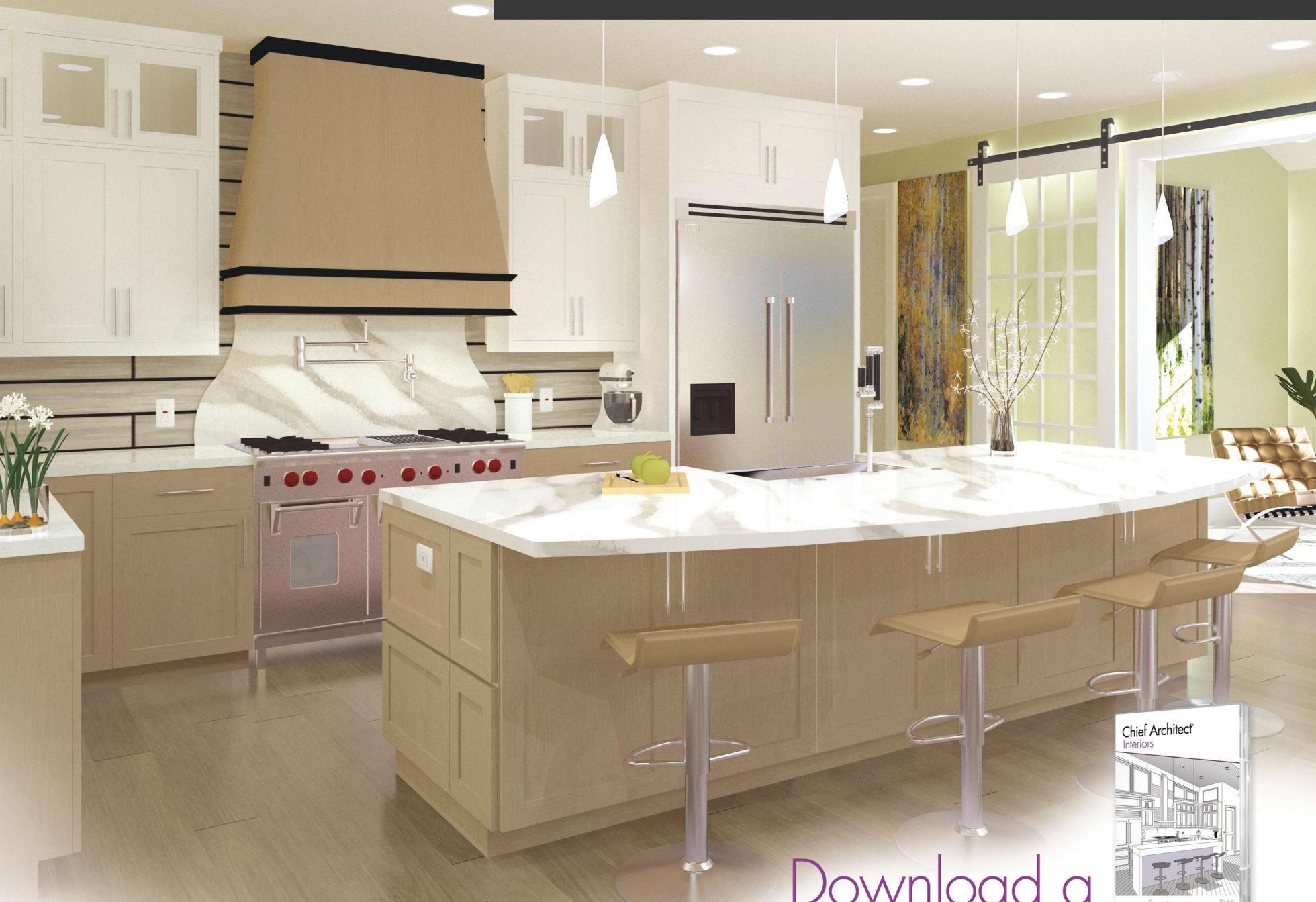
remodeling expenditures will soften somewhat moving forward, but still remain at or above 6% through the second quarter of 2018, according to the Cambridge, MA-based Joint Center.

"The remodeling market continues to benefit from a stronger housing market and solid gains in house prices, which are encouraging owners to make larger investments in their homes," said Chris Herbert, Joint Center managing director. However, Herbert noted that weak gains in home

sales activity due to tight inventories in many parts of the U.S. "are constraining opportunities for more robust remodeling growth, given that significant investments often occur around the time of a sale." Even with the anticipated easing this year, the remodeling market is still expected to grow above its long-term average, with national spending on improvements and repairs to the owner-occupied housing stock projected to reach some \$324 billion, the Joint Center said.

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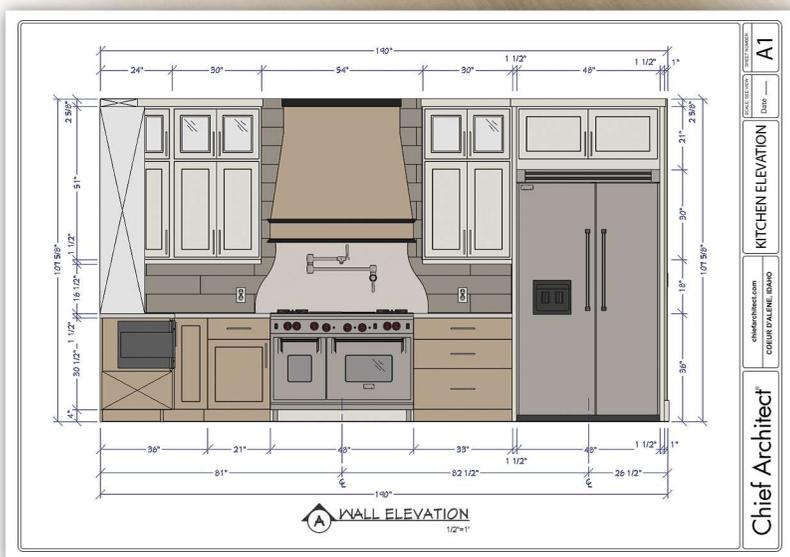
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Photo: Teri Fotheringham, Teri Fotheringham Photography

High-tech appliances, as seen in this kitchen designed by Chris Awadalla of Sanctuary Kitchen Design in Denver, CO, continue to be a hot trend.

## Study Probes 'Kitchen of the Future'

**TORONTO** — The kitchen, besides cementing its traditional role as the “nerve center” of the home, is destined to become a multifunctional space, disappearing as an independent room as it evolves into “a hyper-connected space for leisure, work, health, relaxation and well-being.”

That’s the key conclusion of the “Global Kitchen Report,” an extensive international study examining the major global design and usage trends expected to impact kitchens in terms of usage, design, products and features over the next 25 years (see related Editorial, Page 5).

The study, conducted by the Silestone Institute of surfacing supplier Cosentino, was unveiled this summer during presentations in Toronto and Montreal, and featured the perspectives of renowned architects, interior designers, professors and celebrity chefs. More than 800 kitchen and bath design professionals from eight countries (Australia, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Great Britain, Sweden and the U.S.) participated in the survey, according to Cosentino.

The study concluded, among other findings, that the kitchen will “regain its traditional title as the center of the home, a title that has been slowly stripped away over the decades.”

The Silestone Institute forecasted that in 25 years the kitchen will be “a social and health-focused space (spurred on by the spread of healthier cooking methods, home-grown or zero-mile produce); a place for connecting with others (socializing, working, etc.) and with homeowners’ surroundings.

“The kitchen’s transformation will require input from architecture and interior design professionals, sociologists, nutritionists, and environmental and energy efficiency specialists,” Cosentino said.

Other key findings of the study were as follows:

- **Efficiency, Flexibility and Sustainability:** When it comes to designing kitchens, “the efficiency and energy efficiency, flexibility and sustainability of materials will all be considered, without compromising their durability, safety and hygiene,” Cosentino said. “Countertops of the future will allow us to cook directly on their surfaces, incorporate connectivity and serve as a control panel,” the company noted, adding that “these countertops will also manage tasks like weighing and calculating the nutritional value of food, absorbing liquids and cleaning.”
- **Connectivity:** The kitchen’s connection to the internet and devices (tablets, mobiles, computer, wearables, smart appliances and the like) “stands out as one of the major technological developments in the medium to short-term (future), ahead of sustainable solutions in water and energy conservation and waste management,” Cosentino said.

“The rapid advancement of technology, connectivity and smart appliances will make not only shopping, cooking and laundry easier, but also [assist with] the relationship with [people’s] surroundings, enabling us to use the countertop to cook, make phone calls and even watch television,” Cosentino said.

“This will professionalize the space, either through greater access to equipment that until now has only been available in the catering sector, or by expanding knowledge and the growing interest in food, nutrition and foodie culture,” the company concluded. ■

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# KBDN Seminar Set This Month for Detroit

**EVANSTON, IL** — The suburbs of Detroit will be the scene this month for the latest in a 2017 series of seminars being sponsored in major metro markets by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.

The seventh program in KBDN's 2017 educational initiative, "Profitable Client Engagement Strategies for Today's Evolving Market," is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 18 at the Westin Southfield Detroit, in Southfield, MI. Previous sessions in the series took place in Phoenix, Orlando, Portland, OR, Cherry Hill, Milwaukee and Hauppauge, NY. The final seminar is set for Nov. 15 at the DoubleTree Silver Spring hotel, in Silver Spring, MD.

The eight-city seminar series – aimed at enhanc-

ing the client-engagement skills and profitability of kitchen/bath dealers, designers and related industry professionals – brings KBDN "live" to major markets through a program presented by Jennifer Gilmer, CKD, and Eric Schimelpfenig, AKBD.

Targeted at kitchen and bath design professionals seeking to optimize their client-engagement skills, "Profitable Client Engagement Strategies for Today's Evolving Market" addresses how both traditional, brick-and-mortar and virtual environments are undergoing a revolutionary change, with the advent of new digital tools, including kitchen/bath-related apps, smart phones, mobile devices, augmented reality and powerful new software.

The program's emphasis is on how design firms of all sizes and business models can leverage traditional product displays, cutting-edge digital technologies and updated sales-presentation strategies aimed at key client cohorts, including the younger, more digitally savvy consumers currently impacting the market. CEU credit from NKBA will be applicable.

Corporate sponsors include Best, Geberit, Jenn-Air, Plain & Fancy, Rev-A-Shelf, Showplace Wood Products and Wellborn Cabinets.

Information can be obtained by visiting [www.KBDNseminars.com](http://www.KBDNseminars.com), or by contacting KBDN Publisher Paul DeGrandis at [Paul@SOLAbands.com](mailto:Paul@SOLAbands.com).



Attending Cosentino's recent Dekton event are (l. to r.): Massimo Ballucchi, marketing director of Cosentino North America; tennis superstar and Dekton brand ambassador Rafael Nadal; Santiago Alfonso, v.p. of marketing and communication for Cosentino Group; Brandon Calvo, v.p. of sales for Cosentino North America, and Ana Granados, general manager of the Cosentino Manhattan City Center.

## Nadal Previews Cosentino's Fall Collection

**NEW YORK** — Ahead of his win at last month's U.S. Open, tennis champion and Cosentino's Dekton brand ambassador Rafael Nadal attended a cocktail party at the Cosentino Manhattan City Center to unveil the new Dekton Industrial Series. Designed in collaboration with leading architect and designer Daniel Germani, the mold-breaking range of Dekton colors officially launched in September.

Nadal celebrated the preview alongside 100 of New York's architects and designers, who enjoyed welcoming remarks from the tennis phenom, a meet-and-greet, cocktails and more. To commemorate the evening, Nadal signed one of the newly unveiled slabs, which will remain on permanent display in the showroom.

Known throughout the tennis world as "The King of Clay," Nadal has been the brand ambassador for Dekton since 2014 and knows firsthand the importance of surface both in sport and design. His Rafa Nadal Academy by Movistar, a world-class training facility sponsored by Cosentino, opened last Fall in his hometown of Manacor, Spain, and boasts more than 430,000 square feet inside and out of Dekton.

"When I was working with the architects who designed the Academy, I was incredibly drawn to both the strength and design of Dekton Trilium, the color that inspired the new Industrial Collection," Nadal says. "It beautifully captures weathered and worn metal, but with unparalleled performance."

## NKBA Sets \$1 Million Target Goal For Hurricane Harvey Relief

**HACKETTSTOWN, NJ** — In the wake of the destruction Hurricane Harvey left in southeastern Texas, Louisiana and the Gulf Coast region, many members of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) have been heavily impacted by flooding, wind and other damage. In order to assist in the rebuilding that will be borne by its membership, the association has established a disaster relief fund.

"The NKBA knows how devastating the effects of this record-breaking disaster will be for many of our members, and we are proud to be able to help them offset some of the costs of getting back to business," said Bill Darcy, CEO of the NKBA. "We encourage all of our members to contribute in this unprecedented time of need."

The association's aim is to raise \$1 million – with the NKBA matching donations up to \$500,000 – that will aid its members in the affected areas. Donations will go directly to helping these members get their businesses, livelihoods and lives back on track. Any funds not utilized by member companies or individuals will be distributed to general relief agencies to assist the broader community.

Requests for help will be kept confidential, and members may use funds to help clean up flood damage, restore showrooms, replace inventory, repair equipment or otherwise recover. To donate, go to <https://forms.nkba.org/harvey-relief/>.

## PIRCH to Shutter Multiple Locations

**SAN DIEGO, CA** — PIRCH, the high-end kitchen, bath and outdoor appliance retailer, has decided to close the majority of its experiential showroom locations. The San Diego-based business is currently still in talks with the landlords of locations on the East Coast and in the Midwest. The Austin, TX; Dallas; Chicago; Atlanta, and Paramus, NJ showrooms were scheduled to close Sept. 30. The company is looking to focus its efforts on its profitable California stores, according to an official statement from a PIRCH company spokesperson.

"PIRCH has made the strategic decision to re-focus its footprint and pace of expansion," said the PIRCH spokesperson. "Our California stores are performing well and we remain focused on growth in this region. In other regions, PIRCH is currently in discussions with landlords and has begun the process of closing certain locations that have not met our expectations. We remain confident that our unique business model will be successful on a more focused scale and we are committed to delivering on our founding mission of providing customers exciting new ways to shop for the home through our innovative multi-brand immersion experience."

The spokesperson also maintained that all customers who have already made purchases will be satisfied, and their orders shipped, regardless of whether the store they purchased from closes.

PIRCH's experiential strategy has been recognized as innovative by multiple sources, including being named on *Inc.* magazine's 25 most disruptive companies of the year.

## LG Breaks Ground on Site

**CLARKSVILLE, TN** — On Thursday, Aug. 24, an event was held celebrating the ground breaking of LG Electronics' new home appliance manufacturing facility in Clarksville, TN. Speakers at the event included representatives from LG, along with U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Senator Bob Corker.

The new facility, one of several investments in the U.S. market by LG, is expected to create at least 600 full-time jobs. The company is also currently building its North American Headquarters in Englewood Cliffs, NJ - a \$300 million project expected to increase LG's local employment in the area from 500 to more than 1,000 by 2019.

The Clarksville facility will be the world's most advanced production plant for washing machines, according to the firm, and will give Americans improved access to LG's home appliances.

## Top Knobs Acquires Du Verre Hardware

**HILLSBOROUGH, NJ** — Du Verre Hardware and Top Knobs have agreed to join forces with Top Knobs' acquisition of the Du Verre Hardware brand. Together, Top Knobs, Du Verre Hardware, Atlas Homewares, Vesta Fine Hardware and sister company Hardware Resources' brands, Jeffrey Alexander and Elements, represent a large portion of product selection in the industry for cabinet hardware.

Warren Ramsland, president of Top Knobs commented, "Gina and Gavin founded Du Verre Hardware 18 years ago, and through their leadership and sense of style created a beautiful, green-friendly brand that I've admired for many years. We highly value Gina in her new role as we develop future innovative designs utilizing her relationships within the design community."

Under the creative direction of founding partners Gina Lubin

and Gavin McLean, the Du Verre brand has gained recognition throughout the design world for original hardware designs. Each piece of the brand's hardware is crafted of post-consumer, eco-friendly recycled aluminum fully

compatible with LEED objectives.

"This acquisition is a significant accomplishment and marks the beginning of a new era, filled with opportunities to add to our original high design collections," said Gina Lubin, founder, CEO

and creative director of Du Verre Hardware. "We are proud to celebrate the joining of two iconic companies while continuing to grow the Du Verre brand and help create beautiful, sustainable environments."



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### SieMatic Opens Showroom in Montreal

**CARLSBAD, CA** — SieMatic has relocated its Montreal showroom, now situated among other design houses and upscale showrooms. Consumers entering the new showroom are greeted by four kitchen vignettes, each showcasing a SieMatic style collection while helping the visitor get a true sense for the individual lifestyle each exudes.

“The new, reimagined Montreal showroom is designed to inspire designers and their clients, with authentic vignettes exuding the distinctive vibe of each design theme,” says Jean-Martin Lapointe, v.p. of development, SieMatic Montreal. “Homeowners can truly visualize not only how the cabinetry will look in their kitchens, but how the collection will impact the feel of their entire home.”

Along with experiencing SieMatic’s kitchen design themes firsthand, homeowners can take advantage of the showroom’s professional design services. Located at 5341 Ferrier Street, the SieMatic Montreal showroom is open Monday-Thursday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Friday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., and Saturday by appointment.

### SEN Reports Membership Gross Profit Margins 31% Higher Than Industry Average

**CHARLOTTE, NC** — The SEN Design Group recently reported that its members are earning substantially higher gross profit margins than the industry average.

Based on the group’s computerized Benchmark Reporting Service, SEN Members average gross profit margins of 37.95%. That’s a 30.9% increase over the industry average as reported by RICKI, an Atlanta-based research firm.

SEN attributes its members’ higher gross margins to several factors: First, through the group’s three-year profit planning service, owners are trained how to determine the precise gross profit percentage their individual operations must achieve in order to finance market-rate salaries for themselves, cover their overhead and make an 8-10% pretax net profit.

Second, members learn and implement a host of marketing strategies that enable consumers to perceive them as a better value than their competitors. For example, members have become early adopters of a good-better-best selling system that empowers them to produce accurate kitchen/bath budgets in just 20-30 minutes.

Finally, because they are part of a group, they can buy many products at costs roughly 5-7% better than their competitors. Those savings enhance gross profit margins.

Said Leah Peterson, executive v.p. of SEN: “Anyone who has a \$1,000,000 operation can expect to approximately earn another \$89,000 on their \$4,200 SEN Full Member annual dues. This is a 2100% return on their investment.”

A yearly Financial Benchmark Report and consultation are included with a SEN membership. A member’s latest financial statements are fed into an exclusive software program. The multi-page, computerized report compares dozens of a company’s financial metrics to a select group of successful dealers. The report also gives brief advice as to how a firm’s weaker metrics, such as gross profit margins, can be improved.

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## Rinnai to Triple Headquarters

**PEACHTREE CITY, GA** — Rinnai Corp. has announced it will triple the size of its North American headquarters in Peachtree City, GA. The company will expand its operations by building a new two-story headquarters building and by launching a North America Innovation and Training Center.

“We are extremely proud to expand Rinnai’s North American headquarters in order to position Rinnai for continued growth,” said Frank Windsor, chief operating officer, Rinnai America.

The first phase of construction will focus on the new headquarters building, with associated move-in expected in summer 2018. Renovation and expansion of the current headquarters into the new Innovation and Training Center is expected to follow and be completed by year-end 2018. The Innovation Center will be adjacent to the new headquarters and will house an advanced research and development laboratory, product certification center and the “Rinnai Experience” customer product training.

## Houzz Calls for Scholarships

**PALO ALTO, CA** — Houzz Inc. has announced the call for entries for Houzz Scholarships, a company program that supports the next generation of residential design and architecture pros: students studying architecture, interior design and landscape architecture.

Houzz will award four \$2,500 scholarships in the categories of Women in Architecture, Sustainable Design, Residential Interior Design and Residential Construction Management. Houzz awards these scholarships biannually in the spring and fall, and is now accepting applications for spring 2018.

High school seniors, undergraduates and graduate students 17 years of age or older are invited to apply at [houzz.com/scholarships](http://houzz.com/scholarships). In addition to submitting a brief essay on

their design and architecture influences, students are invited to create a Houzz professional student profile, where they can showcase their portfolio of work and network with more than a million professionals around the world. The

deadline for the spring 2018 scholarships is December 15, 2017.

“The caliber of applicants and their essays for the Houzz Scholarship program is extremely impressive,” said Liza Hausman, v.p. Industry Marketing at

Houzz. “These design and architecture students have offered incredible perspectives on the future of how we will live in our built environments. We’re so pleased to help these students pursue their goals and dreams.”

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## Sharp Partners for Smart Appliances

**MONTVALE, NJ** — Sharp Home Electronics Company of America has announced a partnership with SideChef to further the next generation of smart cooking appliances. SideChef will develop the mobile application and custom recipe content for all of Sharp's future internet-enabled cooking appliances – beginning fall 2018 – with a connected version of Sharp's SuperSteam+ Convection Oven.

The new Sharp app, powered by SideChef, will offer home cooks a recipe-driven culinary experience, providing detailed directions of how to cook any dish with the compatible Sharp appliance. SideChef currently has an expanding collection of over 5,000 interactive smart recipes that automatically set timers, play educational videos or suggest helpful tips based on the ingredients, time of day, season, location and more. Many of those 5,000 recipes will be available through the new Sharp app.

"Sharp was looking for ways to combine convenience with perfect cooking results from our next generation of smart connected home appliances," said Jim Sanduski, president of Sharp Home Electronics Company of America. "SideChef already offers an award-winning mobile culinary platform, so partnering with them to integrate cooking operation and control was an easy decision."

"At SideChef, we are dedicated to providing the most advanced connected cooking experience available," said Kevin Yu, CEO and Founder of SideChef.



Attending the opening of Emser Tile's Virginia distribution center are (l. to r.): Senator John Cosgrove; Delegate S. Chris Jones; Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore; Emser Tile V.P. of Supply Chain Mark Seal, and Virginia Port Authority CEO and Executive Director John Reinhart.

## Emser Tile Opens VA Distribution Center

**SUFFOLK, VA** — Emser Tile has opened its third distribution center in North America, located in Suffolk, VA. This site will service the growing East Coast and Midwest markets.

The new 400,000-sq.-ft. distribution center, with the capacity to expand to 850,000 square feet, stems from Emser Tile's considerable growth and increased inventory, and supports Emser Tile's long-term expansion plans. The company operates over 20 showrooms and distribution centers throughout the East Coast and Midwest, the majority of which opened in the last five years.

"Our growth in the East Coast and Midwest markets gave us an opportunity to build a state-of-the-art distribution center to meet our customers' needs through even better service," shared Barbara Haaksma, v.p. of marketing for Emser Tile.

To celebrate the opening, Emser Tile hosted a ribbon cutting on August 15 with dignitaries in attendance, including Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore, Delegate S. Chris Jones, Senator John Cosgrove and Suffolk Mayor Linda T. Johnson. John F. Reinhart, CEO and director of the Virginia Port Authority, also spoke at the opening.

By basing operations in Suffolk, Emser Tile aims to become a strategic partner within the community. The company plans to hire and train distribution center employees through partnerships with local colleges and the community.

## Wilsonart to Hold Educational Initiative

**TEMPLE, TX** — Wilsonart has launched "Understanding Wood: Sourcing Against the Grain," a new educational initiative for architects and designers. A survey conducted by SMS Research Advisors for Wilsonart brought into focus the lack of awareness architects and designers have about endangered wood species, despite properly sourced materials being a top priority for 70 percent of those surveyed.

"We learned from this survey that professionals in the industry need to be more informed about the materials they specify," says Tammy Weadock, communications manager at Wilsonart. "The largest knowledge gap exists where it could impact architects and designers the most, in their own practices."

The aim of "Understanding Wood" is to bridge this gap by educating architects and designers on how to identify endangered and threatened woods, and to equip them to find alternate materials that meet their aesthetic and functional needs.

The initiative commences with a National Day of Learning Event on Oct. 18 at the Center for Architecture in New York. Two lunch and learn sessions – resulting in one Health, Safety and Welfare CEU for IDCEC or AIA – will be held at 12:30 p.m. EDT and 3:00 p.m. EDT. Those in New York are welcome to attend either session in the Center for Architecture's Silman Room; registration is required. Both sessions will also be streamed live, and those outside New York are encouraged to sign up and attend virtually.

Other components of "Understanding Wood" include: A Global Forestry White Paper; a partnership with the Interlochen Academy of the Arts, and an educational hub to act as a continual resource.

"We are urging architects and designers to use properly sourced wood materials," Weadock notes. "This will help save protected forests, endangered wildlife and the very air we breathe."

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Haier Group has named **Kevin Dexter** to the newly created position of president of **Fisher & Paykel NA** in Costa Mesa, CA and **GE Monogram** in Louisville, KY.



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Craig

**R. D. Henry & Co.**, of Wichita, KS, has announced several staff changes: **Bruce Mackenzie** is Rocky Mountains region territory business manager; **Denny Marlin** is v.p. of marketing; **Anthony Mandina** is division manager - Mill; **Michael Desmond** is Florida region market representative, and **Carey Craig** is director of Human Resources.

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, **James Lin** will take over as director of Buena Park, CA-based **Fairmont Designs**. **Nathaniel Mucha** has also been named executive v.p. of Bath for the firm.

Smyrna, TN-based **Franke Kitchen Systems** has named **Oliver Bahr** president, while **Daniel Schwab** has assumed the position of v.p. sales.



Alexandrou



Mattrey

**Alex Alexandrou** has been named chief information officer for **LIXIL Americas**, parent of **American Standard**, **DXV** and **GROHE** bath and kitchen brands, located in Piscataway, NJ. **Michelle Mattrey** has also been named vp., insights and analytics, for the firm.



Palakodati



Lancto

At Austin, TX-based **Artisan Group**, **Sunil Palakodati** has replaced Chad Seiders as executive director, and **Jon Lancto** will fill the newly created role of president.

Ashland, AL-based **Tru Cabinetry** has hired **Jeff Lukes** to fill the new position of director of sales.



Kovich



Dempster

**Canyon Creek Cabinet Co.**, based in Monroe, WA, has appointed **Mark Kovich** executive v.p., overseeing sales, marketing, customer service, product management and quality management. **Kirk Dempster** has also been named regional sales manager in the Southwest.

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DENISE GROTHOUSE

# A Kitchen Designer Photography Primer

## HOMEOWNERS ARE SEARCHING

the internet for design inspiration and ideas. Whether they're searching on Google, Instagram or Houzz, compelling images will attract them the most. As a design professional, it's important to showcase your work in such a way that will stand out amongst the millions of other photos that homeowners are viewing daily. Showcasing your projects and progress with great photography is also one of the best ways to give potential clients an idea of what you do and how you do it.

## SHARE THE JOURNEY

The overhaul of a kitchen is a monumental task for all parties involved. Sharing the progress of a kitchen remodel on social media platforms and your website is a wonderful method to connect with your customers – past, current and future.

Share your progress on social media to engage your audience – start by taking photographs

kitchens. Scheduling the photo shoot as soon as the project is done will ensure that the space is captured when it's new and pristine. In addition, it will cause the least inconvenience for your clients because you won't have to contact them later to come back once the project is complete.

Choosing a photographer is a personal experience. Each photographer has his or her own method of styling, lighting, composition and scheduling. Read magazines and take note of the photographer credentials. If you consistently see a designer with photos you absolutely love, reach out to them for the photographer's contact info. Interior spaces often require lighting equipment and special consideration for reflective surfaces, so it's a good idea to choose a photographer with experience in shooting kitchen and bath interiors.

Communicate your goals for the photo shoot to the photographer in advance so they can capture your project the way you want potential

you to pay an additional fee to use them in print advertising or to submit them for publication or enter them in design contests.

Photographers' license agreements can vary greatly in what rights you are granted, and you'll want to be sure you negotiate for all the rights you need up front. The ideal photography license to negotiate is **Full Rights**, which permits you to use photographs without any restrictions whatsoever. Full Rights means you can post on your website, use in social media and submit to contests or magazines without paying an additional fee to the photographer. The phrase **Unlimited Use** is a term also used to describe Full Rights.

Licensing agreements are generally negotiable, so it's best to let the photographer know up front what rights you'll need; if the photographer is not open to this, consider another photographer.

Finally, if your photographs include people, you will need a **Model Release** form signed. This expresses that the individual is granting you permission to use their image in the photographs.

*“Using photography to share the progress of a kitchen remodel on social media platforms and your website is a brilliant method to connect with your customers – past, current and future.”*

on the current kitchen prior to demolition. This will provide you with the opportunity to share before and after photographs. Photograph the existing kitchen from many angles so you can take the after shots from the same angles to fully demonstrate the transformation.

For the informal before shots, take them during the day when the lighting is best to fully capture the details of the space. Pictures taken at night rely solely on the lighting of the space, which may not be sufficient to capture a clear photo. The before and after pictures can be taken with a cell phone, provided the lighting is sufficient, but be sure your settings are adjusted to take high-resolution shots (ideally, photo files should be a minimum of 1 MB in size to ensure they are print quality). If your camera flash is required, the lighting is most likely not adequate.

There are wide-angle lenses designed for cell phones to expand your phone into a virtual 35mm camera. Experiment with your photographs and use the photo editing built into your phone to improve the images.

## HIRE A PRO PHOTOGRAPHER

Ideally, you'll want to hire a professional photographer to capture your final design, especially a photographer with experience in shooting

clients to see it. Identify specific design details that you want the photographer to shoot. Be sure to get a variety of shots, from close-ups to wide shots, so that the entire space is captured.

## CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

A thorough understanding of photography contracts will assure you know all the costs for use of the photographs taken. Photographers charge a fee to take the photographs, but some charge additional fees, depending upon the use.

You'll want to consider what you're planning to do with the photos to ensure your contract provides you with all the necessary permissions. Will you be using them on your website only, or will you be entering them in design competitions, or submitting them for possible publication?

Below is a summary of some of the basic contracts commonly needed.

First off, have the homeowner sign a **Property Release** to ensure you have full legal rights to photograph the space. Many designers include this in the initial design contract.

Next, you will sign a **License of Rights for Photography** with the photographer. The license determines how you can use the photography. For example, an agreement might allow use of the photographs on your website, but require

## STAGING THE SPACE

Proper staging of the kitchen space can make a huge difference in the appeal of the kitchen in photographs. Staging can be executed with a little effort. A simple bowl of lemons, a knife block and a cutting board can dramatically increase the visual appeal of the photos.

The best way to figure out how to stage a kitchen is to first take a picture of the space unstaged and note the areas that look empty or those that could use a pop of color. Staging should be done minimally so as not to detract from the cabinetry or design details that you have created.

**DO:** Experiment with photographing from your cell phone.

**DON'T:** Try to take photos at night. Great lighting plays a key role in the clarity of the shot.

**DO:** Take the time to fully understand your permissions to use the photography taken by a professional photographer you hire.

**DON'T:** Hire a photographer without an agreement in writing stating usage rights.

**DO:** Stage your kitchen with minimal props that accent the space.

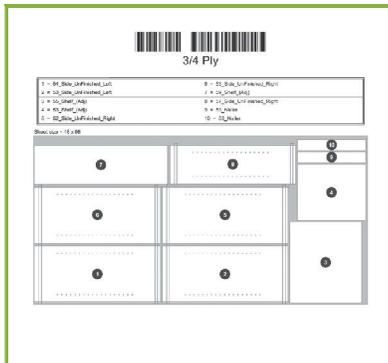
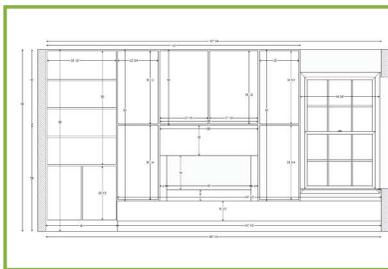
**DON'T:** Rely on your naked eye. Look at the pictures to determine if your staged items are proper to enhance the kitchen. The look of a space can vary from your naked eye to a one-dimensional picture.

Photography that captures your work perfectly makes a big difference to potential clients who are looking to hire you. A well-crafted photography strategy will bring your work and design sensibility to the world. ■



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MARY JO PETERSON,  
CMKBD, CAPS, CLIPP

# Open Plan vs. Closed Plan Kitchens

**THE CONCEPT OF** an open plan for the kitchen/Great Room seems as ubiquitous as white in kitchen design, yet each year there are noises about the pendulum swinging back to the closed kitchen. Those of us who have been designing for some time know that, while particular styles never go away, everything cycles, rising and falling from prominence.

The question of an open versus closed kitchen design deserves a review of the benefits of each, and concepts that may help a client get the best of both.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Traditionally, the kitchen was in the “back of the house,” designed for one person as a closed work space where few but the cook ever visited. In some cases, there was a space for eating, where typically the chrome-trimmed, linoleum or laminate-topped table hosted family suppers.

In the '90s, a trend toward more casual dining and entertaining brought the shift away from formal dining rooms and strengthened

preferences, while recognizing that our real designs must be based on personal preferences of the individual client.

Families seem to prefer open plans so that the caregiver for dependents can be involved in food preparation, and so that multiple members of the household might also assist in kitchen duties. There are those who prefer an open plan when the children are younger and need constant supervision, but a closed plan when they grow to teens and their music is better off isolated.

That said, an open plan can be more flexible, allowing for sit-down meals for a few or many through simple furniture rearranging. Especially important when the kitchen has few windows, there is more opportunity for natural light to move through the space and, in general, the line of sight is increased. Open design supports less formal entertaining and it can create a sense of more space in tighter plans.

In contrast, a closed plan is preferred in order to more completely contain kitchen noise,

decisions should relate directly to the clients' lifestyle and needs. Who and how many will be in the kitchen, cooking or doing other things? How is entertaining handled? Caterers in the closed kitchen or everyone helps in the open plan? A cook with spicy high-heat recipes or steamed vegetables with little odor or mess? Clean or cluttered habits? In addition to lifestyle, a realistic evaluation of the space and money available for the job must be done.

## RESPONSIVE DESIGN IDEAS

After listening to a client's wishes, the solution may be open, closed or a combination of the two, including some of the following concepts. The current fascination with doors and their hardware options, whether sliding, barn-door style, pocket or more, gives us many opportunities for flexibility, changing a space from an open to a closed plan as desired for the activity at hand. Even wide passages into the kitchen space can be handled with the sophisticated hardware available today.

Raising the back of an island or peninsula will create a partially closed view to the kitchen while leaving the sense of an open plan, as will the use of mid-height cabinetry. Wall cabinets, open shelves or sliding top-hinged doors on cabinetry over an island or peninsula will help to provide some of the benefits of both types of design. In small galley kitchens, sometimes just a pass-through will help open the space, with above and below wall cabinets for maximum passage of light without forfeiting storage.

Recently I have seen several small spaces where a metal mesh curtain has been installed via a ceiling track, partially obscuring the kitchen when desired, creating a contemporary or industrial-style statement. In luxury spaces, a scullery or cooks' kitchen will be closed off, while the social kitchen is open, keeping the cooking and related odors, clutter and noise closed away. For the one-kitchen plan, today's super-quiet appliances and powerful ventilation will have to do the trick.

There is no question that the vast majority of kitchen designs for new or remodeled kitchens are open plans, but it's also clear that the closed kitchen has advantages that appeal to a number of clients. While my own preference has always been toward an open plan, the research for this design column has given me pause, and reminded me that this is not a black and white design issue. It seems our responsibility as designers is to help our clients make the best decision for their lifestyle, and then to design at the place on the continuum from closed to open that gives them the space that will support their wishes. ■

*An open plan supports less formal entertaining, maximizes natural light and creates a sense of more space in tighter plans, while a closed plan more completely contains kitchen noise, odor and mess.*

the concept of the kitchen open to at least the Great Room. After 9/11, home became a safe haven, insulated from perceived dangers, and the open plan was the best fit for families spending their free time at home together.

Today, the room has expanded in space and importance to be the heart of the home, that place where shared duties and most of the socializing in the home takes place, and the open plan supports this.

Most experts agree that the square footage given to the kitchen has increased, and the jury is still out on whether this actually increases the prep space. In New York City, open kitchens made up 6% of total square footage of apartment space prior to 2000 and, as of 2010, the size has increased to an average of 8%. While the majority of new construction since 1990 has incorporated open kitchens, recent developments are increasing the number of closed kitchens or the ability to close the kitchen when desired.

## CONSIDERATIONS

To consider the pros and cons of an open versus a closed plan, we'll look at majority

odor and mess. Today's more silent appliances and efficient ventilation help to reduce these problems, but a kitchen closed off from the social space in the home is particularly effective.

The “mess” of the kitchen can involve organization in the space as well as food prep, serving and clean-up, and we do have amazing accessories to help organize and tidy the general appearance. Some of us are just not into “tidy,” and a closed kitchen hides our work space. This separation provides privacy for that cook who does not wish to be observed, and it isolates noise from both directions, providing an “away space” for the main cook.

A closed kitchen supports more formal entertaining, and entertaining in small spaces, where that kitchen activity is too close to the dining area to be subtle unless there is a door closing it off. If the kitchen is moderate in size, the closed kitchen is often easily planned to be efficient, especially for one cook. Often a closed kitchen will cost less to remodel, but an open kitchen will likely be better for resale.

While many points can be argued, the main influences on open versus closed design

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LESLIE HART

# Five Touch Points to Client Satisfaction

**ASK AN INDEPENDENT** dealer, cabinet shop or decorative plumbing and hardware showroom why a consumer should deal with them instead of a big box store, and the answer invariably is “customer service.”

Yet a friend’s recent experience turned this blithe assumption on its head. He has been waiting 18 months (no kidding) for a drawer front to be replaced by an independent dealer. It was drilled for the wrong hardware, and has two unsightly holes on either side of a handle. Voice mails go unanswered. Emails vaporize into cyber space. Drawer heads are ordered, lost or come in the wrong size.

Meanwhile my friend ordered an RTA cabinet from a big box store and it arrived with a damaged part. The friendly store associate immediately apologized, got in touch with the

operations centric. They focus too much on internal processes and lose sight of the customer.

“Inevitably customer interactions sour. Just because you have to manage operations every single day doesn’t mean you can put customer experiences on the back burner. Develop a philosophy of customer first, operation second,” Webb urges.

Businesses can do this by creating exceptional human experiences, both digital and non-digital, across what Webb has identified as the five customer touch points: pre-touch, first-touch, core-touch, last-touch and in-touch.

To resonate, the experiences should be tailored to your customers’ loves and hates, and that’s how you should segment your customers.

So you need to help prospects anticipate an exciting experience. Paint the picture on your website of the great kitchens and baths to come, with photos grouped with your market segments in mind.

“Content marketing is the biggest marketing buzzword on the planet today,” notes Webb. “Basically that means providing useful information to prospects.” It can be especially powerful in our industry where purchases can be so complicated and unfamiliar.

“The best way to have a good pre-touch experience for your potential customers is to deliver free and valuable resources prior to their commitment,” Webb adds.

“Sharing content in the pre-touch moment is giving something valuable without asking for anything in return.”

Just as important as your digital presence is putting an eagle eye on your brick-and-mortar presence. “In order to understand how to develop the perfect pre-touch moment, you need to get out of your chair and do research,” Webb says.

“Drive down the street and envision how customers might perceive the quality of your experience based on what they see. Walk around your building and peer through the windows as if you were a potential customer. What do you hear, smell and think?”

## FIRST TOUCH

At the first non-digital touch point, customers’ brains rapidly absorb the smells, sounds, tastes and sites of that encounter, Webb points out. So ask yourself if your showroom is filled with exceptional sensory details.

How are people greeted? What do they experience?

According to a leading architect, Ken Nisch, whose firm JGA designs retail spaces, the first touch should prepare customers for the experience they are looking forward to.

“Whereas traditional retail is at the end of the ride,” Nisch says, “think about retail at the front of the ride, to get you excited about the experience to come.”

No doubt it keeps getting tougher and tougher to create meaningful first-touch experiences. Experiential retail concepts that once might have surprised and delighted prospects, today have become ho-hum. “It seems like every store has a coffee bar or a workshop on the sales floor,” he points out.

How can you get prospects excited about a new kitchen or bath? What additional content can you supply them with at this stage of their journey? Can they leave with something of value?

*“To maximize customer satisfaction, businesses must create exceptional human experiences, both digital and non-digital, across five customer touch points.”*

vendor and called back the same day to say a new part would be in the store in three to five days. And it was.

Admittedly this is just one incident, but it feels indicative of the challenges of customer service today. Everyone is busy and short staffed, consumers are more demanding and negative online reviews take seconds to post. Yet referrals remain the lifeblood of the business.

By sacrificing customer service, a business shoots itself in the foot. So now is a good time to rethink the current landscape of customer service, which is what the book *What Customers Crave* by Nicholas J. Webb is all about.

Actually Webb maintains, “Customer service is dead. If you’re using customer service as a way to lead your market segment...you’ve already lost. ‘Good’ customer service will kill your business because most customer service initiatives are not enough to allow you to compete effectively in today’s market.

“It is no longer about customer service. Instead it’s about customer experiences, and those had better be exceptional and relevant ones.”

Webb says he is “frequently shocked at how many companies have never asked themselves, ‘What is it like to do business with us?’”

He cautions that, when companies become really busy, they can unfortunately transition from being customer centric to

Some kitchen consumer segments might be: loves to cook; loves design more than function; loves to entertain and impress guests; loves new technology; or hates the idea of doing a kitchen but loves the thought of maintaining the value of a home.

Similarly bath consumer segments might be: sensuous types who love to relax and indulge themselves; sports and health enthusiasts who love the hydrotherapy of steam or whirlpools; pragmatists concerned about home values; technology lovers; or people who hate the idea of moving and love the idea of staying comfortably in their home as they age.

What might customers hate about the experience of redoing a kitchen or bath? The expense? The long process? The complicated decisions? The inability to visualize the finished room? The chaos and disruption?

Once you’ve identified your most common customer segments according to their loves and hates, you can then create ways to delight them at every touch point.

## PRE-TOUCH

At this point, prospects are researching you, most often without your knowledge.

People’s excitement and engagement grows when they are anticipating an experience to come. Research shows, for example, people are happiest in the eight weeks before their vacation, rather than afterwards.

### CORE TOUCH

Once a prospect becomes a customer, it's essential to manage each experience along the way as the project comes to life. It's all about how easy it is to do business with you.

How many meetings or showroom visits does it typically take? Over what period of time? What normally happens in each one? Where is there the most danger of something going wrong, and what can you do about it in advance? How can you leave the customer feeling good every time? How long does it take for you to respond to an email or phone call? Does the customer understand the next step in the process and the timeline?

Don't neglect content marketing during the core touch phase. If it's time to select countertops, offer information on materials. If it's time for installation, provide tips on preparing the home.

### LAST TOUCH

The last touch is where our business often falls down. We may be looking ahead to the next project. Yet the customer has issues that, frankly, may seem nitpicky to us, but are important to them.

Prepare the customer ahead of time that there will be final project tweaks. Otherwise they may be alarmed when they see something that needs adjusting. Reassure them you will do a final walk through together and you will handle the punch list within a certain time frame.

Here is when you want to deliver an experience that is so exceptional that you receive five-star ratings on social networks. Webb cites the example of one company he knows that delivers

all of its jetted tubs with an enormous basket of spa goodies.

Webb then shares two personal home improvement experiences: one positive, one negative.

"I recently hired a contractor to lay tile in my home. He was pleasant and professional and delivered on his promise throughout. What he did at the end surprised me. When everything was cleaned up and the floor looked fabulous, he asked if I could sit down for a moment. When I did, this is what he said.

"Mr. Webb, I'm a small contractor and the opportunity to do this kind of work is an honor for me and I just want you to know that I appreciate the opportunity to do this work for you. If I can ever be of service to you in any way in the future, it would be a genuine honor."

"He said this with a hundred percent sincerity. It wasn't robotic. He wasn't faking it. In fact...he pulled out his wallet and showed me a picture of his family.

"We have a low expectation for the customer service in this type of work. He wasn't selling luxury cars. He was laying tile. So it really stood out when he showed this exceptional service and touch-point moment. He made me not just his customer but his advocate. At every opportunity, I recommend him to friends, family and acquaintances."

The author had a different experience with a contractor who installed a rotating rack in a closet to accommodate his large collection of suits. The night after the job was done, the entire rack collapsed. When the contractor fixed it, he said, 'Just so you know, this wasn't my fault. Your clothes are too heavy.'

"If only he kept his mouth shut, he might still be in business today," Webb says. "He's not...I wasn't the only one he mouthed off to."

### IN-TOUCH

Staying in touch with customers after the job is done can't be about trying to upsell or ask for referrals. It has to be genuine. Follow up asking if everything is okay with their project. Ask for feedback on how the project went.

You can also send reminders like: "Sometimes we find as things settle after a few months, cabinet hinges may need adjusting. Here's how you can do it, or we are happy to come do it for you."

Or, "Now that you've had your new kitchen or bath for a few months, you may be wondering how to clean your cabinets, counters, faucets and so forth." Then send an email on each topic. If you installed lighting, where can they get replacement bulbs? And what kind and size should they be? Keep your market segments in mind.

"We know you like to cook. Here are a few recipes we thought you might like."

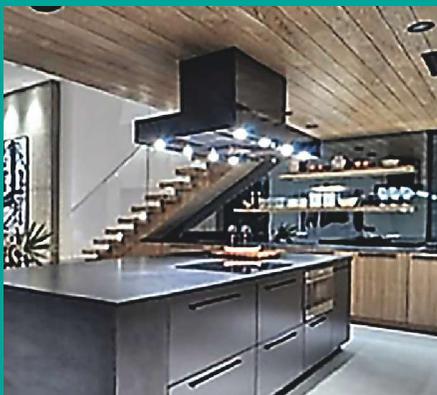
"We know you like to entertain, here are some great wines or cheeses we recently enjoyed."

As Webb points out, creating exceptional customer experiences for all customer types across all five touch points is not a one-time event. "Constantly live your customers' experiences and then collaborate with your colleagues to make them better and better." ■

Read past columns and features and send us your comments about this article and others at [KitchenBathDesign.com](http://KitchenBathDesign.com)

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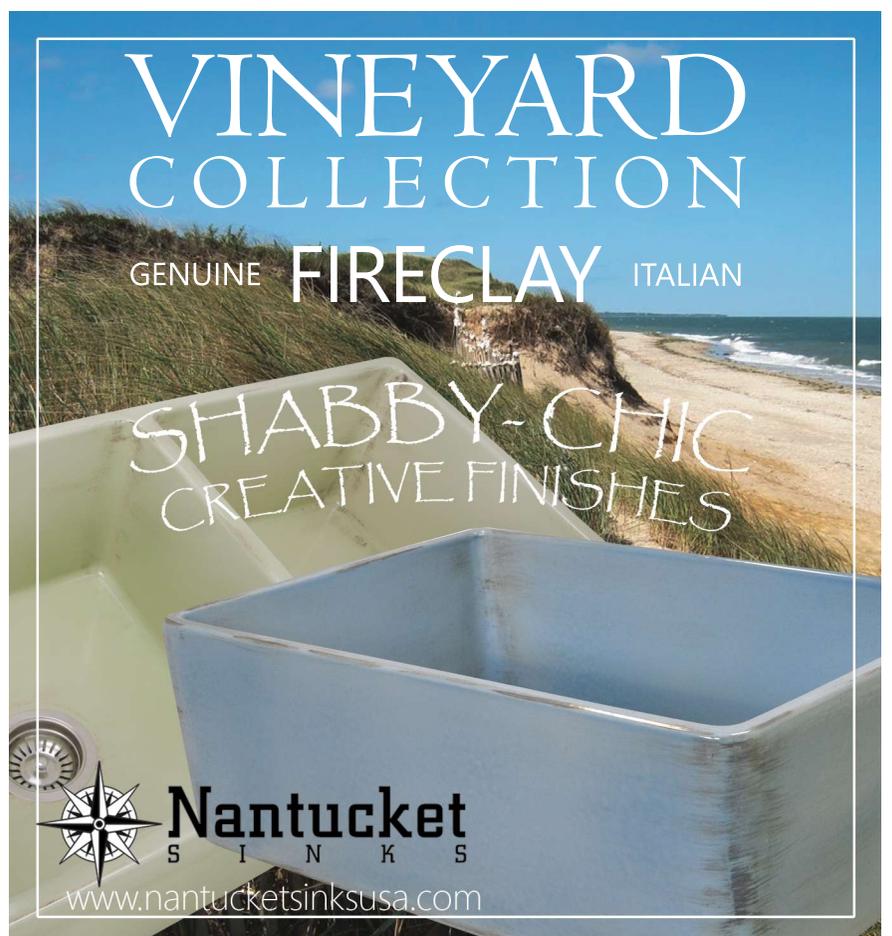
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# Line2



**WHAT IT IS:** An app that allows users to have a work line and a personal line on a single mobile device.

**WHAT IT DOES:** Creates another separate dedicated phone line for a user for either business or personal use, allowing users to have two lines on one mobile device. The second line is also accessible wherever the app is accessible – desktop, iPad or tablet. The app's features include texting with both group messages and picture messages, group calling, Wi-Fi calling, international calling and voicemail.

**WHO IT'S FOR:** Business professionals

**WHY KITCHEN AND BATH DESIGNERS NEED IT:** It's important to separate one's personal life from one's business life, but this can be difficult for kitchen and bath designers who are often "on" 24/7, or who need to keep track of business calls while traveling to and from project sites. Rather than juggling two mobile phones, Line2 allows designers to have separate dedicated lines for business and for personal calls for a monthly cost that varies by plan.

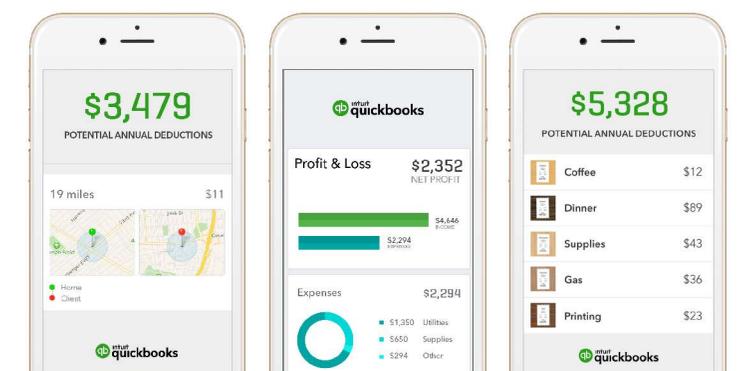
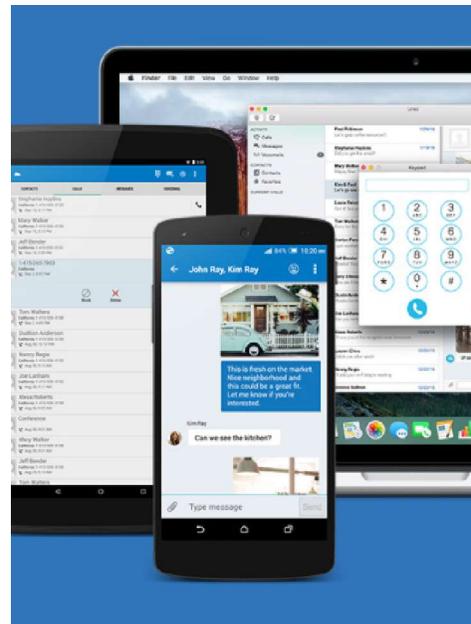
**AVAILABLE SINCE:** January 2014

**WHO MAKES IT:** Line2

**PLATFORM(S):** iOS for iPhone and iPad, Android, Fire OS, macOS and Windows

**WHERE TO FIND IT:** iTunes Store, Google Play Store

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** <https://www.line2.com/>



# QuickBooks Self-Employed



**WHAT IT IS:** An app to help self-employed business professionals complete taxes and estimate potential deductions.

**WHAT IT DOES:** QuickBooks Self-Employed tracks mileage, collates business receipts and expenses and enables users to send and receive invoices, allowing self-employed professionals to separate business and personal expenses, estimate full tax deductions for business expenses, manage business transactions, estimate quarterly and annual taxes as well as bundling taxes with Turbo Tax to simplify taxes. Quickbooks Self-Employed can be connected to a desktop computer for organization optimization.

**WHO IT'S FOR:** Self-employed individuals, contractors, freelancers, etc.

**WHY KITCHEN AND BATH DESIGNERS NEED IT:** Along with the tax readiness, QuickBooks Self-Employed offers tools that help users find and maximize deductions, allowing kitchen and bath designers to maximize time and take advantage of tax deductions.

**AVAILABLE SINCE:** January 2015

**WHO MAKES IT:** Intuit Quickbooks

**PLATFORM(S):** iOS for iPhone and iPad, Android OS, Windows and Mac

**WHERE TO FIND IT:** iTunes Store, Google Play Store

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/Self-Employed>

# ColorSmart by BEHR Mobile



**WHAT IT IS:** An app to preview, match and coordinate colors.

**WHAT IT DOES:** The ColorSmart app allows users to browse through Behr's colors, photo-match to a color, preview chosen colors in different rooms and styles, paint a room image with touch-and-tap technology and save colors and room images to preview later.

**WHO IT'S FOR:** Designers and homeowners

**WHY KITCHEN AND BATH DESIGNERS NEED IT:** Color matching on-the-go can be vital for remodeling projects. This app allows designers to find just the perfect color from anywhere and show clients color options for their projects.

**AVAILABLE SINCE:** September 2011

**WHO MAKES IT:** Behr

**PLATFORM(S):** iOS for iPhone and iPad, Android OS

**WHERE TO FIND IT:** iTunes Store, Google Play Store

**FOR MORE INFO:** <http://www.behr.com/consumer/colors/mobile-apps>



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a long, white, form-fitting dress with a deep V-neckline and a side cutout, stands in a modern shower stall. The shower stall features a light-colored marble wall with a pattern of small, dark, geometric cutouts. The fixtures are made of polished brass, including a ceiling-mounted showerhead with three adjustable nozzles, a handheld showerhead, and several body jets. The floor is made of large, light-colored square tiles.

# NON-CONFORMED *By* BRIZO

Some styles break the mold; some ignore it altogether. The *Litze™ Bath Collection* by Brizo combines a modern, minimalist design with unexpected touches like a ceiling mount pendant showerhead, for a look that's inspired by many eras—and confined to none.

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# Closet Designer Inspires Skill Expansion

BY ANITA SHAW

Kitchen and bath designers can look to other rooms and elements for additional revenue streams, and Denise Butchko encourages a closer examination of custom closet design.

**CHICAGO** — Great kitchen and bath design encompasses a number of different elements – beauty, function, style and, maybe most importantly, the personality of the person it reflects.

Those same concepts led designer Denise Butchko, principal of Butchko and Company in Chicago, from her roots in marketing and image consulting to closet design and education.

Well known in the kitchen and bath industry for her speaking engagements about closet design, Butchko frequently partners with kitchen and bath designers on master closet projects, translating the organizational and storage concepts that are so cleverly used in

kitchens and baths into equally well designed and organized closet spaces.

Her interest in the field grew out of her work in image consulting, and she notes, “Image consulting consists of cultivating a wardrobe style for a client that takes into account coloring, body type, personal style, and their energy and lifestyle.” While she loved her work, Butchko soon realized that it was hard to make a good living at it.

Realizing that people will pay for the structure of the closet, she turned her attention to learning what should could about designing closets, with the intention of combining it with image consulting. “I haven’t woven in

the image consulting, and ended up staying with closet design,” states Butchko, a Certified Storage designer through the Association of Closet and Storage Professionals.

Honing her craft meant learning first about general unit cabinetry and then custom work, where she learned in-depth techniques about wood and woodworking. “I learned from a mill-worker about cabinets and the difference between boxes, i.e. cabinets, and parts, i.e. closet systems – where one worked well and where the other didn’t – and how I could be making design mistakes if I was trying to use just these parts in a home office that really needed to be cabinets,” she notes.

## LEARNING AND GROWING

Beginning her business as an independent closet designer in 2007 turned out to be a greater risk than first thought, as the housing bubble was about to burst. But, Butchko had chosen not to manufacture, which made her firm more flexible, allowing her to maneuver the rocky economic path and survive.

“The vast majority of closet companies start with a manufacturing business model and build out sales and design from there,” she explains. “I was doing the opposite, with design as the primary focus.”

Butchko and Company specializes in custom closet and storage solutions, and the primary clientele is fellow business partners such as kitchen and bath designers, interior designers and architects. “I collaborate with them and their clients to create these designed solutions,” she remarks.

She will often do a design for a professional who’s in another part of the country. “They then take the design I create, do their own field measurements for verification and work with their own manufacturer to get the closet fabricated and installed. It’s a great way to work,” she says.

Most of her designs are contemporary, per request, and she channels the simplicity and organization of a contemporary minimalist style into her designs, while still adapting to the overall style of the home.

It works especially well in the Chicago market, where she does most of her work. “This market demands total space maximization,” where every possible inch vertically and horizontally needs to be used.

Butchko and Company doesn’t carry any product lines, and all projects are manufactured in a custom shop on a job by job basis. The firm also uses a lot of closet accessories from Hafele, Rev-A-Shelf and Sugatsune.

While she has a set footing in closet design, Butchko works with any and all types of custom storage projects. A recent notable project was one she called “Channeling Frank Lloyd Wright,” which incorporated the home’s craftsman style into a custom library and reading room.



↑ This space was redesigned to accommodate a Hers (2/3) and His (1/3) division of space, with an elegant island packed with drawers. Behind are lighted glass shelves to show off the best of her collection.

▣ Seeing one’s jewelry equals wearing one’s jewelry. These lighted glass-top jewelry drawers add both beauty and function in a stylish way.

▣ Lighting and glass ‘amp up’ the ‘glam’ factor in a closet. These framed glass doors with glass shelves and vertical LED lighting highlight a shoe collection worth showing off.



Photos: Mike Kaskel



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Photo: Mike Kaskel

▣ Converting a dining room to a library/reading room in a Craftsman style home in Chicago took both creativity and great products. Butchko embellished and matched so that the style harmonized with the home and the space became truly warm and usable.

**SPEAKING AND EDUCATING**

Butchko has become well-known in kitchen and bath design circles for her educational marketing and closet design webinars, sharing her storage and design techniques and showing professionals how to move beyond the mainstays of the kitchen and bath.

She is a pilot speaker of NKBA's Chapter Education program, with seminars such as "Closet Design Beyond Measure," "Boutique Inspired Closet Design" and marketing topics like "Beyond The Selfie – Using Pictures and Video to Leverage Your Brand."

Butchko has also started an on-demand course, "Learn Closet Design On Line," where she shares her knowledge of closet design. The

course includes three recorded modules, all accessible online. A few times a year she runs the program live online and interacts with the students on assignments.

The first module extensively covers the evolution of the closet industry, as well as how to work with the business model the student is working from. She explains that kitchen and bath designers or cabinet manufacturers working on a closet design will be working from another set of standards, so she set out to clarify closet and custom storage design standards.

Her later modules cover larger projects, including master closets and walk-ins. "The bigger the closet gets, the more options you can mix in," she says. "So many more people are wanting higher-end and more beautiful looks now, so designers need to learn how to capitalize on the trend and make more money from it – and enjoy the process as well, of course."

"Designers are already in the home, with people that trust them and are willing to give them a significant amount of money to help them with their homes," she says, adding, "A great closet helps [resale value] so much!"

Butchko has also authored several books, including two for the business-to-business market: *Closet Design Beyond Measure* and *How to Design a Walk In Closet*, as well as *The Consumer Guide to Closet Design*. All of her books focus strictly on how to design a functional closet.

Her goal moving forward is to expand into teaching and create educational tools for the design industry, moving away from designing. "I'm still doing closets and I like designing closets very much," she stresses. "It keeps me creating new content, and helps me be able to train and teach people because I am up on what's going on in the industry." ■



Photo: Denise Butchko

▣ Crafted from White Ash, this big closet had a big budget and took months to complete (so named The Big Ash Job). Maximizing space included an island on wheels and shoe shelves behind three-way mirrored doors.



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# Hospitality Influences Residential Design

BY JAMIE GOLD, CKD, CAPS

Hospitality trends continue to influence kitchen and bath design thanks to everything from globalization to the surge in home-sharing platforms.

Hospitality trends have been inspiring residential design for decades and remain strong in influencing what clients request. What's fairly recent is a surge of homeowners becoming hospitality providers themselves through Airbnb and other home-sharing platforms.

What's also fairly new are millennials entering the home buying and remodeling markets with global tastes and expectations. They are among the group strongly driving home share popularity, too. Cross-pollination has never been stronger. These are some of the ways it's showing up.

## HOSPITALITY INSPIRATIONS AND IDEAS

Millennial Bobby Berk of Los Angeles-based Bobby Berk Interiors + Design (and a 2017 Kitchen & Bath Industry Show home-share trends presenter) comments, "We've been exposed to amazing design all over the world through the internet, and are constantly comparing what we see in real life to what we see on the web. Because of this, we rarely settle for anything other than exactly what we want." The millennial want list includes luxury touches, a

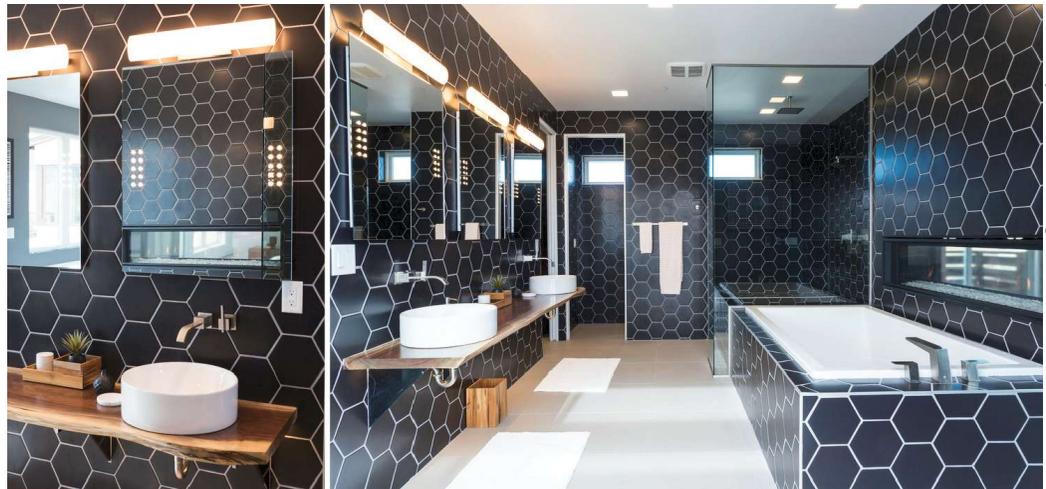


Photo: Bobby Berk Interiors + Design

Interesting patterns and shapes speak to travel-inspired millennial tastes.

contemporary aesthetic, smart technology, indoor-outdoor connection and a strong sense of place. "Taking regional cues and incorporating local cultural touches into designs" is key, Berk says, adding, "We see this in hospitality, and [home-share] projects are no different."

"Authenticity and provenance" are essential trends in hospitality design, points out Los Angeles-based Kirk Nix of KNA Design, adding, "It is important that each and every property evoke a sense of time and, most importantly, place." The same can be said for residential. Gone for the most part are the cliché excesses of the '80s, '90s and pre-Recession years. Calm is definitely in.

"I believe that access to more information is driving taste and expectations," comments Vicki Alani of CBT, a Boston-based architectural firm. "Subscribing to travel websites, style posts and storytelling podcasts [is] giving people greater appreciation for new lifestyles and trends. The time spent wishing we lived this 'other life' has become incorporated into our day to day, and travel/vacations are a perfect time to try out these trends," the architect adds.

"We often hear from homeowners that they get inspired for renovation projects while on vacation," shares Stephanie Szemetylo, an industrial designer with Kohler. "Most of what we've heard and seen is around large walk-in showers, integrated bathroom lighting in mirrors, more sophisticated showering configurations [and] smart bathrooms." The Wisconsin-based manufacturer works with both hospitality and residential projects. "People are spending more on travel and experiences versus objects/things, so we've seen that impacts the decisions they make for their homes. Technology and social media play a large hand in this, as well," she notes.

Jason Clifton designs residential, vacation rentals and hospitality projects at his Juneau, AK-based Bauer/Clifton Interiors firm. Residential "requests have evolved beyond that of standard hotel amenities. Specifics include: advanced technology as experienced in Asia (such as automated water closets and toilets), private outdoor living spaces for the enjoyment of nicer climates right off of the master suite and even more efficient space planning to include hidden features [like] all-in-one laundry machines, as experienced in Europe," he states.



Photo: KNA Design

Brass, especially brushed, is showing up in high-end hospitality and residential projects.

Mixed finishes, wood tones, organic shapes and oversized showers speak to hospitality inspirations.

Dramatic hotel style works more for residential powder rooms than master baths.



Photo: Kohler Co

## SMART STORAGE AND TECHNOLOGY

In another example of cross-pollination, smart technology goes on the road and hoteliers find ways to incorporate it into their suites, then travelers see these innovations and bring them home to their residential projects. "The millennial travelers typically use their smart



Photo: Bauer/Clifton Interiors



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\*\* Vs. major brands with 3<sup>rd</sup> rack. Major brands defined as TraQline Top 5 Market Share March 2017.



CBT/Ron Blunt - Photographer

⬆ Larger hotel baths are getting trophy tubs as well as showers.

phones for virtually everything; that integration must be available in their accommodations or they will look elsewhere,” Nix points out. “Televisions – either exposed or concealed within the mirror – are essential,” he adds. “Also, speakers for music throughout guest suites [are] more frequently requested from the millennial traveler.”

As to which hotel trends are making their way fastest into the residential world, Nix sees: “The sheer ability to stream your own television programs, listen to your personal music library, order food and drink, operate the lights, draw a bath, book travel and seamlessly access the internet, all using your own smart phone, is the next logical evolution in homes globally.”

“Residential is being influenced by hospitality and hospitality is being influenced by



Photo: Kohler Co.

⬆ TVs in mirrors are huge in hospitality and gaining popularity in residential.

residential,” notes Alani. “At the same time, they are both heavily influenced by [the] workplace. We have USB outlets everywhere so we can plug in anytime, anywhere.” She adds, “I am glad to say that ‘way out’ technology has been replaced by a desire to have technology that makes life simpler, for example, automatic shade devices, or lighting controls from the bed.”

Berk shares, “Whether each room has an Alexa from Amazon, or USB ports in all of the lamps and integrated into furniture, or remote operable window coverings, people want smart tech. It should be intuitive to operate and enrich their overall experience and comfort.”

Clifton observes, “With technology constantly upgrading at such a quick pace, requests for built-in speakers and TVs have been



Photo: KVA Design

⬆ Hospitality and residential spaces are still favoring wood-look tile.

replaced with designated areas for tablets and Bluetooth speakers to ensure a bathroom isn’t designed around a soon-to-be archaic piece of technology. With that said, automation has continued to gain popularity.”

**FURNITURE, FINISHES AND FIXTURES**

On the premium hotel suite side, Alani notes, “We are seeing more Japanese soaking tubs replacing standard soaker tubs, heated towel bars and lighting that can be set to scenes and controlled by the flick of a switch.” The Boston-based architect is also seeing the availability of unique colors and finishes for bathroom fixtures. “Black, white, rose, any color you can imagine. We are no longer restricted to chrome and brushed stainless or brass,” she says.

“Wood is definitely making a comeback in bathroom design,” observes Nix, including wood-look tiles. “Darker colors also seem to be



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Photo: Bauer/Clifton Interiors

☛ Vacation rentals are styling up to modernist millennial tastes.

well received in 2017. From grey to black, these tones denote modernism and minimalism. When used for walls, these colors exude luxury and relaxation. Also, 2017 is a banner year for the return to organic and natural materials,” the L.A.-based designer adds. He’s seeing “a variety of beautiful new dark bronze, graphite and black finishes coming into their own. Brass is back on the scene in a big way as well: When combined with the elegance of marble, this becomes one irresistible combination.”

Alaskan-based Clifton shares, “While the look of natural stone has always been and [will] likely continue to be highly desired, we’ve discovered the level of maintenance and care required isn’t suited for every client’s lifestyle, so we resort to alternative materials. The world of porcelain tile and quartz counter surfaces has evolved brilliantly within recent years and continues to do so.” Style-wise, he says, “Transitional forms are now considered builder-grade, so we’re noticing lighting and faucetry in unique forms being intermixed to achieve a more personalized design aesthetic. For instance, polished chrome and matte black pair well, or antique brass paired with oil-rubbed bronze for variety.”

“Modern, minimalist/contemporary design is a style that both hospitality and residential bathrooms are widely adopting, and will definitely continue,” predicts Kohler’s Szemetylo.

“Must-haves for the master bath are larger showers, clean lines and floating vanities. More storage. Universal Design, including bench seats in showers and an emphasis on comfort for all ages and abilities,” declares L.A. designer Berk. “As a finish, brass is back, and seems to be here to stay, although the brushed variety seems to be preferential. Golds and mixed metals continue to be prominent. I’m also seeing a lot of graphic, three-dimensional and even concrete tiles being used in bathrooms. We love to use black accents and we’re happy to carry these into bath areas, as well!”

#### LAST WORDS

Regardless of size, color or shape, hospitality and residential are both about the user’s experience and well-being, the pros agree. “A home bathroom is a different context than the hotel bathroom. You can still be inspired by the style and features of a hotel, but you’ll need to remember the realities of everyday life and plan for storage and other amenities,” Szemetylo advises. Truth! ■



Jamie Gold, CKD, CAPS is an independent designer in San Diego, the author of *New Kitchen Ideas That Work* and *New Bathroom Idea Book* (Taunton Press), and a blogger, design journalist, seminar developer and industry consultant. Her website is [jgkitchens.com](http://jgkitchens.com).

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# Kitchen Design Strikes a Better Balance

BY KIM BERNDTSON

Designer transforms a nondescript spec home kitchen into a new space with improved function and aesthetics that complement the architecture.

## GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO —

Mikal Otten still remembers the first time he walked into this Greenwood Village, CO home, which serves as a second residence for his clients who had to remodel the kitchen because of damage caused by a water leak. The flooring and some cabinets had already been removed, leaving behind the skeletal framework from which he and interior designer Beth Armijo of Armijo Design Group could create a new space. The new design would focus on improved function and aesthetics as well as a better balance to complement the architecture.

“Those initial images are usually what push a design,” says the owner of Exquisite Kitchen

Design in Denver, CO, who indicates those first glimpses emphasized the spec home’s rather nondescript former self. “It was a relatively new home, only about seven or eight years old, but the finishes and everything inside were basic and cheaply done.”

Additionally, the cabinetry only reached to about 8', well short of the 11'-tall ceilings. “It looked like the kitchen was just thrown in,” he says, “and the design didn’t tie into the architecture whatsoever.”

## EYE-LEVEL DETAILS

To address some of the architectural issues, Otten added soffits above the cabinets along

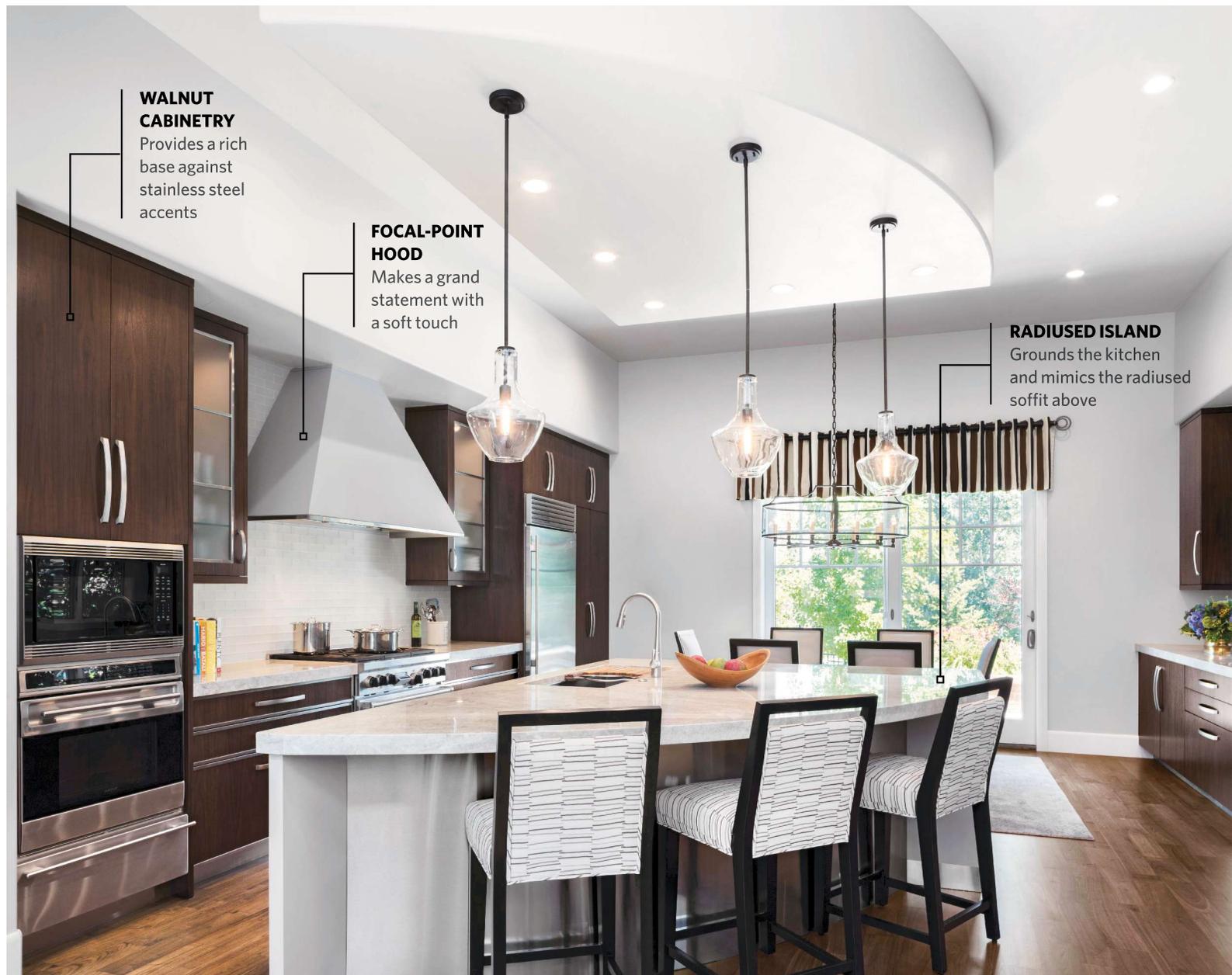
the cooking wall as well as in the bar area to connect with the soffit above the island.

“The island soffit was in the previous kitchen,” he explains. “We decided we wanted to keep it, but also update it.”

As such, he added three decorative Kichler pendants suspended from the centrally located soffit, hovering above the matching radiused island.

“Bringing the ceiling height down with the soffits keeps the eye at a decent height so the space isn’t so cavernous,” he explains. “It’s nice to have tall ceilings, but they can get out of control. The new soffits balance the space. I often think about the most comfortable spaces I am in, and their beauty is at eye level. To have to continually look up can be disconcerting.”

Eye-level details include the focal-point hearth and the bar, both of which capture attention depending upon the entry point into the kitchen. “When I design a space, I consider the



**WALNUT CABINETS**  
Provides a rich base against stainless steel accents

**FOCAL-POINT HOOD**  
Makes a grand statement with a soft touch

**RADIUSED ISLAND**  
Grounds the kitchen and mimics the radiused soffit above

Photos: Raul Garcia, Astula Inc.



■ The radiused island grounds the center of the kitchen and is painted in Plymouth Rock lacquer to match the ventilation hood.

entry areas,” he says. “When you walk into this kitchen from the front entry, you glance across the island and see the beautiful, contemporary hearth. From the garage entry on the opposite side, you have a different view...one where you glance across the island and rest your eyes on the bar. It’s important to find something that entices you into the space and welcomes you from each entry.”

Elements on the cooking wall include the Wolf range, which was original to the kitchen, and ventilation hood sheathed in a warm gray lacquer with stainless steel accents. “The hood is grand, while being soft,” says Otten. The backsplash, comprised of glass tile from Glasstints, adds a bit of texture and softness to the space.

Display cabinets to each side of the hood are illuminated with LED lights, and their frosted glass doors are framed with stainless steel to coordinate with the hood. Otten also framed the flat-cut walnut Premier Custom Built base cabinets – which feature a Hearthstone stain – with stainless steel accents. Utilizing the metal as a toe kick, as well as a façade for the island, pulls everything together.

“The hearth area, with its combination of stainless steel against dark, rich walnut, is a new interpretation that you don’t always see,” he says. “It adds such a fresh touch to the space. And since there is a lot of natural light, we were able to use the dark wood. The previous kitchen was a red cherry, but we decided to pull everything a bit more toward brown in the new kitchen. We landed on this rich walnut, which we lightened with the gray lacquer juxtaposed against it. The accents of stainless steel give a little extra punch.”

Otten completed the cooking wall with the original Sub-Zero refrigerator and Wolf wall oven and microwave, which were relocated to a more convenient height for his client. “We reconfigured this elevation for a better balance to the right and left of the beautiful, focal-point hood,” he adds.

### ECHOING ELEMENTS

On the opposite wall, Otten created a bar area that echoes many of the elements featured on the cooking wall. “The previous kitchen also included a bar, but it was rather boring,” says the designer. “This is the area that you see when you enter the kitchen from the garage, so we wanted elements that tied into the kitchen while softly calling attention to it.”

As such, Otten repeated the display cabinets with LED lights, stainless steel ‘frames’ and glass doors. The beverage cooler is balanced with stainless steel cabinets and a small bar sink is cut into the 2”-thick Madre Perla quartzite countertop. “The quartzite’s coloring, with its pale yellows and taupe-y grays against an ivory background, ties together the warm walnut with the cool steel,” he says.

The countertop’s waterfall edge adds a finishing detail, as does the partial wall element that extends from the ceiling to the countertop. “The wall detail finishes the cabinet run so it doesn’t just end at the side of the cabinet,” he states, noting that it also provides a separation between the drink mixing area and serving area.

Grounding the center of the space is the radiused island, which is painted in Plymouth Rock lacquer and accented with a stainless steel facade. It also includes plenty of seating as well as additional storage. “Every single cabinet has some sort of specialized storage,” he points out, calling attention to utensil dividers, spice storage, pot/pan storage, etc. “We included plenty of drawers and rollouts behind doors so we could make her new kitchen as functional and useful as possible.

“Overall, this is a great new space for my clients,” he continues, “classic and beautiful, without being too contrived or overdone. It’s a space you can really envision living in.” ■



■ Improving function was an important consideration for Otten’s client so every cabinet has some sort of specialized storage, including this drawer for pots, pans and lids.



■ The bar area echoes many of the elements featured on the cooking wall, including walnut cabinetry with stainless steel ‘frames.’ The 2”-thick Madre Perla quartzite countertop’s waterfall edge adds a finishing detail, as does the partial wall element that ends the cabinet run and extends from the ceiling to the countertop.



# THE INNOVATORS

KBDN highlights **50** top innovators whose work, creative talents, business acumen and professionalism are currently leading the way for the industry and elevating the kitchen and bath trade. — BY KBDN STAFF





**T**he kitchen and bath trade loves great design; it's no secret that great projects are a driving force in this industry. Indeed, creativity and artistry are frequently recognized and rewarded through a plethora of design competitions, with glossy project photos splashed across the pages of magazines, websites, blogs and even on TV.

But in the celebration of design, the very professionals who create those projects and elevate the industry are sometimes overlooked. Yet great design doesn't exist in a vacuum; the kitchen and bath industry continues to prosper largely due to the efforts of innovators who aren't afraid to lead the way and chart their own course, whether through design, education, technology, showroom development, community service, new business models or specialty areas that evolve alongside today's ever-changing consumers.

For this reason, *Kitchen & Bath Design News* is pleased to announce its inaugural *KBDN* 50 list of Innovators, honoring some of the industry's finest dealers, designers and industry leaders who are out there on the front lines, right now, redefining the kitchen and bath trade.

Nominated by their peers and then carefully reviewed by the *KBDN* nominating committee, the 2017 Innovators reflect a true cross section of the industry.

Some are in the early stages of their careers; others have devoted decades to the industry. Some have showrooms; others are independent designers.

Some specialize in an essential niche – such as Universal Design, theme design, decorative plumbing and hardware, the luxury market, sustainable design, appliance showroom design or virtual reality technology – and, in many cases, they have literally and single-handedly redefined that niche, changing how spaces are conceived, designed and experienced.

Of course some have created entirely new niches, such as the online design portfolio better known as Houzz, and the Network Management System business management software program created specifically for kitchen and bath dealers.

From seasoned design professionals who devote hundreds of hours to mentoring the next generation of design talent to authors who educate the public about key topics like safety and sustainability, many of the designers on the list have made sharing their knowledge a priority. They give seminars and host webinars, speak at conferences and teach college courses, and share their knowledge through websites, blogs, radio shows, HGTV appearances and advice columns.

A number of these innovators are also active in various professional organizations, serving the industry through their work with local and national chapters of their associations, buying groups and other industry groups. These design professionals are integral to creating educational programs for the industry and funding scholarships for design students; they foster networking opportunities and develop unique ways to engage with their communities, both within the trade and with consumers.

They lead by coloring outside of the lines, and in doing so, create new pathways for other design professionals to follow.

Of course design innovation is also an important part of the package, with many of the top 50 having received myriad awards and design accolades for creating fashionable and functional spaces that wow all who see them. By incorporating their unique vision into their kitchen, bath and showroom projects, they not only dramatically improve the lives of their clients, they also raise the bar for all of the industry. And ultimately, that's what innovation is all about.

On this and the following 12 pages, *KBDN* spotlights "The Innovators" – 50 extraordinary kitchen and bath professionals who are changing the industry right now. ■

*KBDN* will begin accepting nominations for next year's Innovators on January 1, 2018. Visit [KitchenBathDesign.com](http://KitchenBathDesign.com) for further details.



## Richard T. Anuszkiewicz

*Passionate, multi-talented young designer blazes his own trail*

A passion for design and an appreciation of style are two driving forces behind Richard T. Anuszkiewicz's accomplishments.

The creative director of Richard Living lifestyle brand and executive director of ABS Architects Casework

division is a 2010 graduate of Virginia Tech's NKBA-accredited Residential Design program who has received numerous accolades. Since being named to the inaugural NKBA "30 Under 30" list in 2013, Anuszkiewicz has quickly become recognized as a kitchen design authority with creativity and passion.

Unafraid to forge his own path, he notes, "For me, innovation is trail blazing, and my main goal has always been to change one's perception of what the kitchen and bath could or should be."

Launching the renowned #FASHIONFORWARD Tour in 2014, Anuszkiewicz's love for public speaking has led him to present nationally at premier industry events including KBIS and Dwell on Design Los Angeles. In 2016, he was a part of the DXV by American Standard Design Panel, commissioned to design a kitchen for their national advertisement campaign.

Anuszkiewicz has been highlighted in various media, including *Vanity Fair*, *House Beautiful*, *Architectural Digest*, *Traditional Home*, *The Washington Post*, *Robb Report*, HGTV and more. He enjoys staying up to date with trends and technologies and most recently was abroad at Salone del Mobile in Milan and The London Design Festival as part of Modenus #designhounds.



## James Baloga

*Entrepreneur acts as architect of a multi-location retail giant*

James Baloga has carved out more than simply a major entrepreneurial presence in the kitchen and bath industry's retail sector. Along the way, he also established the very blueprint for the kind of high-volume, full-service, multi-location retail business

model that has seen his company grow into perhaps the largest independent kitchen and bath dealership in the nation.

As owner and founder of the Holbrook, NY-based Consumers Kitchen & Bath Specialists, Baloga envisioned, and then ultimately spearheaded, the growth of a corporate entity whose success has been fueled both by traditional word-of-mouth referrals and an aggressive, savvy media advertising campaign.

Since its founding in 1977, Consumers Kitchens & Baths has served literally hundreds of thousands of Long Island homeowners through its highly systemized ordering/warehousing/service operation.

Operating from five "Specialty Supercenters," the company boasts display facilities in excess of 100,000 sq. ft., and spotlights more than 650 full-size kitchen cabinet styles, along with an expansive selection of vanities, countertops, plumbing products, accessories and custom closet systems.



## Bob Black

*Company principal offers legacy of community service, fine design*

Bob Black has long recognized the value of fostering a corporate environment that encourages community service. He should. It's in his bloodlines.

Black is a principal at Morris Black and Sons, Inc., a multi-faceted building supplies company that has been a major presence since 1908 in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley.

Company founder Morris Black and his sons set examples for community service through their involvement with various local organizations, and the family has upheld that tradition, along with the firm's role as a trendsetter.

The company's kitchen and bath division, Morris Black Designs, established in the 1970s, grew from a separate department specializing in stock and custom cabinets into an award-winning entity whose kitchens have been featured in national magazines and on cable TV.

In 1976, Morris Black and Sons predicted the do-it-yourself trend by opening a free-standing home center to market building products directly to homeowners. In 1986, the company consolidated its operations in an Allentown, PA facility that includes a 4,000-sq.-ft. kitchen and bath showroom. An architectural millwork department was created to supply the commercial and institutional markets. Soon afterward, Morris Black and Sons was manufacturing its own custom casework. Today they are on the cutting edge of innovation, embracing current technology trends, including 3-D augmented reality, to provide homeowners the opportunity to stand in their virtual kitchen.



## Danielle Burger, CKBD

*Designer grows business through continuing ed and marketing savvy*

Danielle Burger's aptly named design firm, Kitchen Vitality, is the perfect descriptor for the high-energy design professional who made a big splash in the kitchen and bath industry when she was named NKBA U Professional of the Year in 2016.

Her design knowledge, marketing savvy and enthusiasm continue to serve her well as the 2017 Vice President of Professional Development for the Chicago Midwest Chapter of the NKBA, and her Houzz badges for customer service (in 2015, 2016 and 2017) attest to her ability to connect with her clients.

With a background in art history, her decade-long career has spanned the gamut from decorating model condo units to working at a high-end DPH showroom to running her own business, first in Chicago, and most recently in North Carolina.

She explains, "I work with clients in a collaborative way. Adjectives such as 'cozy' or 'inviting' can be easily misinterpreted. Instead, I study a client's ideabook on Houzz or Pinterest or an adored object in the home, such as a piece of art or furniture. This helps me tap into their unspoken aesthetic and create a design concept that is unique and personal."

Burger actively pursues continuing education opportunities, and believes these have really helped to take her career to the next level.



## Nar Bustamante

*Designer, contractor and artist defies traditional boundaries*

Nar Bustamante, president and principal designer of Nar Design Group in Sacramento, CA, was born in Mexico City and raised in San Francisco. His world travels deeply influence his appreciation for art, culture and good design. This, along with client's artwork,

provide the inspiration for his numerous award-winning projects.

Bustamante is ambitious in his goals for his new and growing firm, and his more than a dozen design awards suggests he may get there. He seeks to "reinvent kitchen design rules in California by producing some of the most sought-after kitchens and homes with a unique take on modern and eclectic designs." To his point, a powder room featuring oversized imagery of peeling paint was a *KBDN* Design Award winner this year.

"Every design must be a deep reflection of the client, executed in accuracy and quality," Bustamante explains. "I want the spaces I create to be not only highly functional, but they should also evoke a feeling, a conversation and a desire for art. Clients hire me to create the largest commissioned art installation in their home. Over the years I have come to realize I'm no longer designing kitchens and bathrooms, I am designing a lifestyle reflection of how the clients see themselves in a material world."

Bustamante has also shown a knack for cultivating young designers. Last year, 26-year-old Ashlee Richardson, a Nar Design Group associate, was named one of the National Kitchen & Bath Association's 30 Under 30.



## MaryJo Camp, CKD, CBD, CAPS, CID, CGP, CLIPP

*Educator brings kitchen designers, appliance manufacturers together*

Award-winning designer and educator Mary Jo Camp has been a major player in the kitchen and bath industry for decades. However, the principal of Denver, NC-based DesignCamp is best known for her work in bringing appliance manufacturers and kitchen designers together, and helping these manufacturers

to better understand the needs of the kitchen design community.

Never has this been more essential than today. With technology changing at such a rapid-fire pace, it's critical for all players to be on the same page to meet demand for today's technologically savvy spaces.

Camp has held positions ranging from Principal of Great Kitchens in Menlo Park and Adjunct Professor at Canada College to Vice President of Marketing and Lead Designer for Standards of Excellence's State of the Industry appliance showrooms. She's designed numerous state-of-the-art appliance showrooms and has served on design councils for Thermador and Jenn-Air.

Camp authored the Kitchens With Confidence training program designed for Lowe's, and her kitchens have been featured in the Bosch Kitchen Design app.

Proud of her work in helping to bring designers and appliance manufacturers together, she notes, "Appliance manufacturers are finally understanding the needs of the design community," adding, "I think there's a broader knowledge now and that helps to create a sense of teamwork, which further advances the industry."



## Lori Carroll, NCIDQ, ASID, IIDA, NKBA Member

*Multi-award-winning designer honored as 'woman of influence'*

With 40+ national design awards, Lori Carroll is well known for her creative talents. Her professional accolades began early, winning countless ASID and IIDA awards over the years, including eight local Best of Show awards since

1998. Most recently, she brought home the Gold in KBDN's 2017 Kitchen & Bath Design Awards, Master Bathrooms Over \$50,000 category, and has also won the NKBA Pinnacle of Design, the 2016 NKBA Kitchen of the Year and 2017 NKBA Bathroom of the Year awards.

Neither are her talents confined to the U.S.; in 2016, she won the Kitchen & Bathroom Designer Awards' International Designer of the Year award.

But for all her design expertise, Carroll is equally skilled as a savvy business woman, having been honored as Tucson's 2015 Women of Influence - Female Business Owner of the Year.

"Being a small town girl from Iowa, it's hard to believe all that has happened in my career over the past few decades. Although my business is still based in a smaller market, with a diverse demographic, I have been fortunate to go from winning Best of Show at local ASID Design Excellence competitions to being recognized nationally and internationally for my designs. I still see myself as a relatively simple person; embracing a profession that looks glamorous on the outside but takes an elevated level of drive and dedication to succeed."



## Ellen Cheever, CMKBD, ASID, CAPS

*Educator and role model acts as mentor to the design community*

Ellen Cheever is the very embodiment of a Certified Master Kitchen & Bath Designer, having forged a matchless legacy across four-plus decades as a designer, author, business leader, consultant, educator and mentor to literally thousands

of homeowners and design professionals.

A member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association's "Hall of Fame," and former director of educational services for the NKBA, Cheever is the author of more than 20 books and manuals on kitchen and bath design, and has served as a contributor to *Kitchen & Bath Design News*, for which she created a highly regarded seminar series melding cutting-edge design techniques with profit-making business management strategies.

In addition to heading her award-winning Wilmington, DE-based residential design firm, Ellen Cheever & Associates, Cheever has also combined her talents, expertise and experience to design showrooms, help launch products, develop kitchen/bath dealer networks and create trade-show exhibits and editorial sets. She continues to write, consult, design and present CEU programs on space planning, project management, product specification and related topics, including an annual series of live and online courses offered by Jenn-Air for maintaining AIA-, IDCEC- and NKBA-accredited design certifications.



## Sean Clarke

*Family business leader spearheads debut of urban design center*

Family and business are closely linked for Sean Clarke, president of Clarke, a premier kitchen and bath showroom destination. His grandfather opened a Connecticut-based appliance store back in 1955 and, several decades later, his father Tom Clarke continued the family tradition when he became the country's first Sub-Zero distributor

and opened the first Clarke showroom in Hopkinton, MA.

Operating the very first Sub-Zero showroom in the U.S., Clarke is now New England's exclusive distributor of high-performance appliance brands including Sub-Zero, Wolf, ASKO, Best and Scotsman as well as Waterstone Faucets and Dawn Sinks. Top-tier cabinet and countertop lines are also featured in vignettes at Clarke, which now has three showrooms.

Under Sean Clarke's direction, the company took on its most ambitious project, opening 7 Tide in the Boston Seaport a year ago, the company's first urban-based showroom. The prestigious project led to an invitation from Sub-Zero and Wolf for Sean Clarke to become the co-chair of their new Distributor Marketing Advisory Board.

"At 7 Tide, we have built our most ambitious showroom and test kitchen to date, and have already doubled its size within a year," he remarks. And, since the building provides more space than the company needs, it has attracted synergistic companies including Marvin Windows & Doors and Kohler to open inspiration centers at the address.



## Siobhan Daggett-Terenzi

*Hands-on designer helps shepherd in the next design generation*

Throughout her 25-year design career, Siobhan Daggett-Terenzi has found that giving clients a personalized experience is the key to success. After 12 years as the senior designer at a

local kitchen dealer where there wasn't enough time to be hands-on with clients, Daggett-Terenzi started Branford, CT-based Cucina Design in 2004. On her own, she has been able to work one-on-one with clients providing individual, specialized attention. This customized approach at her boutique design firm often extends past kitchen cabinet design into excursions to granite yards, tile companies and appliance stores. As she caters to individualized designs, she has made it a point to step outside of her comfort zones into such areas as Midcentury Modern, popular with the millennial population.

Additionally, Daggett-Terenzi is also active in bringing the next generation of designers into the industry. What began as a project with a local high school design teacher, interested in getting kids local apprenticeships, has led Daggett-Terenzi into mentoring three interior and kitchen design students from nearby University of New Haven. "We're always trying to bring new blood into the industry," she stresses, "to spark an interest in kitchen design."



## Mick de Giulio

*Renowned design leader unveils 11 ambitious new showroom concepts*

Mick de Giulio is one of the world's top kitchen designers. Beginning in the 1980s, he's been among a handful of individuals responsible for the transformation and elevation of the kitchen from a utilitarian space to what it is today: the soul and heartbeat of most homes. This is due, in no small part, to his ability, with each successive project, to consistently

advance bold new ideas and artistic visions for warmth, comfort and style.

De Giulio seems to especially push boundaries in the arenas of product and showroom design for brands like Kallista, SieMatic, Sub-Zero/Wolf and others. His 2002 Beaux Arts inspired kitchen for SieMatic is widely seen as an important design milestone in the industry.

Late last year, responding to a challenge put forth by long-time client, the late Bob Abt, owner of Abt Appliances in Glenview, IL, de Giulio took the wraps off a series of 11 interconnected kitchen vignettes at Abt's 100,000-sq.-ft. location, resulting in Inspiration Studio. Each vignette highlights the possibilities that can be achieved using 11 different brands of appliances: Bosch, Dacor, Gaggenau, Jenn-Air, La Cornue, LG, Monogram, Thermador, Samsung, Sub-Zero/Wolf and Viking. "The spaces were designed on a continuum, with each space flowing into one another," notes de Giulio, who consciously avoids declaring standard design boundaries like traditional and contemporary. "I wanted to challenge conventional design and inspire visitors to think differently about kitchens and appliances." Mission accomplished.



## Gail Monica Dent

*Promoting entrepreneurship is just part of this designer's success plan*

Gail Monica Dent is an interior designer with an MBA and a project management approach guided by her Five Essential Keys, a step-by-step approach to completing a job. "I bring in a level of planning that includes project and design management, which

represent the gap between design and construction."

Beyond her business, Provanti Designs in Bellevue, WA, Dent serves as a mentor to designers and is involved in organizations that encourage entrepreneurship. She understands that many designers have the talent to be creative, but lack the business knowledge or self-confidence to succeed. "I love owning my own company, and I just want to support other designers who want to do it on their own," she remarks. "I want them to receive recognition and numerous awards, just as I have."

Dent also participates in the Houzz Industry Research Barometer, the Sherwin-Williams Pro Advisory panel, the NKBA and a local organization, Washington Women in Need. Committed to improving the lives of low-income women in Washington, the organization WWIN provides financial assistance for health care and education. "Many of these women are down on their luck, and when you hear their stories and see things turn around for them, it's amazing," Dent reports.



## Kimball Derrick, CKD

*Renowned designer creates inspired kitchens, showrooms*

Kimball Derrick has been guided by a trio of principles that have defined his 35-year career as a nationally known designer of inspired kitchens: (1) strive for originality in every aspect of a project; (2) focus on the delicate but critical balance between functionality

and aesthetics, and (3) maintain a sensitivity to purpose by understanding the kitchen's role in the home.

Those principles have served both Derrick and his clients admirably.

A Cincinnati native with roots in the custom woodworking trade, Derrick developed a passion for exquisite design and craftsmanship during an era when the demand for custom cabinetry was dovetailing with sharp growth in the kitchen and bath market. That passion led to the founding of a well-regarded custom cabinet manufacturing company and, eventually, to the launch of a successful kitchen design firm.

Derrick has also distinguished himself as president of the Southern Ohio Chapter of NKBA, as a board member for the Bath & Kitchen Buying Group (BKBG) and as a judge and three-time regional winner of the Sub-Zero/Wolf Regional Design Competition. He recently created showrooms in New York and Cincinnati for Sub-Zero/Wolf, and for Mason, OH-based Tisdell Distributing, while continuing to sustain his business with showroom designs, consulting roles and kitchen and bath projects across the U.S.



## Sandra Diaz-Velasco

*International designer wins awards for architectural vision*

Sandra Diaz-Velasco adds an international architectural flair to all of her designs. Diaz-Velasco, who holds a license in architecture, was originally an architect in her native Colombia before coming to the U.S. to serve as project designer for Dean Lewis

Architecture. She later served as project architect for Taylor & Taylor Partnership in Miami Beach, FL, before founding her own firm, Eolo A&I Design in Miami in 2008.

Many of her award-winning designs have been featured in consumer and trade publications and, in 2016, she was recognized as a *Modern Luxury Interiors* Dynamic Woman, and featured in the Ornare Miami Tastemakers Showcase. An award that served as a culmination of her 20 years of contributions to the profession in her adopted home of Florida was being selected as a "Star on the Rise" by the Design Center of the Americas (DCOTA) in 2015.

Diaz-Velasco is known for her sleek, contemporary designs that are on the cutting edge of technology, and integrating "smart home" components without obstructing the design's form and function. She is constantly striving to stay in tune with the "latest of the latest."

"My favorite new design elements are...where we had to deal with the challenge of incorporating functional elements without sacrificing design. In this project for a young executive in Miami, we made the kitchen stylish but not distracting, almost as though it were hiding in plain sight."

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## Kathleen Donohue, CMKBD, CAPS

*Designer and educator spotlights theme design, sustainability*

Kathleen Donohue has a long and storied career, having worked as an award-winning designer, speaker, author and educator, with specialty areas including theme design, architectural history, sustainability and accessibility.

Theme design remains a passion for the Neil Kelly designer, who's currently working on designing a historically accurate garden shed in a neighborhood of 1910 historic homes, after recently completing a master bath in a 1910 Greek revival home, restoring it to the classical style.

As part of the Neil Kelly team, she is also helping to elevate the industry through her efforts with sustainability, and notes that the company is a "B Corporation," which "is a special designation saying that you choose to put people before profits - pay living wages, give back to the community, be very conscious of sustainability, etc." She incorporates this into her own designs by creating more energy-efficient features and giving clients options for natural materials rather than products that off-gas.

Future plans include what she calls "rewirement" - a semi-retirement that will allow her to focus on fewer projects for previous clients and referrals. She concludes, "The idea of being able to work on one project at a time - what a luxury! We do this for the inherent love of it, and I'm looking forward to spoiling my clients with all my attention!"



## Gail Drury, CMKBD

*Trend setting designer and mentor has a passion for personalization*

While designer Gail Drury is well known for her trend-setting designs, multiple design competition awards and plethora of published projects, she is currently breaking ground in an equally meaningful, if less visible, arena: as a mentor to the next generation of young designers.

The president of Drury Design and former NKBA instructor is on the board of a local college, and says she "loves mentoring students and being part of an interior design advisory board." Her commitment to promoting future designers extends to her business, where she hires student interns to give them a taste of the industry.

With 35+ years of experience, Drury recognizes the need to be well versed in the latest trends, and has been making a name for herself in design circles with what she calls "a new twist on modern, I call it 'farm-house modern,' offering a unique, contemporary look that also focuses on convenience."

She believes her design success comes from her commitment to creating personalized living areas that truly fit the client's lifestyle, and channels her passion for art and interior architecture into creating spaces that not only address fashion and function, but that also maximize the client's ideas and preferences.



## Gary Erickson

*Plumbing & hardware specialist advances the DPH channel*

Gary Erickson's goal, apart from running his California-based company, is to advance the business and professional interests of the decorative plumbing and hardware channel, a critical design and specifying niche in the residential construction market.

Erickson is fulfilling that goal through a track record of service to the Decorative Plumbing & Hardware Association, a 300-member trade organization of independent dealers, suppliers, manufacturers' reps and other key players in the decorative plumbing and hardware industry.

Erickson, who began his career in 1987 at Snyder Diamond, a major kitchen and bath presence in southern California, is a partner and vice president of Renaissance Design Studio. The company's pair of luxury showrooms serve the Los Angeles market with a comprehensive collection of products - including architectural hardware, designer plumbing fixtures, handcrafted doors, stairs and custom millwork - and an equally wide range of services, from millwork design and installation to construction and project consultation.

Long active in the DPHA, Erickson has been honored by DPHA for his company's showroom, and as "Showroom Professional of the Year." His installation this month for a two-year term as DPHA president epitomizes the kind of volunteer leadership that trade associations rely upon to operate and thrive.



## Bill Feinberg

*Risk-taking CEO puts emphasis on giving rather than getting*

For more than 30 years, Bill Feinberg has been taking career risks. His first big leap was in 1984, when he went from being a door-to-door window salesman to owner of a cabinetry and remodeling business. Not one to shy away from adversity, Feinberg - who is the president and CEO of Fort Lauderdale, FL-based Allied Kitchen & Bath,

as well as its co-founder - took a second leap when he decided to pursue a costly dream in the middle of the Great Recession, tearing down three duplexes to build a new 15,000-sq.-ft. flagship showroom.

In 2016, he leapt again, adding a second showroom in Fort Lauderdale/Oakland Park's burgeoning Culinary Arts District. Feinberg is still pushing the envelope today, expanding his business into the outdoor kitchen market, growing his company's decorative hardware and plumbing selection, and collaborating with various big-name partners, such as Cosentino and Monarch Appliances.

His business risks have meant not only professional success but charitable returns to the community. On a monthly basis, Allied partners with local charities to host events in the showroom. Allied's 50-plus employees are the beneficiaries of Feinberg's motto: "If there's anything I can teach my employees - you get a lot more by giving than getting."



## Robin Rigby Fisher, CMKBD, CAPS

*Teaching design and sustainability keeps designer ahead of the curve*

Since Robin Rigby Fisher began designing kitchens and baths 32 years ago, the industry has changed dramatically. "Every single day, I learn something new," stresses Fisher. "It's

a career that constantly evolves, which is what I love."

An award-winning designer, Fisher has been a founding partner of both a Portland, OR design/build remodeling firm and an independent residential design firm. As an advocate of sustainable design, she has co-authored *Sustainable Design for the Kitchen and Bath Designer*, part of the Professional Resource Library for the NKBA.

During the interview process, the designer talks to her clients about their sustainability quotient with regard to indoor air quality, energy efficiency, water conservation, buying locally, recycled content and Universal Design. She states, "I don't think sustainability should be an option, it should just be what we do."

Fisher regularly shares her passion for design and sustainability with the next generation by teaching the cornerstone classes in kitchen and bath design at Portland Community College. "One of the reasons I teach is to keep me at the top of my game, because I expect my students to be at the top of their game," she reports.



## Jamie Gold, CKD, CAPS

*Designer and author spotlights today's timely issues*

Designer Jamie Gold is passionate about good design – and she knows that's about a lot more than just pretty spaces. The San Diego-based independent kitchen and bath designer and author was one of the first to embrace the healthy home movement, and she

considers it a personal mission to educate consumers and the industry at large about important issues such as sustainability, aging in place and how good design can also promote health and longevity. Indeed, these are all topics that she addresses in depth in her *New Bathroom Idea Book*, published in May.

She states, "Kitchen and bath professionals have long been involved in creating safe, functional, sustainable and stylish spaces that enhance our clients' properties. It's increasingly clear that we are also pivotal in enhancing their wellness through the growing link between healthy living and healthy homes."

A three-time "Best of Houzz" award winner, she has also been published in a diverse collection of media ranging from *The Huffington Post* and *SmartMoney.com* to a monthly Trend Spotting feature in *KBDN*. A well known blogger who can be found at trade shows and design events from coast to coast and internationally, she approaches each project with an eye toward "sensible style" that works for that particular space and its residents' needs.



## Jennifer Gilmer

*Award-winning designer hits the road to educate and publishes new tome on kitchen ideas*

It is hard to find a designer today whose portfolio of work, commitment to trade education and writing cuts a wider swath across the kitchen and bath industry. Jennifer Gilmer, CKD, is founder and owner of Jennifer Gilmer Kitchen

and Bath in Chevy Chase, MD. And, in over 30 years in the business, she has designed more than 1,000 kitchens, and her business has grown to become one of the top-billing design firms in the Washington, DC area.

Two years ago, Gilmer hit the road with *Kitchen & Bath Design News*, co-presenting day-long business and design seminars in eight markets per year. The program, "Client Engagement Strategies for Today's Evolving Market" continues the rich legacy of local trade education established by *KBDN* with Ellen Cheever from 2002 to 2015.

Most recently, Gilmer is the author of *The Kitchen Bible*, a guide for homeowners undertaking kitchen renovations. The book, with more than 250 full-color photographs and 224 pages, sold out its initial run and is in its second printing. Her work has been featured in numerous national publications including *Better Homes & Gardens*, *This Old House*, *Southern Living* and on HGTV.



## Christopher Grubb

*A passion for design leads down multiple roads*

Christopher J. Grubb's passion for the design industry is presented through his multiple roles. His internationally recognized design firm, ARCH-INTERIORS, based in Beverly Hills, CA, has had work profiled in hundreds of national and international magazines,

newspapers, books, and on social media. In addition, he is the owner and lead designer of The C.G. Collection and Autograph by Christopher Grubb, studios that collaborate with manufacturers on licensed home furnishing collections, lighting, plumbing fixtures, tile, decorative hardware, etc.

With regard to his lines, Grubb says, "I love designing product because it inspires me to focus on the detailing and intricacy of each unique piece."

Grubb also shares his design skills and expertise on multiple radio and television shows. This past summer, he recorded a series of educational courses for Construct-Ed, an on-demand website that provides online learning for the pros by the pros.

A sought-after speaker at industry events, Grubb enjoys his time connecting with other professionals. "There is such a sense of fulfillment when people come up to me at the end of a presentation and want to ask more questions, or even if they just say "wow,"" he stresses.

But at the end of the day, designing for a client is what sparks the most creativity. "My passion for design is having a client say 'we love what you did. It manifests us.' That's the end game. That's the reminder of why I went into this."



## Cheryl Hamilton-Gray

*Cutting-edge designer offers global perspective*

An award-winning designer known for her innovative approach to kitchen and bath architecture and design, Cheryl Hamilton-Gray is always on the cutting edge in everything from design to social media.

Her broad-based design background is grounded in a variety of global influences that address elements of balance, practicality, originality and textural harmony.

Hamilton-Gray was an immigrant to the U.S. who incorporates architectural and cultural influences from other continents into her distinctive designs – so it's no surprise that her work has earned her "Best of Houzz" awards for three years running, along with rave reviews on social media.

The well published 30-year veteran designer sees design as a holistic endeavor, explaining, "Arriving at a specific kitchen and bath design style, finish and color choice is an emotional experience for most clients, based on their life experiences, knowledge and beliefs. By taking time with clients to explore the possibilities of introducing, and combining, multiple colors, textures and finishes, I innovate by shifting away from the all-white or monotone 'comfort-zone.'

"As in nature; kitchens are, living and breathing, functional spaces. By introducing, and grouping, more colors and textures into the heart of the home, we create timeless, energetic and uniquely personal kitchens and bathrooms."



## Leslie Kalish

*Hitting the right color notes is in this designer's DNA*

Drawing on her background in textile and clothing design, Leslie Kalish has brought a new dimension to interior home design by paying particular attention to one detail: color. "Color is the pro-generator of everything we do," notes the designer, who is a Certified Color for Your Home Color Consultant.

As the design director for Obermeyer ski wear for 10 years, Kalish sat inside a control light box and analyzed lab dips to achieve perfect matches between the clothing line's various items. "From the hours I spent inside that box, I developed this eye for the undertone, rather than the mass tone," she explains.

Her firm, LMK Interiors in Lafayette, CA, utilizes a similar control light box that is a neutral gray with five different light settings. "When you put something inside this light box, it changes dramatically," the designer notes. "We basically do all of our work inside this box."

LMK has so many samples of tile, flooring, countertops and fabrics that its designers can build entire story boards inside the light box, providing complex woven color stories. "From the tone of flooring, cabinetry and stone, to a piece of art, a textile and finally the color on the walls – the simultaneous reactions of all these design elements should create harmony and beauty," Kalish stresses.



## Elina Katsioula-Beall, MFA, CKD

*Designer brings the magic of the movies to her clients' kitchens*

Award-winning designer Elina Katsioula-Beall infuses cinematic drama into each of her kitchen and bath designs, helping clients to live in their very own movie set. Prior to designing kitchens,

Katsioula-Beall studied classic art in her native Greece and then obtained a master's degree in theatrical design from Yale. The next stop was Hollywood as an art director for stage and television, including the Academy Awards.

Continuing along her design journey, she co-founded DeWitt Designer Kitchens with her husband, DeWitt Beall, in 2002. After her husband passed away in 2006, Katsioula-Beall moved the showroom to Pasadena from Studio City, and again in 2015 to Hollywood Hills. While working in a "disposable economy," Katsioula-Beall attempts to maintain a more sustainable design practice by taking cues in using reclaimed and repurposed materials from the "avant-garde" European market; she spends four months abroad in England, France, the Netherlands and Greece.

"Refined taste meets resourcefulness in less privileged societies, which feeds my imagination and fuels my creativity to be innovative when I design in Los Angeles," notes Katsioula-Beall. "As a designer, I believe that innovation means 'creating faster than they can copy.'" It is certain that her journey will continue to be compelling and full of accomplishments – in addition to the 17 NKBA Awards already received.



## Ken Kelly, CKD, CBD, CR

*Designer furthers knowledge in the kitchen and bath design industry*

Decades of experience in the design and remodeling industry has allowed award-winning kitchen designer Ken Kelly to be successful for more than 30 years.

Kelly, who studied architectural design and management in college, started the Williston Park, NY-based

Kitchen Designs by Ken Kelly in 1982 along with his wife, Grace. The couple remains principals and partners at the Long Island showroom.

In addition to being the number one Wood-Mode dealer in New York, and number seven in the nation, he has his own signature line of Ken Kelly cabinetry. His award-winning designs have been showcased in *The New York Times*, *House Beautiful*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Woman's Day*, *Designer Kitchen & Baths* and *Distinction* magazines. His work is also featured in several books and online in HGTV's Designer's Portfolio.

Kelly speaks regularly at industry events about kitchen design, and also serves on Blanco USA's Design Council. As an educator in the field, Kelly is instrumental in furthering knowledge in the kitchen and bath industry.



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## Rhonda Knoche, CMKBD, CAPS

*Designer's 'path less traveled' drives successful collaborations*

Many years ago, while interning for the renowned Ralph Palmer, Rhonda Knoche learned an important lesson from her then-mentor. He told her, "You see things a bit differently...use it."

The winner of 16 design awards and 2015 NKBA U Professional of the Year has had the opportunity to learn from several impressive mentors since then, including Martha Kerr, Johnny Grey, Neil Kelly and Mick de Giulio – but she's never forgotten that first lesson.

Her specialty is to "approach things differently" – whether that means using an old movie poster mural over her built-in refrigerator or choosing colors that "change and transform – like a bit of magic." When a prospect asks what everyone's doing "right now," she suggests that they might not be a good match. "Because you won't see what I'm doing all over the place...you can't see photos of things that haven't been done before."

After 23 years working for Neil Kelly, she went out on her own five years ago, focusing on creative collaborations with her clients that start with what she jokingly calls "a Columbo line of questioning" to better understand their needs and lifestyle.

Ergonomics and creative use of small spaces are current areas of interest, but it's her willingness to take that path less traveled that continues to drive her success.



## Lauren Levant

*Unique interests and pieces inspire young designer's creations*

As principal and creative director of Lauren Levant Interior, Lauren Levant is carving an impressive path early in her career. A native of Connecticut, Levant honed her design craft in the demanding markets of Connecticut, New York and Washington DC before settling in the Pittsburgh, PA area.

The young designer has received numerous international design awards, and been honored as Viking Appliance's National Designer of the Year. HGTV also named her one of the top 10 American designers under 35. The firm's work has been featured in numerous publications and design books.

"Inspiration comes from the strangest places and, as a result, my portfolio is very eclectic," notes the designer. "As I develop my designs, I use the unique personalities and life experiences of my clients. I try to challenge myself to dig in until I find something to work with, and I think editors and judging panels have been excited to see details that are out of the ordinary."

As a Women in Business honoree, Levant collaborates with local craftspersons, fabricators and artisans in her design of interior spaces. "Through their talented hands, we designers can create something truly unique for our clients," she offers. "The process of bringing this piece to life together connects everyone involved in a soulful, profound way. Clients find the process unforgettable and exciting."



## Leslie Lamarre, CKD, CID

*Eco-conscious designer has an eye for sustainable projects*

Kitchen and bath designer Leslie Lamarre, CKD, CID, was designing sustainable homes in California even before the rigorous CALGreen Code was put into place. Sustainability is something to which Lamarre, principal/interiors at San Mateo, CA-based TRG Architecture + Interior Design

– started in 1995 with her husband, Randy Grange – is deeply dedicated.

Many of the company's early efforts toward green building, such as energy-efficient lighting and water-use reduction, are now standard requirements of the CALGreen Code. This allows Lamarre and her team to focus their energy on additional sustainability improvements. When specifying products for kitchens and baths, she seeks out businesses that do their part to provide sustainable and recycled products, and minimize waste created by their manufacturing processes. Lamarre's firm is now working on its first rammed earth house, a planet-friendly technique that literally deploys rammed, or compacted, earth on select walls. In addition to the sustainable aspect of this building technique, Lamarre loves the design aesthetic of the striations.

As far as moving the industry forward, she says, "The bottom line is this: in order to advance, the industry has to accommodate sustainability along with smart design. In fact, they are becoming one and the same. And the companies that are not embracing sustainability risk being left behind."



## Danielle McDonald

*Creating beachfront spaces is this designer's specialty*

Danielle McDonald has found her niche, and it's one that many would envy. The famed New Jersey shore is her backdrop, and second homes on the beach are her specialty.

After many years in the design industry, McDonald started at Margate, NJ-based Colmar Kitchen & Bath Studio in 2005. The design approach to these homes is different, she notes, because the needs and functions are different than they would be for a main home.

"For entertaining purposes, we need to have the kitchen oriented to outdoor living along with indoor living because people are vacationing here," she reports. "The outdoor space is a major focal point of the entertaining done here."

"Everything is about an influx of people for three to four days, and then there's nobody," she continues. Kitchens are often on the second floor to take advantage of the view, and they showcase a lot of clean lines and a modern aesthetic.

One of McDonald's designs was recently honored with the Viking Designer of Distinction award. The client had purchased a huge retirement multi-unit home on the beach that was originally for Catholic priests. "They knocked down the facility and built one large home, which included an apartment for each of their children – three condos in one house," she explains.

McDonald was honored at KBIS 2017 in front of her peers. "It was a great honor to be recognized for something I am passionate about," she concludes.



## John Morgan

*Rep impacts the industry through CAD, virtual reality training*

John Morgan has served the kitchen and bath industry from a unique vantage point – one that’s seen him serve a far-flung customer base of dealers, designers, distributors and multi-branch retailers, several thousand of whom he’s personally trained in computer-aided design (CAD).

The principal of Morgan Pinnacle LLC, a Maryland-based manufacturers’ rep firm founded by his father Jack, Morgan began working in the kitchen and bath industry as a college student nearly 30 years ago, and has long since made a name for himself through speaking engagements, writing and service to the NKBA, including a 2013 stint as national president. A champion of CAD when the technology was still in its untested infancy, Morgan has earned the distinction of being one of the industry’s top-performing reps, as well as a leading consultant and trainer. He has also contributed as an advisory board member for the Virginia Tech Center For Real Life Kitchen Design, and was a *KBDN* columnist for nearly a decade.

Morgan remains on the industry’s cutting edge, continuing to educate dealers and designers about virtual reality and the ways that technology can help enhance the sales experience.



## Mikal Otten

*Leading designer combines a passion for nature, function and layer-upon-layer of materials*

Mikal Otten is a second-generation kitchen designer and founder of Denver-based Exquisite Kitchen Design. Over 20 years, his work has been published in many national magazines and has netted numerous design awards. Otten is known for placing primary emphasis on kitchen function. His

designs are well-conceived in terms of flow and form. At the same time, he consistently brings an artistic knack for layering textures and adding luxurious details.

“I’m really loving the layering of materials, [like] soft, raw steel against brushed oak,” says Otten, who grew up in the business under the tutelage of his exacting kitchen-designer father. “We just began incorporating brushed, warmer bronze and darkened brass. It’s all about adding layer after layer.”

Living and working in the Mountain West, Otten draws inspiration from nature. This is evident in his designs – in particular, a project in Vail dubbed “Mountain Bliss.” That project won global first place for best transitional design in the prestigious Sub-Zero and Wolf Kitchen Design Competition.

“We’re continuing to look to nature for inspiration, especially in Colorado, bringing the outside in and incorporating the greenery, landscape, stone and even water into the kitchen. We’re creating depth and texture within the layers as you would see in nature. It’s about letting the materials be true to what they are. When chosen correctly, we can create something truly beautiful.”



## Cassandra Nordell

*Young CEO raises the bar for green design and women in business*

At the age of 33, Cassandra Nordell has accomplished more in her career than your average 30-something. The CEO of design firm William Standen Co. in Sarnia, ON, Canada has already received numerous commendations after co-founding the firm with her husband,

Patrick MacLean, in 2010. Nordell holds the title of one of the top 100 female Canadian entrepreneurs as ranked by *Canadian Business* magazine in 2016. She was also recognized in the PROFIT 500 for leading the fourth fastest-growing consumer services and construction company in Canada. And, in 2014, she was named to the NKBA’s “30 Under 30.”

Nordell believes that good design can have a true impact, changing the way people live. In the same vein, it can also have a positive impact on the environment. In keeping with those ideas, she has made sure that William Standen Co. remains a leader in green design, and that each project the firm takes on has a green element to it. The result has been numerous green design awards. “We were green from the get-go, despite the lack of interest. It has always been important to me to provide healthier spaces for our community and clients,” she says. Nordell plans to take her firm’s award-winning green-design consciousness and expand it into multiple Canadian cities in the future.



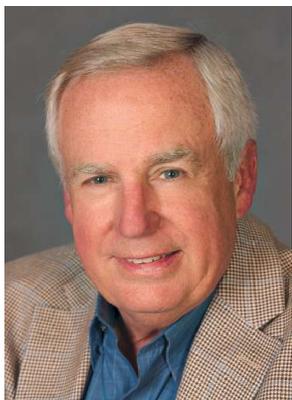
## Christopher Peacock

*Award-winning British designer makes sure it’s ‘Made in America’*

Christopher Peacock is in a rare position, being able to say that he has truly left his mark in the homes of two U.S. presidents; his namesake cabinetry can be found in the kitchens of both Bill Clinton and Donald Trump.

The British native has made a name for himself in the U.S. since coming over from London in 1987, first working as a designer at the Boston Design Center, and then in New York where he designed kitchens in the Architects & Designers building. Peacock started his eponymous firm 25 years ago, and it has grown to include seven showrooms in the U.S. as well as two showrooms in Europe – all of which he still owns and operates out of his corporate headquarters in Norwalk, CT as the president and CEO.

In a world where “Made in the USA” is less common, Peacock makes it a point to “proudly” design and manufacture his pieces out of his own U.S. factory. He notes, “I’m a little different in that I completely design and manufacture my own cabinetry. I think we’re a leader in that.” Peacock’s style of cabinetry has been imitated many times over, but his creations are singularly his own.



## Kenneth Peterson, CKD

*Veteran dealer champions business management education*

Ken Peterson's passion has long been to teach kitchen and bath dealers how to run their businesses more effectively and profitably. In fulfilling that role, he's established a noteworthy industry niche.

With nearly 50 years of experience in the kitchen and bath industry, Peterson – who once headed a multi-location, family-owned dealership in Connecticut – served as a consultant, trainer, writer and conference speaker before launching the industry's first buying group and business-development organization in 1994.

Today, his Charlotte, NC-based SEN Design Group boasts more than 200 dealer members and 70+ vendor partners, and offers a wide range of services, including financial planning, sales and business management training, marketing tools, networking and management systems.

Peterson, who served as NKBA president in 1981, has also spearheaded the development of numerous marketing tools and management programs, including the recently launched NMS Network Management System, which he calls the only industry-specific, business management software program that automates dealer operational functions to improve team productivity, revenue growth and company profitability.

Besides his corporate duties, Peterson is a frequent seminar leader, a consultant to his team of personally trained business coaches and a business columnist for *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.



## Joe Poehling

*CEO invests heavily in new 'experiential' retail*

As CEO and fourth-generation owner of First Supply, LLC, Joe Poehling is investing heavily in creating premier buying environments in two primary ways.

The company is a long-time partner with the Kohler Co. in three of its Signature Store locales – Minneapolis, Kansas City and Milwaukee. In 2018, it will collaborate on a fourth location in Detroit.

First Supply also owns and operates 29 Gerhard's locations around the upper Midwest. Gerhard's is a consumer-facing retailer founded by Poehling's father in 1940. Indeed, 120-year-old First Supply is truly a groundbreaker in the industry, having opened its first showroom in 1920, says Poehling. "We think we are the oldest kitchen and bath store in the country."

In addition to the company's Gerhard's and Signature Store locations, the company operates 60-plus supply outlets with 650 employees.

But Poehling isn't resting on First Supply's laurels. About 10 years ago the firm began greatly expanding and upgrading all of its showrooms. "We sensed a real change in what drives success into that segment. So we picked up on the whole concept of driving traffic with inspirational design and staffing with people who are capable of offering inspirational design."

In the past, notes Poehling, showrooms had offered more of a directed sale. "Today the consumer wants to be involved. They want to be in control of what is going into their home in a much greater way," he says. Anyone who's visited a Gerhard's location or one of First Supply's Signature Store locations understands Poehling's commitment to this new way of selling and buying.



## Mary Jo Peterson, CKD, CBD

*Designer, author and educator is a true pioneer in Universal Design*

Mary Jo Peterson developed a specialized design niche years before it became in vogue, focusing her kitchen and bath projects to address the special needs of a previously underserved base of clients.

In the process, Peterson established a national reputation not only as a pioneer and innovator, but as an award-winning designer, writer, consultant and educator with unrivaled expertise in universal/accessible design – a specialty that's become increasingly critical in today's multi-generational, aging market.

Peterson, whose Brookfield, CT-based design firm serves all sectors of the residential construction market, has served as a TV spokesperson, author of four books on kitchen and bath planning and columnist for *Kitchen & Bath Design News*. An award winner of NKBA's annual Design Competition, she has also been honored for her contributions by the National Association of Home Builders, the American Institute of Architects and the National Building Sciences Museum, among other organizations. Peterson has also been instrumental in developing coursework for the Certified Aging in Place (CAPS) designation, as well as serving on the board for the Living in Place Institute and its CLIPP program, which is aimed at creating safe and accessible living spaces in today's homes.



## Matthew Quinn

*Design and product collaboration lead to creative inspiration*

Principal of the Atlanta, GA-based Design Galleria Kitchen and Bath Studio, Matthew Quinn has worked around the world, creating original and memorable living spaces. "I work hard to avoid designing by formula; it is important to me that the kitchen represent my

client's soul, not mine," he stresses. The recipient of numerous national design awards, he won the grand prize of the international Sub-Zero and Wolf Kitchen Design Contest.

In addition to co-owning Design Galleria Kitchen and Bath Studio and the Matthew Quinn Collection, a boutique decorative hardware showroom concept, Quinn also remains active in product design. His hunt more than a decade ago for a freestanding tub led to a collaborative design with MTI Baths, with a line of sinks following. "By this time, I was addicted to product design, as it was another creative outlet and provided products for my projects that were innovative and unique," notes Quinn. He has since created products for Reveal Designs/Sun Valley Bronze, Francois & Co., Art for Everyday, Julien, The Rubinet Faucet Co., AKDO and LaCornue.

"All of my licensed products have been designed so that the designer can take them and put their own spin on them with the use of multiple finish, texture, configuration and size options," he remarks. "It makes me so happy to see other designers using my designs in applications that I had never imagined."



## Rebecca Reynolds

*Inspired design travels around the world and onto the web*

While Rebecca Reynolds notes the majority of her work is in the Connecticut/New York metro area, her out-of-state projects come from her local clientele. Her designs extend throughout New England, the southern U.S., California and as far away as Kosovo. "My clients have

multiple homes and rely on working with a trusted designer," she explains. "My relationship with my clients is as important as the design."

After raising her family, Reynolds shares, "I'm now afforded the time to travel. It's an endless source of inspiration. It informs and fuels my passion for design, cooking, art and culture."

An award-winning designer and contributor to many design panel discussions and industry events, Reynolds has recently embarked on a new venture, partnering with Los Angeles-based designer Lori Gilder. Together they're building the Kitchen Design Network, an online design and lifestyle website for kitchen obsessed homeowners, designers and brands.

The duo discovered that there was no comprehensive site for kitchen design, so they set out to design a trusted, one-stop source for everything needed to design, plan and build a new kitchen: inspiration, resources, professional renovation advice, a vetted directory connecting consumers directly to designers in addition to lots of lifestyle content.

Reynolds explains, "Like the kitchen table, the site will be a global meeting place, the hub to connect homeowners, designers and brands."



## Tatiana Machado-Rosas

*A design leader creates a big impact on trends in San Diego*

Tatiana Machado-Rosas has excelled in kitchen and bath design for more than two decades, and her leadership as design department manager for San Diego's Jackson Design and Remodeling

has inspired multiple award-winning projects. In 2017, Machado-Rosas' design won "Kitchen of the Year" from *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles*. In 2015, she won the Kitchen + Dining category in HGTV's "Fresh Faces of Design" competition.

Machado-Rosas is an ardent proponent of professional certifications. She is an active member and has served on the Board of Directors of the American Society of Interior Designers, and her work has been featured in the ASID Kitchen Tour since 2002. One of her designs was named Best Kitchen in the *Architectural Digest* 2013 Before + After: Reader Kitchens contest.

Tatiana has received numerous national and regional awards including ASID Awards, Chrysalis Awards, NARI CotY Awards, NKBA Awards, and *Qualified Remodeler Master Design Awards*. Her designs have been spotlighted in a number of media outlets, including HGTV.com, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Cottage White*, *San Diego Magazine*, *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles*, *Kitchens*, *Kitchen & Bath Design News* and *Modern Luxury*, among many others.



## Sam Rose

*Ferguson executive spearheads successful, nationwide 'omni-channel' showroom experience*

Sam Rose is v.p. of showroom-builder business for Ferguson, responsible for overseeing the strategic direction for Ferguson's 270 showrooms nationwide. For more than 25 years, he has presided over the growth of Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery into a nationally recognized brand, evolving the business

to meet the changing needs of both the trade professional and end consumer.

"Our goal is to transform what can be an overwhelming process of selecting new products for the home and make it a fun and rewarding experience, while also being the best path to market for our vendors and a valued partner to the trade community," says Rose.

Ferguson showrooms are known for their knowledgeable product experts and innovative approach to servicing customers in a world-class retail environment. It's this combination that enables Ferguson to continue gaining the confidence of the kitchen and bath design trade nationwide. In particular, Rose has helped refine Ferguson's showroom training program, balancing product knowledge with leading customer-service training. He also helped spearhead the showrooms' recent upgrades in technology and merchandising in which product is displayed the way customers buy. With an eye on the future, Rose is currently working to expand and diversify the showrooms' product offering and provide customers with a seamless "omni-channel" experience.



## Peter Salerno, CMKBD

*Renowned artisan redefines the luxury market with limitless vision*

In the kitchen and bath industry, Peter Salerno's name is synonymous with luxury. The Wyckoff, NJ designer's richly appointed creations have redefined the high end of the market with unique applications of upscale products and new ideas that are anything but "safe."

When a client wanted a design with two carved trees wrapped around a refrigerator, Salerno took it in stride. A stainless steel island with legs and drawers riveted together to look like the skin of an airplane? Absolutely!

"I get excited when I see a client who truly wants to do something different and artistic," he says, citing projects ranging from a shadow box displayed in a countertop to a bar area with a 1"-thick glass floor that doubled as the ceiling to a wine cellar below, viewable from the bar – and lit with the touch of a switch.

Having done projects from the U.S. to Canada to Moscow, Salerno's uniquely artistic vision takes him all over the globe, and often into new territory – including a sideline in upscale wine rooms that grew out of his passion for wine collecting.

An HGTV Featured Kitchen and Bath Designer who began his career in his father's custom cabinet shop, Salerno believes "It's all about the extraordinary."



## Eric Schimelpfenig, AKBD

*Designer and technological guru is a voice for the expanding digital age*

Eric Schimelpfenig is a young man on a mission: to spread the word about how kitchen/bath design professionals can enhance their client-engagement skills in an age when sales presentations are undergoing a revolutionary change

with the advent of powerful new digital tools.

Schimelpfenig's expertise – as well as his burgeoning reputation – lies in educating dealers and designers about how to leverage cutting-edge technologies and sales presentation strategies aimed at a new generation of kitchen and bath clients, including the young, digitally savvy consumers impacting the market. His presentations, highlighted by a key role in *Kitchen & Bath Design News'* annual eight-city seminar series, focus on ways that design professionals can utilize a rapidly expanding palette of software, smart phones, mobile devices, new apps and other digital tools to smooth the path from initial client contact through final contract.

The founder of Sketchthis.net, Schimelpfenig himself has utilized 3D technology throughout his career as a Massachusetts-based kitchen/bath designer, educator and consultant. He's also taught Sketchup 3D modeling software at trade shows and other events, while serving as a technology columnist for *KBDN*.



## Maria Stapperfenne, CMKBD

*Designer serves the industry through association involvement*

Innovators don't just create, they also lead. That's clearly the case for Maria Stapperfenne, a 25-year industry veteran and 2015 NKBA president who continued her commitment to serving the trade as an NKBA Board member

and association ambassador. She works on projects ranging from conceiving Voices of the Industry programs to working with her local chapter to raising scholarship money for architecture and design students.

The manager of Tewksbury Kitchens & Baths is always on the go, currently doing volunteer work and promotion for the Living in Place Institute where, after receiving her certification in 2016, she does presentations to designers and showroom personnel.

She's also trying to bring into NKBA a greater focus on the living-in-place aspect of design, explaining, "One of the tenets of NKBA's mission and vision statement is safety, and we believe it's one of the things that separates us as an association."

Education remains a priority for her, and she believes, "It's our job to entice new talent into the industry and create more awareness to entice millennials," with programs like the NKBA's "30 Under 30."

She is passionate about using design to "help people find their happy place" and is a huge fan of collaboration, joking that, "inter-professional collaboration is the new black!"



## Adi Tatarko & Alon Cohen

*Houzz co-founders offer conduit of prospects, leads and design ideas*

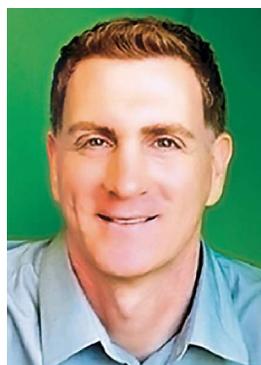
Beginning in 2010, the wife and husband duo of Adi Tatarko and Alon Cohen took a side project and turned it into Houzz.com. Today, Houzz has more than 40 million monthly unique users, 90% of whom are homeowners – and more than 1.5 million home professionals use the platform.

But the impact of Houzz is perhaps better understood by the volume of project leads driven and the high average spend by consumers who visit the platform. Houzz users spent \$60,400 on average on home renovations in 2016, more than three times the national average. And, in 2016, Houzz drove \$4 billion in gross revenue to paying professionals with Houzz pages.

The genesis of Houzz? "It was the frustration felt by Tatarko and Cohen by

the lack of resources and inspiration available to help them articulate a vision for their home and to find the right professionals who could help them," says Houzz spokesperson Alison Brady Gervis.

In what is traditionally a local business with showrooms as the key selling environment, Houzz offers a larger regional or even national platform where great photos and online consumer interactions are the new pinnacle.



## Joseph Wheeler

*Research co-director re-imagines the future for kitchens & baths*

Joseph Wheeler thinks he's seen the future, and if reality mirrors his crystal ball, kitchens and baths will assume an exciting new dimension.

Co-director of the Virginia Tech Center for Design Research, Wheeler is the driving force behind "Future-

HAUS," a revolutionary prototype that's providing a preview of how digital technologies, cutting-edge products and smart building design may soon unite to make homes more efficient, sustainable and affordable.

Unveiled in four phases, Wheeler's research project, partnering faculty and students with industry supporters, proposes an alternative to conventional construction: a pre-fabricated delivery method for assembling inexpensive, energy-efficient, high-quality housing. FutureHAUS would see kitchens, bathrooms and other rooms assembled as pre-finished, pre-plumbed, pre-wired, plug-and-play "cartridges" that are then delivered from the factory to job sites.

Virginia Tech's kitchen prototype demonstrated ways that smart technologies can assist with a wide range of daily tasks. The bathroom prototype integrated fixtures, technologies and materials to help control water and temperature flow, monitor energy and water consumption and accommodate working heights for multi-generational users.

Wheeler's team plans to construct a complete FutureHAUS at a local research complex. The concept itself, he predicts, could one day be arriving in homes.



## Jim Williams

*CEO redefines the distributor as a business partner*

Jim Williams has been a leading light in the Great Lakes Region for nearly 50 years, building the Grand Rapids, MI company he serves as CEO into a distribution powerhouse known for its service to customers in the kitchen and bath, heating and ventilation, plumbing and related markets.

As a full-service distributor to dealers, builders, contractors, interior designers and architects, Williams Distributing recognized early on that traditional two-step distribution in an increasingly sophisticated market involved more than simply providing an inventory of competitively priced, ready-to-ship cabinetry, plumbingware and other products. An early champion of customer training, education, marketing and relationship-building, Williams' firm succeeded in a market whose product mix, distribution channels and specifier needs have undergone profound change since the company's founding in 1968.

Williams himself has a lengthy record of community service, including as board chairman of the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids and president of the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

He was named the Michigan State University Business Person of the Year in 2004, and was recently honored by the Cascade Community Foundation with its annual Claude and Marion Robinson Community Leadership Award, honoring a person who has demonstrated a commitment to improving the community.



## Vasi Ypsilantis

*Designer expands expertise to move beyond the kitchen and bath*

Designer Vasi Ypsilantis opened her kitchen and bath showroom, "the Breakfast Room, Ltd.," on the prestigious north shore of Long Island in 1999, some 15 years after beginning her career in kitchen and bath design.

"I had a passion for kitchen design early on since it allowed me to develop my talent in two key areas," says Ypsilantis. "It was important to be able to use my architecture and space-planning skills, since kitchen design is not just about decoration. The kitchen must also incorporate function - ergonomics combined with aesthetics."

Through the years, her designs have been published in national and international magazines, and her work in show houses and historic homes has garnered attention and earned her two Notable Designer of Distinction awards as well as a first place honor in the Sub-Zero Wolf contest.

But working as a kitchen and bath designer led to some frustration for Ypsilantis. "I learned that, no matter how talented you are, your work will not be represented properly in the hands of an unprofessional or untalented contractor," she offers. "Since good contractors were hard to come by, I had many bad experiences." She believed she could do it better, and decided to make the additional leap to licensed contractor in 2004.

Since then, she has added an interior design and build firm. "Now, I'm creating interior styles that flow throughout the entire essence of the home," she explains.



## Karen Williams

*Popularity of kitchen design leads to service that finishes the space*

The Architects & Designers Building in Manhattan is home to the St. Charles of New York showroom, and it's where you'll find Principal Karen Williams creating luxury designs for homes around the world. With St. Charles for 38 years, Williams has witnessed a

great deal of change with regard to kitchen design.

"When I first started with St. Charles, kitchens were not popular," she reports. But during her tenure, kitchens have moved from being one of the least significant rooms of the home to one of the major spaces.

The growing importance of the kitchen inspired the launch of Curated by St. Charles, created for the company by Lindsey Katalan. Curated is a luxury service that procures the finest crystal, tableware, barware and culinary accessories needed to finish a design. Through Curated, St. Charles can complete a space by providing the ideal cutting boards, bowls, pots, spices, knives and other desired elements. "We offer three styles - soft contemporary, modern and soft transitional - and the packages have the basics, but can be customized to the client's needs," offers Williams.

In addition to Curated, Williams has expanded beyond the kitchen and bath to now include interior design services in her portfolio. "It is a natural extension, really," she states. "A master bathroom often leads to a master bedroom design. And the kitchen, because it's expanding into the other rooms, becomes part of one design concept."



## Alan Zielinski, CKD

*Prominent designer helps to assure the success of KBIS*

Alan Zielinski's ascendancy to national office at the National Kitchen & Bath Association coincided with a pivotal time for the NKBA and the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS), the association-owned trade show.

Zielinski, an accomplished designer whose company has served the Chicago market for six-plus decades, was instrumental, as 2012 NKBA president, in helping guide the association through a critical negotiation which allowed it to co-locate the then-foundering KBIS with the similarly recession-challenged National Association of Home Builders' International Builders Show (IBS). The decision has been widely credited for reversing the fortunes of the industry's two most important trade shows.

Zielinski, whose Niles, IL-based Better Kitchens Inc. was established in 1956 by his father Ed - a founding member of the American Institute of Kitchen Dealers, forerunner to the NKBA - has also seen his design projects grace the pages of multiple publications, and has been associated with a litany of celebrity chefs, including Martha Stewart, Emeril Lagasse and Mario Batali.

He is also an accomplished commercial pilot, certified flight instructor and Federal Aviation Administration-designated examiner who has piloted single-engine planes, corporate jets, vintage aircraft and hot-air balloons.



Photo: Caleb Vandermeer

# Doing More with Less

Designers discuss creative ideas for saving space in the kitchen, both physically and visually, to accommodate the various tasks that take place there.

BY KIM BERNDTSON

**I**t seems that, regardless of footprint size, everyone is always looking for more space in their kitchens. Oftentimes, it's about wanting to gain more room for storage, but considering that kitchens have become the 'it' place to be, finding enough space to accommodate traditional as well as newfound purposes can be a challenge.

"Kitchens are expanding into multi-function rooms by encompassing dining areas, breakfast rooms and living areas," says Randy O'Kane, CKD, senior designer at Bilotta Kitchen and Home, with several locations throughout New York. "Thus, the expansion of the kitchen is definitely happening."

However, kitchens aren't always given any extra square footage to accommodate the additional demands. That means space saving is often top of mind for designers. Even kitchens

that aren't necessarily considered small can benefit from space-saving principles since they can improve efficiency and workability within the room.

"A number of years ago, it wasn't that uncommon to do an addition or bump out to a kitchen," says Gail Bolling, co-owner of The Kitchen Company, in North Haven, CT. "However, more recently, we've been doing less of those because they're expensive. Now, we're looking for more creative ideas to use the existing space."

Steve Ptaszek, CKD, agrees, noting the days of the massive homes with colossal kitchens are also going away. "In new construction, kitchens seem to be getting smaller," says the owner of Imagine That Kitchens + Baths, in Minneapolis, MN. "I do mostly remodeling, and I'm doing more and more smaller kitchens."

Photo: Caleb Vandermeer



◀ ▶ ↻ Hannah Hacker designed her own kitchen with space-saving ideas in mind, such as utilizing the area all the way to the ceiling with short upper cabinets. She also included blind corner pull-out accessories in the corner cabinets on each side of the range. In the dining room adjacent to the kitchen, she used the space underneath the bench and shallow cabinets on either side to squeeze out additional storage.

▶ Hannah Hacker designed this island with a custom portable cutting board and shelf unit on wheels that docks under the island countertop but can be moved around the kitchen when additional counter space is needed.

Hannah Hacker's clients are trending in the direction of petite spaces, too. "On the West Coast, we have been seeing a move toward more condo living and smaller footprints for homes," says the owner/AKBD of Adapt Design, LLC, in Beaverton, OR.

For Jennifer Austin, RJ Austin Interior Design in Kenwood, CA, kitchens aren't necessarily scaling down, but space challenges still exist given that many of her clients prefer open kitchen designs. "People seem to be gravitating to larger kitchens that they use as gathering spots," she says. "They want open kitchens, but one of their drawbacks is that we lose a wall for cabinetry. Clients also don't want cabinets to come into a space, such as over an island, so we need to find other places for storage, often within the same footprint...all while keeping costs down."

### SPACE-SAVING IDEAS

Designers address space constraints in a multitude of ways, including with design.

"When I approach a kitchen design, I always start with the layout before we even start talking about materials," says Hacker, who indicates a focus on layout is especially key in small spaces. "It's important to think about not only the basic work triangle, but also where everything will be stored."

Walking space in a small kitchen is often an issue as well, she continues. "Islands are a classic example," Hacker says. "Everyone thinks they need an island in their kitchen, but it's often not the best use of space in a small kitchen since you

Photo: Caleb Vandermeer



Photo: Engage Photo and Video

need to account for walking space on all sides of it. A u-shaped kitchen or a peninsula may give you significantly more counter and storage space than an island."

Austin agrees, noting that while islands offer base cabinet storage, their inclusion must accommodate traffic throughout the kitchen. "Everyone wants an island, especially with an open floor plan," she says. "But, it can disrupt the flow, so there needs to be enough room to move around it."

Many designers encourage clients to consider multi-tasking as a way to save space. For example, Hacker recommends that seating in the kitchen be kept at counter instead of bar height. "That way, it can be used as countertop work space as well as for seating," she says.

O'Kane agrees, adding that an island can have a pull-out table for extra seating. The designer applies the multi-tasking concept to appliances as well. "One of my favorite space-saving tips is to use appliances that utilize one footprint, such as ranges that allow for cooking in one spot," she says. "Microwave/convection/hoods are one appliance that does



📌 Gail Bolling removed a large closet in this kitchen to provide a new space for the refrigerator and a pantry cabinet. By relocating the refrigerator, she created a space for the island focal point where everyone can congregate. Without adding any square footage, she was able to give her clients more storage and counter space.

several functions, and steam ovens and/or speed ovens are great multi-functional pieces for a small kitchen.”

Convertible refrigeration appliances that convert between a refrigerator and freezer based on need – such as an ice cream party where extra freezer space is desired versus keeping drinks cold for daily use – are also a good element when space is limited, O’Kane adds.

Hacker appreciates the space-saving abilities of combination appliances as well, noting that these can help reduce the physical size of an appliance package. “Many of my clients say they have to have two ovens,” she says. “But they really only use the second oven a few times a year. A combination oven checks off the need for a microwave and also the secondary oven. I’ve found that the speed ovens are so easy and quick to use that they become the main oven and the full-sized oven is the one that gets used only a few times a year.”

Bolling also focuses on multi-tasking principles, such as creating a bar area that can be used for mixing and serving drinks during a party and as a spot for collecting mail, charging electronics and managing family communication the rest of the time. “It’s also a great place for storing recipes,” she adds. “There’s no reason why it has to be single purpose. I often design bar areas with wall cabinets that have glass doors for displaying barware and base cabinets that can be used for storing notepads, pens and clutter.”



Photos: Demis Carbo Photography

📌 This kitchen appears to be much larger after its transformation, even though Gail Bolling didn’t add any square footage. Opening up the wall between the dining room and kitchen, replacing a double-oven cabinet and an island cooktop with a 36” commercial-style range and a larger, one-level island improved the function and visual appeal of this kitchen.

Continued ▶



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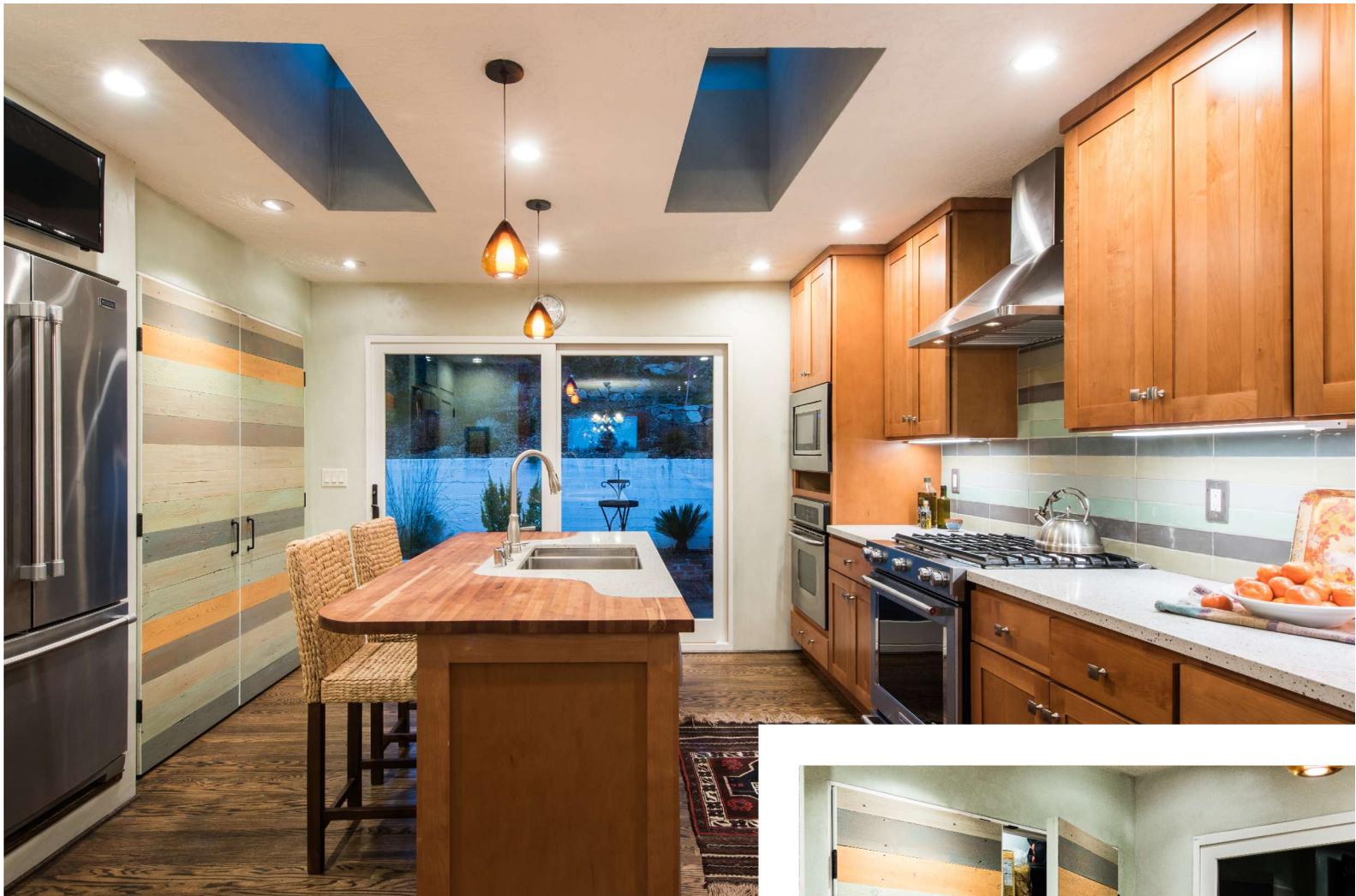
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Photos: Meredith Giardoni

↑ → Jennifer Austin's clients often want large walk-in pantries, but when there isn't enough space, she'll create space-saving solutions such as this galley kitchen's custom pantry faced with multi-colored shiplap.



Islands can benefit from the same thought process, she continues. "People may have a teeny kitchen table and teeny island, or maybe no island," says Bolling. "It's crowded for working and there isn't any good place for people to come into the kitchen and mingle. I suggest getting rid of the table and replacing it with a big island that includes seating, which can maximize counter and work space, plus add base cabinet storage. It's also more inviting and easier for people to come in and circulate."

Bolling also looks for ways to get rid of diagonals and angles. "They waste a lot of space," she says. "We used to do a lot of diagonal corner cabinets and ranges, but squaring off those corners maximizes counter space, working space and cabinet storage."

"I just remodeled my own kitchen," she continues. "It had an angled island and diagonal sink. I squared everything off, moved the sink and made a big rectangular island that gives me so much more storage and seating. I didn't change the footprint at all. I just changed the design and reconfigured the layout. When people walk in now they can't believe it's the same kitchen because it looks so much bigger."

Designers also often add pantries that help save space by providing a lot of storage in a relatively small amount of space. For narrow spaces, Bolling will turn a tall, 12"- or 15"-wide space into pull-out pantries with shelves that can be accessed from both sides. "Since it's narrow, items don't get lost and it maximizes space," she explains.



Photo: Jordan Leborich

▣ Jennifer Austin provided her client with eat-in-kitchen seating... without taking any permanent footprint space. This nearly 4' butcher block extension can be pulled out for meals, then tucked behind a drawer face when not in use. The designer complemented this space-saving technique with blind corner cabinet accessories.

Continued ▶

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Photos: Peter Rymwid

Austin's clients often want large walk-in pantries. "But if there isn't enough room, or if there are budget constraints, I will include a pantry made by the cabinet company that is 24" deep and 7' high," she adds.

Austin likes to eliminate narrow pull-out base cabinets that are frequently located on each side of a range, opting to add that space to adjacent cabinets. "Usually those narrow cabinets are about 9" wide," she says, "which means you only have 6" or less of interior room. By eliminating those narrow cabinets and making the cabinets next to them wider, you've gained extra room. It's about using fewer, wider cabinets to maximize space."

Hacker turns to non-standard cabinet sizes to utilize all of the available space. "A typical wall cabinet is 12" deep," she says. "But there are a lot of items, such as glasses, bowls and pantry items, that can be stored in a shallower cabinet if that is all you have room for."

☑ Randy O'Kane designed this New York City apartment kitchen with double-tiered cabinets that extend nearly to the ceiling to make use of every inch of space. The long island also houses two huge sinks and dishwashers.

☑ The Bilotta Kitchen & Home showroom showcases space-saving kitchen ideas such as this display that utilizes the backsplash area behind the sink for all sorts of storage. Doors can easily be slid open to access contents then closed to provide a less cluttered look.



O'Kane often helps clients find more storage space by extending wall cabinets to the ceiling and/or to the countertop, which utilizes the backsplash area. "If the cabinet is 13" deep, you still have 12"-13" of countertop where small appliances can fit nicely," she notes.

Additional space-saving ideas O'Kane likes to utilize are to tuck paper towels under the overhang of an island, and to use pot racks instead of pot/pan drawers.

#### SPACE-SAVING PRODUCTS

One of most effective ways to find more space is to look inside cabinets. Advancements made in cabinet storage/organization accessories have vastly improved storage efficiency and access, meaning homeowners can store more stuff in less space and have easier access to it.

"Being organized is a great space saver," says Ptaszek, who indicates he often utilizes double-tiered cutlery dividers and 'stepped' inserts for drawers to corral utensils and manage spices.

Bolling adds that clients worried about storage often simply lack space-saving and organizational cabinet accessories. The concern becomes even greater when new floor plans eliminate walls to open up kitchens. "My clients are often surprised to learn about new cabinet features that maximize storage," she says.

In particular, Bolling appreciates the space-saving capability of vertical tray dividers, which she utilizes in high, hard-to-reach spaces such as above refrigerators and double ovens and also in narrow base cabinets and spaces 12" or less. "I use them for everything from cookies sheets to roasting pans, serving platters, cutting boards and muffin tins...basically anything that can be stored vertically," she says. "When these items are stored horizontally, they waste

a lot of space in a base cabinet. Plus, they are also stacked on top of each other.”

Hacker and Austin both indicate that corner accessories have been a boon to saving space for their clients.

“I personally stay away from lazy Susans in corner cabinets because they take up too much space,” says Austin. “Instead, I like to use kidney-shaped trays. Each tier works independently and can be pulled out into the room.”

Austin also sees cabinet accessories, such as roll-out shelves, as critical for making base cabinets more functional. “An island offers base cabinet storage,” she says, which can be a space saver. “Making sure that storage is accessible with roll-out trays means people don’t have to bend down to see what is inside the cabinet.”

The availability of smaller appliances, as well as a greater variety of appliances – such as combination appliances and modular cooking appliances – has also helped designers find extra space. “Appliances take up a huge amount of space in a kitchen,” says Hacker. “Selecting an appropriately sized appliance package for the space available is very important. Column-style refrigeration is great for small spaces. They are cabinet depth, come in multiple widths and do not need to be installed side by side. I have done kitchens where the freezer column gets installed in a pantry outside the kitchen.”

Ptaszek agrees, noting that refrigeration advancements in particular have been a game changer. “Appliance sizes used to be pretty standard,” he says. “Ranges were 36”, or maybe 48”. Refrigerators were side-by-sides. But now manufacturers offer 24” cooktops and ovens, and 18” dishwashers. Refrigeration options are off the charts – you can have cabinet-depth refrigerators that save space and column refrigerators and freezers that don’t even need to be next to each other. You can also have a refrigerator and/or freezer drawer, which can be great options for clients who don’t want any ‘talls.’ There are a lot of options, and being able to pick and choose elements makes so much sense.” ■



Photo: Mark Ehlen, Ehlen Creative Communications

■ Steve Ptaszek enjoys the challenges associated with designing small kitchens that incorporate space-saving techniques. Oftentimes, he designs elements that are asked to perform double duty, such as in this kitchen where the eating area also serves as extra countertop space.

■ Steve Ptaszek created a dog bed utilizing the toe kick area in the kitchen. He tucked the food and water bowls under the bench to minimize tripping.

## Space-Saving Lessons Taken from Europe

The global nature of today’s world provides a virtually limitless exchange of ideas. In fact, a number of space-saving techniques designers now incorporate into their designs are either directly European in origin or have been adapted or influenced from products and ideas originating in Europe.

For example, Steve Ptaszek likes to use frameless cabinets. “They provide easier access to cabinet contents, as well as a cleaner look,” he says.

Gail Bolling also appreciates European influences related to contemporary styling as well as maximizing storage. “A lot of Europeans don’t have giant kitchens,” she says, noting that their more diminutive footprint has inspired a desire to be less wasteful, both visually and physically. “For a while, the Old World style was in. But its turned posts and fancy columns also waste a lot of space. Now we have moved away from that because people realize the importance of storage.

“A lot of European ideas are also very functional, and we’re applying them to our designs,” she continues. “They make it easier to give clients more storage and a less cluttered, more open look, often with fewer wall cabinets. Items that used to be stored in wall cabinets, such as dishes and glasses, are now stored in base cabinets, with accessories that help access and organize them.”

Hannah Hacker welcomes the visual space-saving attributes that European design offers, too. “We’re incorporating the sleek, more contemporary look of European design even in more traditional spaces,” she says. “There isn’t a lot of ornamentation or detailing. If you go overboard with details in small spaces,

it can start to feel busy and claustrophobic. Using flat-panel doors and more contemporary materials also help a smaller space not feel as small. It may not be physically space saving, but it certainly is visually space saving.”

Randy O’Kane likes to incorporate demi-tall cabinetry that has been used in Europe for years. “European design has been using demi-tall cabinets long before we were,” she says, noting their mid-height size can be a solution for finding storage in open kitchens. “Open-concept kitchens mean fewer walls. If you consider that refrigerators, pantries and wall ovens need walls, that can create challenges. We overcome those challenges by using undercounter ovens, base cabinetry for pantry space and demi-tall cabinetry.”

A European impact can also be seen in appliances. “A lot of European appliance brands are starting to offer more small-profile appliances and combination appliances,” says Hacker. “I have also seen some interesting ideas for dual-purpose kitchen spaces like countertops that can slide over the top of sinks and movable islands that can double as work space and table space.”

Jennifer Austin believes the availability of ceiling extractors opens up design ideas for island cooktops and ranges, saving visual space. “They’re pretty new to our market, but they’ve been big in Europe,” she says. “They are mounted flush with the ceiling. Island hoods are often right at eye level, and people can also use pop-up vents behind the range, but they aren’t as efficient. The ceiling extractor takes the place of the hood and pop-up vent. Their efficiency is better than the pop-up, but not as good as a hood, but you don’t have any intrusion of your visual space.”

# Flexible Connections

Demand is on the rise for appliances that meet the flexible needs of individual lifestyles through connectivity and design.

BY ELIZABETH RICHARDS

The essential functions of a kitchen – storing and preparing food, and cleaning up when the preparations are complete – require a full complement of appliances to get the job done. But while function might be the top priority for these products, the aesthetic appeal cannot be ignored. Designers are tasked with not only finding the best appliances for their clients' family and entertaining needs, but also with finding exactly the right look to match the homeowner's desired design aesthetic.

"People are looking for appliances that really fit their lifestyle and personality. In kitchen appliances, they want features they read about or learned about that they can immediately picture themselves using. Additionally, consumers are looking for appliances to fit their specific spaces or design vision. By offering a wide selection of products and in various sizes, we can accommodate almost any request," says Stephanie Muraro Gust, product marketing manager for Perlick Residential Products in Milwaukee, WI.

Trends are constantly changing, but year after year, consumers want appliances that are innovative and flexible, and that make everyday use of the kitchen more efficient and convenient. Jack Palazzolo, v.p. of marketing for Madison, WI-based Sub-Zero Group, Inc. says, "There will always be trends that come and go, but in the long term, our customer is looking for appliances that provide incredible, consistent results and stand the test of time."



**Vinotemp's** Element 168 Bottle Smoked Black Stainless Steel Dual-Zone Wine Cooler stores up to 14 cases of wine. It features: dual-zone cooling, a smudge-proof black stainless frame, an easy-to-clean tempered glass door, Vinotemp BioBlu interior lighting and specially designed steel and wood wine racks. Circle No. 155 on Product Card



**Beko's** 19.9-cu.-ft. French door refrigerator/freezer has EverFresh+ technology, NeoFrost dual-cooling technology and Active Fresh Blue Light to keep food fresher longer, notes the firm. It also features flexible storage capacity, Turbo Ice Maker, Fingerprint-Free Stainless Steel and IonGuard for an antibacterial effect. Circle No. 156 on Product Card



**Big Chill** has developed the Retro Electric Induction Range, which provides a retro style in over 200 custom colors. The 30" large-capacity oven accommodates a commercial baking sheet. The cooktop features four induction zones that automatically adjust to the size of the pan, as well as nine heat settings on each burner. Circle No. 157 on Product Card



The interior of **Gaggenau's** 400 series illuminating dishwasher lights up when opened. When closed, it projects the remaining cycle time onto the floor. The handle-less DF 480 dishwasher can be hidden behind a cabinet front. Circle No. 158 on Product Card

Current trends include mixing and matching multiples of the same product for added versatility; multifunctional capabilities; a rise in black stainless finish, and increased interest in connected appliances and appliances that promote healthy cooking. That's according to manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.

## PERSONAL STYLE

Homeowners desire the opportunity to feel like their kitchen is truly their own, a reflection of their personality and lifestyle that won't be mimicked by everyone on the block. Manufacturers are ensuring that there are options for any whim so designers can offer clients a truly personalized look.

"Since appliances are such a major part of a kitchen, it's not unlikely that the design of a kitchen is shaped almost completely around the look of the consumer's appliances. The appearance of products should reflect the owner's personality and harmonize with other products in the kitchen as well as the rest of the home," states Natalie Walsh, customer marketing manager for Electrolux Major Appliances North America based in Augusta, GA.

"People want appliances that are personal to them, something that feels like it was built and designed with their wants and needs in mind. One-size-fits-all-type appliances are no longer desirable," adds Muraro Gust. "Consumers are putting more emphasis on customization, so manufacturers are coming out with more color options and hardware finishes," she says.



**Whirlpool's** Fingerprint Resistant Black Stainless Steel Kitchen Suite features coordinating appliances with a rich, metallic black in a soft, brushed matte finish that hides fingerprints, smudges and daily wear, says the company. The new suite of appliances features a refrigerator, range, microwave and dishwasher. Circle No. 159 on Product Card



**Liebherr Appliances' HW 8000** fully integrated pantry-style 24" wine cabinet stores up to 80 wine bottles on wooden shelves while providing wine label presentation. The wine cabinet panels can be customized to match cabinetry heights of 70", 80" or 84". Circle No. 160 on Product Card



**GE's Monogram Columns** make it possible to split up the refrigerator and freezer. Columns have adjustable panels and flush installation and can be retrofit. They include Ramp-up LED interior lighting, aluminum extruded touch points, full-extension, soft-close temperature-controlled drawers and Autofill pitcher. Circle No. 161 on Product Card



**True Refrigeration's 30"** Columns are available in three new models – solid door, glass door and dual-zone wine column – with stainless steel interiors and exteriors. Custom colors, including Antique White, Matte Black and Gloss Black, can be combined with hardware in copper, brass and chrome. Circle No. 162 on Product Card



**Frigidaire Gallery's Smudge-Proof Black Stainless Steel** collection has eight appliances including a 30" double wall oven with True Convection technology in both ovens, a third heating element and single convection fan. The oven also has: Quick Preheat setting, Effortless Temperature Probe and One-Touch Self-Clean. Circle No. 163 on Product Card



The **Capital Cooking MCR304-L Precision Series Gas Range** is a commercial-grade, 30" manual clean oven with 30,000 BTU Bake Burner and 18,000 BTU Infrared Broil Burner. The range is customizable with hundreds of hue options from the RAL Color Standard. Circle No. 164 on Product Card



Hybrid hoods from **Stanisci Design & Manufacturing**, in sizes ranging from 30" to 60" wide, are made of stainless steel baffle bases and wood tops. The stainless steel baffle liner is available with six different ventilation options. Fourteen different wood species are available. Circle No. 165 on Product Card



The 36" **NEXT Dual Fuel range from Superiore**, available from **Tecnogas**, has a cooktop with four brass gas burners and an electric griddle. The large-capacity electric oven features self-cleaning capabilities and the Cool Flow System. The new Home Chef software system allows users to customize cooking. Circle No. 166 on Product Card

Sometimes, homeowners choose appliances designed to shine. "It's time to be proud of your appliances. It's a great time to be a home chef. From Pinterest for inspiration to YouTube how-tos, the home chef has access to better, fresher foods and knows how to use them. Having beautiful, high-performance appliances is part of this. When you love to cook, you don't want to minimize the appliances in the kitchen, you want to show them off as part of your craft," says Andrew Shead, sales & marketing for True Residential in O'Fallon, MO.

"Every great cook has a signature personal style and wants appliances to match," states Beatriz Sandoval, director of brand marketing for Thermador at BSH Appliances in Irvine, CA. "From a sleek, flush design to a bold statement piece, ultimate entertainers want appliances to convey their exceptional lifestyle. That said, custom paneling remains a highly sought-after option, and allows for the surrounding cabinetry to seamlessly blend in."

#### **BLENDED BEAUTY**

While some prefer the bold personal statement, other consumers have a more understated style. They want appliances that reflect this by blending into the overall design – sometimes hidden away completely. "There are really two types of customers – one that wants their products to stand out and the other that wants them to be completely hidden," says Scott Davies, marketing manager for Fisher & Paykel North America in

Huntington Beach, CA. "Aside from cooking appliances, all the others can be completely hidden. Even ventilation can be hidden now. Either way, seamless integration with the cabinetry around it is critical."

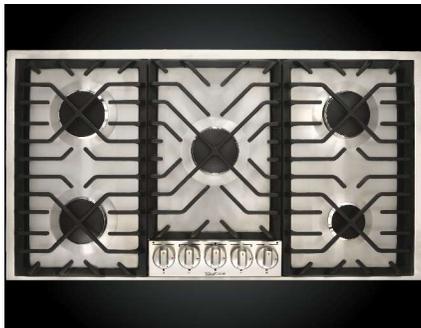
"Appliances are an integral part of the overall design of any kitchen," notes Peter Weedfald, sr. v.p. of sales & marketing for Sharp Home Electronics Co. of America in Montvale, NJ. "Consumers want appliances with a low-profile design and clean sightlines to integrate seamlessly with the kitchen, and preserving counter space will always be a high priority."

"Seamless integration of appliances into their environments is another must in the luxury appliance category," agrees Jon Hall, marketing director for Jenn-Air, based in Benton Harbor, MI. "As open floor plans continue to grow in popularity, appliances designed to keep sightlines clear are increasingly important," he adds.

#### **MIX AND MATCH**

A big demand placed on designers is the need for flexibility in appliance selection and layout. Manufacturers are supporting this desired flexibility by offering smaller versions of appliances that lend themselves to a mix-and-match approach. Often, the resulting designs incorporate more than one of the same types of appliance into the space for a truly personal arrangement.

"When it comes to building a new home, or remodeling a kitchen, consumers want appliances that offer options and versatility," says Weedfald.



**Wind Crest by CNP Industries'** CTSG gas cooktops feature a center dual port burner with an output of 20,000 BTUs. The grates rise just 1" above the countertop, and the one-piece stainless design offers a sleek and integrated appearance. Circle No. 167 on Product Card



The Refrigerator-Freezer from **Summit Appliance** is an all-in-one refrigerator-freezer designed for built-in use under counters. The unit measures 30" wide and under 24" deep, and includes French doors. Each section is frost-free and includes adjustable shelves and LED lighting. Finish options include stainless steel, white, black and panel-ready doors. Circle No. 168 on Product Card



**Sharp Electronics Marketing Company of America's** Black Stainless Steel Microwave Drawer Oven has a black stainless finish and a concealed control panel that opens to a 45° angle. It also has the Easy Touch Automatic Drawer system, low sides and virtual Carousel. It features customizable setting options and built-in functions with a 1.2-cu.-ft. capacity. Circle No. 169 on Product Card



The 48" **AGA Mercury Induction Range** has five induction burners and three fast-heating ovens, each large enough to fit a 25 lb. turkey, according to the company. The range is available in six finishes, including matte black (shown). Circle No. 170 on Product Card



The Kalamazoo Smoker Cabinet from **Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet** features an under-counter cabinet design that mirrors the lines of the company's cabinet collection. It provides a sealed charcoal system that offers a 225°F smoking temperature for up to 16 hours on a single 7 lb. load of charcoal. Three large shelves are included to hold food. Circle No. 171 on Product Card



The **Thermador 36"** Refrigerator and Freezer Columns showcase a range of new features, including Open Door Assist for push or pull opening; the Thermafresh System for humidity and temperature control; Delicate Produce Bins for fresh fruits and vegetables, and TFT control display panel for precise temperature management. Circle No. 172 on Product Card



**Broan's** new under-cabinet range hoods, featuring the Broan Captur System, are available in six modern designs, and offer up to 600 CFM and LED surface lighting. The sculpted lines of Alta, Antero and Corteo show off a sleek look, while Sahale is more refined, Glacier more contemporary and Spire is a pro-style shape. Circle No. 173 on Product Card



**Viking Range's** warming drawer is also a slow cooker for cooking at a low temperature over longer periods of time. A 475-watt element provides temperatures from 90°F to 250°F, and the unit has 1.7-cu.-ft. drawer capacity. The 30"-wide warming drawer/slow cooker has a Sabbath mode, a four-hour auto shutoff feature and an optional pan/lid accessory set. Circle No. 174 on Product Card

"It's also important for manufacturers to offer flexible placement options and finishes to allow for customization so it's easy to mix and match."

Davies adds that appliances, including multiple units, are being placed where they are needed most. "The standard triangle design of a kitchen is no longer relevant," he reports. Instead, he explains, placing smaller refrigeration units adds convenience, instead of relying on the main larger refrigeration that is generally placed away from surfaces. Installing both gas and induction cooktops together allows for more choice in surface cooking, he adds. "Providing smaller, more compact products to enable users to create this style of kitchen design is essential," he comments.

Sandoval agrees that smaller appliances are trending for added flexibility. "In addition to multiple refrigeration columns, ultimate entertainers are placing multiple dishwashers throughout their kitchen. Whether the cook needs to clean specialty tools, large dishes or delicate glassware, these luxury consumers desire multiple dishwashers to meet their needs," she adds.

Shed believes customers are placing multiple refrigerators throughout the home with specific purposes in mind. For instance, he says, customers may use their 30" glass door refrigerator as a large bar and snack refrigerator but hide the more mundane and less appealing items, like leftovers, behind a solid door refrigerator. "We also still have customers finding new uses for our refrigerators. We've seen our 15" glass door

undercounter refrigerator in bathrooms and dressing areas for refrigerated makeups and pharmaceuticals," he states.

Hall cites Jenn-Air's new modular cooktops, which provide the option for highly customized cooking surfaces. He adds that homeowners are creating specific stations within the kitchen, often with these smaller models. A baking station or prep area, for example, might include a 15" induction modular cooktop for melting chocolate, making a lemon curd or steaming vegetables.

#### QUALITY PERFORMANCE

Not only is flexibility important, but consumers are also looking for quality machines that perform multiple tasks with ease and efficiency. Often, this means including appliances that are designed to multitask, such as a cooktop with several cooking style options, or a combination oven. Others can shift in purpose with a few simple accessory changes, allowing for ultimate flexibility.

"We see customers gravitate toward adding accessories to make their units multifunctional," says Muraro Gust. "For example, our undercounter refrigerator can stock bottled water and beverages during the day, and with the switch of a rack become a martini fridge for entertaining in the evening. Anything that allows people to customize their appliances in form or function is desirable."



The Premium island range hood from **Kobe Range Hoods** is hand-crafted with 18-gauge commercial-grade stainless steel and comes with a 750 CFM internal blower. The QuietMode feature allows this range hood to operate its six speeds at a reduced sound level. It includes three-minute delay shutoff and ECO Mode technology. Circle No. 175 on Product Card



**Caliber Appliances'** Pro Range series estate-scaled 36" and 48" all-gas ranges and rangetops are customizable. With a 23,000 BTU open-top burner with a broad range of heat settings and an Insta-Low Setting, it also includes even-heating, stainless steel griddles, 23,000 BTU French tops and Crossflame Pro grilling section with Tri-flow convection oven. Circle No. 176 on Product Card



New dishwashers from **Miele** include the QuickIntenseWash program, which provides a fast wash and dry cycle in under 58 minutes. To save energy, the EcoTech heat storage unit uses hot water from the previous stage to heat fresh water. The 3D+ cutlery tray can be lowered. Certain models can be monitored and controlled via the Miele@Mobile app. Circle No. 177 on Product Card



**RangeCraft Manufacturing's** custom designed range hoods come in more than 20 shapes and sizes from a choice of over 25 metals. Decorative bands, rivets and pot rails can be added. RangeCraft's Made in the USA range hoods are Made To Order, and include powerful quiet fans. Range-Craft also offers universal inserts for wood hoods for kitchen ventilation. Circle No. 178 on Product Card



**Jenn-Air's** collection of module cooktops offers 15" cooking modules including a single-burner cooktop with a wok ring, a two-burner gas cooktop, a chrome-infused griddle, an induction wok and an induction cooktop. The modular induction wok features a concave design to cradle a round-bottom wok, with an element that delivers up to 3,600 watts. Circle No. 179 on Product Card



**Fisher & Paykel's** French Door Built-In Refrigerator showcases a flush fit design in stainless steel or custom panel finishes. The 36" unit is available in 72"-, 80"- and 84"-high units with bottom-mount freezer. ActiveSmart technology monitors how the appliance is used and adapts to maintain a controlled environment and optimum temperature. Circle No. 180 on Product Card



The Solaro 2.0 dishwasher from **Electrolux** incorporates Perfect Dry, a system that circulates air evenly for drying; a removable third rack that holds tools and serving utensils, and the new LuxCare Wash Arm, which delivers more water coverage than a traditional spray arm, as well as two targeted wash zones, according to the company. Circle No. 181 on Product Card



**BlueStar's** Matte collection has eight finishes for bespoke appliances, showcasing matte hues. Developed as a smooth, velvety finish, the BlueStar Matte collection was inspired by Heidi Piron, founder of Heidi Piron Designs in Chatham, NJ, and the grand prize winner in BlueStar's first annual Kitchen Design Competition. Circle No. 182 on Product Card

"Consumers continue to want features and options that offer flexibility, connectivity, convenience and efficiency in cooking," concurs V. David Bernardino, marketing director/Super Premium + Builder at Ridgefield Park, NJ-based Samsung Electronics America.

Changes in the attitudes and lifestyles of younger consumers also have an impact on what is expected from appliances. "The way consumers procure and cook food is rapidly changing. New appliance purchasers between the ages of 22 and 34 have unique habits and attitudes toward household chores. There is less emphasis on at-home cooking, resulting in the need for more functional products that make cooking and preparing meals faster and easier," says Walsh.

Weedfald sees the trend toward healthy eating standing out, creating greater demand for superheated steam cooking technology, even as a replacement for a conventional oven. "We expect to continue seeing a shift toward appliances that make healthy cooking even easier," he says.

Appliances have high performance expectations to live up to as well. "People are consistently looking for appliances that will stand the test of time, make their lives easier and offer outstanding design," notes Taryn Brucia, director of public relations for LG Appliances USA based in Englewood Cliffs, NJ. She sees a clear desire for multifunctional appliances, even those that extend beyond the kitchen.

"Ultimately the premium customer demands convenience and functions that increase usability and functionality," says Davies. This includes fully

extendable shelving in ovens, high-quality runners in drawer appliances, smart electronics that take care of and extend the life of food, and visuals on the outside of products that help cue the customer as to the state of the product. "Ease of installation and superior post-purchase service are also very important," he adds.

"Homeowners want their appliances to help them achieve exactly what they want, whether that is optimal food preservation or consistent results when cooking," comments Palazzolo.

#### STAINLESS WITH A TWIST

While color is occasionally used to make a statement, manufacturers agree that, when it comes to kitchen appliances, stainless steel is still the top choice. Adding a unique twist to this constant is the rise of black stainless steel, which is exhibiting increased popularity, according to manufacturers.

"Stainless steel continues to reign supreme when it comes to kitchen appliances, and of those who currently have stainless steel, 64% of those consumers stated they would consider black stainless steel," states Walsh. "Black stainless steel also offers consumers the ability to embrace more of a modern kitchen design."

Bernardino agrees: "Stainless steel still continues to be the most requested finish, but we're seeing a lot of demand for our new black stainless steel finishes, as they provide a sleek and modern finish that fits with contemporary kitchens."



Perlick's Signature Series 24" Dual Zone Wine Reserve has a stainless steel interior and exterior, and two separately controlled compartments; each one has two full-extension wine racks, and holds up to 14 bottles of wine. RAPIDcool technology chills room temperature beverages in less than 30 minutes. Circle No. 183 on Product Card



The Built-in Double Wall Oven has Samsung's Flex Duo technology, enabling three distinct oven spaces individually controlled with the Samsung Smart Divider. The Built-in Ovens utilize SteamBake and SteamRoast functions, and are equipped with Wi-Fi so users can remotely start, control and turn them off. Circle No. 184 on Product Card



The Brilliance Nugget Ice Machine from Scotsman Ice Systems delivers chewable nugget ice. The machines are energy and water efficient, the firm notes, and feature smart design and user-friendly cleaning. Circle No. 185 on Product Card



A stainless steel European-style range collection that runs on both natural gas and LP gas is the latest offering from Fagor America. The 24" and 36" convection ranges with built-in rotisserie have seven pre-set cooking programs. The 36" range has two convection systems, each one with a 1,690 watt heating element. Circle No. 186 on Product Card



Portofino by Smeg is a 36" dual-fuel range with vapor clean, double convection, defrost by weight and maximum thermal insulation, reducing preheating time by up to 50%, the firm notes. It has a large LCD display with 20 automatic cooking programs and interior lighting. The ranges come in eight colors. Circle No. 187 on Product Card



The Pro Dual-Fuel Steam Range from Dacor is available in 48" and 36" models, and features a 4.8-cu.-ft. steam and convection oven topped with six 22K BTU dual-stack sealed burners plus an electric griddle. A 7" LCD control panel and iQ Kitchen app control the range along with Illumina Knobs. Circle No. 188 on Product Card



The Wolf Induction Range uses pan-sensing technology, with energy supplied only to the cooking vessel. The range also has the signature Wolf dual convection oven cavity with two convection fans that circulate heat, and 10 cooking modes. The range is available in 30" and 36" widths. Circle No. 189 on Product Card



Vent-A-Hood's V-Line Series of range hoods has the Power Lung blower, which offers filterless grease extraction. The end result is a more powerful range hood when compared to filter type hoods, according to the firm. V-Line is available in under-cabinet, wall-mount, and liner-insert configurations. Circle No. 190 on Product Card

Brucia adds, "This new finish brings an undeniable luster to the kitchen and is an exciting advancement in the evolution of traditional stainless steel. It elevates the traditional stainless steel look with a satin-smooth, warm and sophisticated finish unlike any other for both a modern and timeless aesthetic that pairs beautifully with any high-end kitchen design. It is also coated with a special material, making it fingerprint- and smudge-resistant, requiring only a dry cloth to return it to its original luster, making it perfect for families," she says.

**GROWING CONNECTIONS**

Being connected is simply a way of life for many people, and the features they enjoy in their smartphones and tablets are more and more often being incorporated into their appliances. At the same time, most consumers only want these features if they add real benefit rather than being a gimmick.

"Connected appliances are a growing trend in the industry, and the features that will be introduced continue to evolve as consumer expectations evolve. The most important thing for connected appliances is that they provide actual benefits to the user and not features for features' sake. Over the next few years it will be interesting to see how appliances evolve as homeowners' grocery shopping and cooking habits change over the foreseeable future," says Palazzolo.

"Wi-Fi and connectivity are having a major impact on appliance trends, as consumers are looking for ways to have their appliances be more integrated into their lives," notes Bernardino.

Hall says that, as with so many other aspects of our lives, the "internet of things" is fundamentally changing everything, including how products for the kitchen are used and designed. "Consumers are becoming more accustomed to the idea of connectivity in devices beyond their smartphones and tablets. As a result, connected kitchen appliances are now a must for affluent, tech-savvy consumers, with voice activation representing the newest frontier in tapping the lifestyle-enabling power of Wi-Fi connectivity," he points out.

The evolving market of "smart" appliances and the rise of Google Home and Amazon Alexa are impacting the appliance industry as well, according to Brucia.

Walsh has seen a shift in the way consumers look at appliances; where they used to be viewed as mechanical, now they are viewed as being electronics. "Therefore, electronics like laptops and smartphones, with two-to-four-year lifecycles, have made consumers a bit skeptical of appliances' computerization," she says.

"Home Automation is being pushed forward, but customers haven't really figured out what should be connected, and once connected, what appliances should do. There is a lot of experimentation here, but we haven't seen any clear must-have features yet," adds Shead. ■



At just 18" wide, the IW-18 Wine Storage from **Sub-Zero** delivers advanced protection against heat, UV light, humidity and vibration. Two individually controlled storage zones provide separate areas to store red and white wines at the proper temperatures. Fifteen racks provide a 59-bottle capacity. Circle No. 191 on Product Card



**Elmira Stove Works'** Northstar range hoods come in outside-vent or recirculating models. They have quiet multi-speed operation and removable stainless steel baffle filters. Dual three-watt LED lights provide task lighting for the range top. A color-matched or complementary-colored splashback can be added. Circle No. 192 on Product Card



Part of the LG Signature line from **LG Electronics**, the Door-in-Door refrigerator features InstaView, which turns the opaque Door-in-Door compartment transparent with two knocks on the door. Auto Open Door works via a smart sensor, allowing hands-free access to the inside of one side of the refrigerator. Circle No. 193 on Product Card



The 18" Custom Panel Single Door Built-In Freezer from **Bosch** can be installed completely flush or framed for added design flexibility. The unit includes interior LED lighting throughout, the Optiflex Hinge for flush-mounting and an ice maker with ultra capacity ice drawer. The freezer is Energy Star rated. Circle No. 194 on Product Card



The Cattura downdraft from **Best** is a thin, sleek and retractable unit that has the patented VERTEX Complete Capture Design, which allows it to capture emissions with up to 100% capture. Dual inlet ports located on the face and the top of the downdraft take in emissions. When fully raised, the unit reaches 18". Circle No. 195 on Product Card



The 24" dishwasher models from **Bertazzoni** have two interior LED surround lights for easier loading. The Energy Star compliant units are insulated for extra-quiet performance, notes the firm, and the Sani Boost element increases washing temperature to 158°F for cleaning and sanitizing. Circle No. 196 on Product Card



**Streamline Hoods** creates custom fabricated hoods, and is the sole distributor of Corian range hoods in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico, according to the firm. Shown is the Cobra, which is designed to resemble the head of a cobra snake. Available in short or long models, Cobra is offered in white or black. Circle No. 197 on Product Card



The **Verona 36"** fully electric double oven range, available from **EuroChef USA**, sports a black ceramic glass cooktop equipped with five sealed elements, including a dual element in the center. Both range options are equipped with a multi-function European convection oven with seven cooking modes. Circle No. 198 on Product Card



The **NXR Duro Corporation** Entrée is a 48" Pro-Style Stainless Steel six-burner Gas Range with 7.2-cu.-ft. Convection Oven and Griddle. The range showcases single-stack burners made in Germany, including high power 18,000 BTU and low power 6,000 BTU burners. Circle No. 199 on Product Card



**Faber's** Stratus single-panel ventilation hood for island or wall installations has an integrated glass or stainless steel panel design, available in 36" or 48" widths. It doubles as an additional source of lighting with LED light bars for the glass application or four corner LED lights on the stainless steel model with installation options in 36"- or 48"-width models. Circle No. 200 on Product Card



**Ilve** is launching a new Custom Color Program for both its Majestic and Nostalgie series of cooking appliances. Available from **EuroChef USA**, the ranges are offered in standard colors – seven for Majestic and eight for Nostalgie – with over 220 RAL colors also available for greater personalization. Circle No. 201 on Product Card



The **U-Line 24"** Convertible Freezer 1224FZR is a frost-free freezer that converts to a refrigerator by the push of a button. Convection cooling provides freezer temperatures from -5°F to +5°F and refrigerator temperatures from 34°F to 45°F. Available built-in or freestanding, it comes in black, white, stainless, integrated and outdoor models. Circle No. 202 on Product Card

# Safe and Serene

**T**oday's homes must be designed to meet a multitude of needs, whether the homeowners are older and interested in aging in place or a young couple with small children in their first home. The bath is the room where safety is of the greatest concern, and manufacturers of the products that grace this space are constantly pushing the envelope when it comes to beautiful products that provide the optimum in comfort and security.

Floating vanities, grab bars and bidet-type toilet options provide custom capabilities when it comes to space placement. And products such as zero-threshold showers, touch-free faucets and non-slip surfaces add ease of use and accessibility.

This month, *KBDN* takes a look at just a few of the many products currently available that make the bath beautiful and safe for all users.

**1. Robern** has enhanced its Cartesian line of modular floating vanities with the turnkey Curated Cartesian Vanities. With nine pre-configured offerings, the line includes options such as glass finishes and Silestone, spacious drawers and tip-out storage, in-drawer electric, hot storage and UL-listed LED lights. Circle No. 203 on Product Card

**2.** The new Vignoni collection by **Simas** is designed to be reminiscent of the ancient territory of Bagno Vignoni, a medieval Italian village with thermal baths. The Italian style and craftsmanship are evident in a design that features soft contours and oval shapes in a contemporary aesthetic. The collection includes washbasins, toilets and bidets in glossy white, matte white, glossy black and matte anthracite. Circle No. 204 on Product Card

**3.** The Akses high-end bypass shower door collection from **Kalia** is designed with two moveable panels that allow for ease of entering and exiting the shower. The ultra-smooth and quiet Poyamide 66 nylon roller technology, combined with sturdy upper rail, provide optimal door movement, notes the firm. The door can be installed in a corner or alcove, and is available in 60" or 48" in chrome. Circle No. 205 on Product Card

**4. Watermark Designs'** grab bars complement the bathroom's overall design while enhancing accessibility, affirms the company. Solidly constructed, the bars are available in any of the company's 38 finishes. Circle No. 206 on Product Card

**5. KWC's** Intro line of bath faucets features a swiveling jet regulator, which allows users to change the direction and angle of the jet of water to suit their needs. The collection also features a single-lever faucet and a widespread faucet. Circle No. 207 on Product Card

**6. Wetstyle's** Glacier ZERO-threshold shower provides accessibility via a non-slip surface, while maintaining a high design aesthetic and functionality. The ADA-compliant shower is made from WETMAR BiO, and features a concealed drain channel completely integrated into the floor base. The shower receptacle is available in True High Gloss and matte finishes. Circle No. 208 on Product Card





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**7.** The AT100 bidet seat from **DXV by American Standard** offers a range of completely automated, easily adjusted functions. The fixture uses warm water from two separate nozzles for front and rear cleansing. Nozzle positions, spray volume and strength, and water temperature are all adjustable by remote control. There is also a massage feature and a built-in warm-air drier for use after washing.  
Circle No. 209 on Product Card

**8.** Designed by Italian design house Pininfarina for **Ronbow**, the Vento collection - which means wind in Italian - showcases a sinktop design inspired by smooth snowdrifts carved by fast, strong winds. The sinktop sits atop a vanity available in two sizes: 30" and 42", and two finishes: Graphite and Chene. Coordinating pieces are available.  
Circle No. 210 on Product Card

**9.** The M-Power below-deck sensor-operated lavatory faucet provides increased water savings, improved hygiene and enhanced functionality, according to the firm. The **Moen** faucet comes in chrome in single-mount, 3" centerset and gooseneck styles.  
Circle No. 211 on Product Card

**10.** **Crystal Cabinet Works** provides custom storage solutions for the bath. Shown is a custom vanity hair station featuring a solid maple interior with storage for curling irons, blow dryers, etc. and access to a built-in power source. The vanity drawer features an oversized, custom maple insert to accommodate a variety of items.  
Circle No. 212 on Product Card

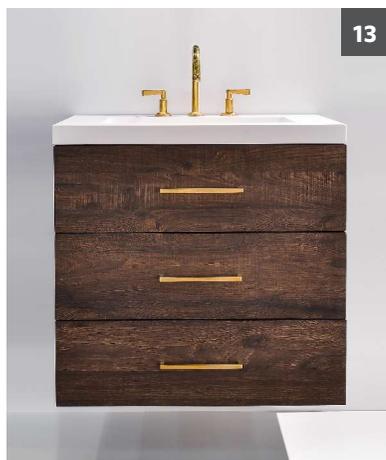
**11.** The Touchfree eSet faucet series from **Dornbracht** fits all basin types, with wall-mounted and free-standing models available in contact-free control. The eSet is available as a surface-mounted solution for basins with a freestanding spout and as a concealed solution for wall-mounted spouts - and either with or without temperature adjustments in each case.  
Circle No. 213 on Product Card



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**12.** **Kohler's** Veil one-piece toilet showcases a range of features, including automatic opening/closing lid and flushing to minimize touch points, rimless bowl and dual jets for a cleaner flush, bidet and warm-air drying systems, and both 1.28-gallon and 0.8-gallon eco flush options. Veil's touch-screen remote control offers customization.  
Circle No. 214 on Product Card

**13.** **The Furniture Guild's** wall-hung Riva 406 vanity is available in multiple configurations, with single or double basins, in sizes ranging from 24" to 96". Guildstone tops are available, which integrate the sink bowl(s) with the countertop and offer options in the number, size and placement of the bowls as well as thickness of the material.  
Circle No. 215 on Product Card



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**14.** The Morro Bay widespread bath faucet from **California Faucets** sports clean geometric lines and a distinctive spout built from two intersecting bars of solid brass. The faucet is hand finished and individually assembled, and is available in over 31 artisan finishes, including 14 PVD finishes.  
Circle No. 216 on Product Card

**15.** A robust grab bar at a 135-degree angle from **Keuco** has an integrated soap holder available in a right or left-sided version. The soap holder can be removed for cleaning and is available in three colors.  
Circle No. 217 on Product Card



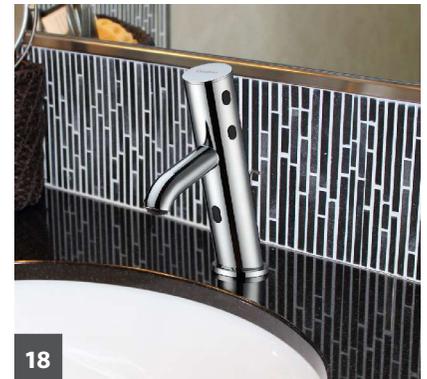
15

**16.** **TOTO** has expanded its line of Connect+ high-efficiency toilets and Washlet combinations with its new MH Connect+ wall-mount high-efficiency dual flush toilet. The toilet includes the company's DualMax 3D Tornado flushing system and features a vitreous china bowl coated with CeFiONtect. The model's DuoFit In-Wall Tank System is concealed and includes a user-friendly dual-flush push plate.  
Circle No. 218 on Product Card

**17.** The Stealth Phantom by **Niagara Conservation** is a single flush toilet that features Stealth Technology, allowing the ability to flush the least amount of water at 0.8 gpf. With its skirted sides, it conceals the trapway system giving it a sleek look that is easy to clean. Other features include: EZ Height design; a standard Fluidmaster II valve; an inconspicuous flush push button; a low friction ceramic surface, and no flapper to cause leakage.  
Circle No. 219 on Product Card



**18.** With no handles to collect germs, the 3102 utilizes **Cinaton's** patented iSense technology to allow operation without touching the faucet. The hands-free system incorporates five infrared sensors that provide control over 13 different functions, from water flow to temperature. The faucet is available in Chrome or Brushed Nickel.  
Circle No. 220 on Product Card



**19.** Three collection models, DuraPlan, P3 Comforts and Stonetto from **Duravit** grant spaces a flush-fitting shower tray that provides a sophisticated aesthetic with easy-to-clean, slip-resistant characteristics; each tray is composed of Duravit's proprietary materials for exceptional quality and performance.  
Circle No. 221 on Product Card



**20.** **Mansfield Plumbing's** Denali Power Flush toilet starts by having water sit higher in its tank. During the flushing process, energy picks up as water moves through a 3" flush valve, with dual side jets intensifying the waste removal process. The toilet operation moves 1,200 grams of waste with 1.6 gpf. Denali toilets are available as a SmartHeight ADA-compliant toilet with elongated front and PuraClean glaze.  
Circle No. 222 on Product Card



**21.** **Victoria + Albert** has developed a line of sleekly styled grab bars that coordinate with some of its most popular tubs, including the Amalfi, Amiata, Barcelona, ios, Napoli, Radford, Ravello and Toulouse. Available in polished chrome, the handles improve ease of access. They are bolted through for maximum strength, and the external mounting bolts include a cover plate in polished chrome for a streamlined look.  
Circle No. 223 on Product Card



**22.** Sodo is the new contemporary wall-mount vanity from **Strasser Woodenworks**. Sodo is available in all standard sizes from 24" to 60" (60" is available in both single and double bowl) and 10 different finishes. Shown here in Silver Oak with slab doors are two 30" vanities with an 18" drawer bank, and 18" cubby with matching 24" medicine cabinets with LED lightning.  
Circle No. 224 on Product Card



**23.** Axor's ShowerSelect SoftCube Thermostatic Trim from **Hansgrohe** includes thermostats that are equipped with sleek, black select buttons with white symbols that make it easy to understand at a glance how to control the shower at the touch of a button. The controls are used to turn on/off the different shower functions, such as the handshower or overhead shower. The Select feature is mechanical, not electrical, and the trim is solid brass.  
Circle No. 225 on Product Card



**24.** The Zura bath collection from **Delta Faucet** features rounded, rectangular and triangular geometric shapes. The line includes deck-mount lavatory faucets in a split Matte Black and Chrome finish, as well as other finish options. The single-handle and vessel faucets are also equipped with optional Touch2O.xt Technology, which allows the water flow to be turned on and off with a simple touch to the faucet's spout, hub or handle.  
Circle No. 226 on Product Card



**25.** The iWash S-10 Bidet Seat from **Icera** provides a heated seat with adjustable water temperature, a warm-air dryer and an LED nightlight. Equipped with an instant water-heating system, the seat also has two power-saving modes and a seat sensor to ensure the unit will only operate when occupied. Functions include rear and front aerated wash capabilities, oscillating wash and adjustable water temperature, pressure and nozzle position.  
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**LAMINATE VENEERS DISPLAY TEXTURE**

Conestoga Wood Specialties has expanded its Allure collection of decorative laminate veneer doors, drawer fronts and components to include textural effects. Ranging from satin smooth to wood grain medium to deep embossed, the collection includes 22 door styles and 13 colors. Five-piece doors and drawer fronts now include drill & dowel construction, creating a mortise & tenon look. The line's durability exceeds KCMA and NEMA standards for scratch and dent resistance, and provides UV resistance as well, according to the firm. Circle No. 231 on Product Card



**BRACKETS BOLSTER SUPPORT**

Brackets from Original Granite Bracket are designed to extend and add more countertop space in the kitchen or bath; create floating counters or vanities, shelves and other furniture such as tables or benches, and install benches in the mudroom. The brackets are manufactured in the U.S. and made of American steel. Circle No. 233 on Product Card



**CIRCULAR SAW SPORTS ALL-MAGNESIUM BLADE**

SkilSaw's Southpaw is an all-magnesium left blade Sidewinder Circular Saw with a 15 amp Dual-Field motor that increases cooling and extends tool life, according to the firm. Its all-magnesium construction reduces weight and dissipates motor heat. The blade is located on the left, giving the user improved blade and cut-line visibility for enhanced accuracy, the firm notes. The 56-degree precision beveling capacity provides the added capacity for a wider variety of cuts. Circle No. 236 on Product Card

**TRACK SYSTEM CARRIES HEAVY LOADS**

The 116RC, a new heavy-duty linear track system from Accuride International, can carry loads up to 793 lbs. This ADA-compliant system uses 7" re-circulating ball carriages inserted within an aluminum track to deliver smooth, sensorial movement. The aluminum tracks and carriages are light and corrosion resistant, according to the company. Available in 94.5" and 142" lengths, the 116RC's tracks can be cut or butted together to fit almost any application. Each track supports multiple carriages, and can be installed in many orientations. Circle No. 230 on Product Card



**LIFT SYSTEM AIDS IN MOVING SMALL APPLIANCES**

The spring-loaded system of the Soft-close Mixer/Appliance Lift from Hardware Resources provides mechanical assistance to raise a stand mixer, blender or food processor from a base cabinet to just below counter height when outfitted with a sturdy platform. The chrome lift then locks into place to keep the small appliance steady while in use. Three adjustable spring settings make it possible for the appliance lift to move kitchen machines that are up to 45 lbs. in weight. Soft-close dampers ensure smooth, quiet operation. Circle No. 232 on Product Card



**TASK LIGHTING PROVIDES VARIABLE MOUNTING OPTIONS**

This undercabinet light from GERA Leuchten allows kitchens with few upper cabinets to still have under-cabinet task lighting. The lighting is designed in a way that makes it possible to position it either directly below a wall-mounted cabinet or wall-mounted in kitchens without wall units, creating additional storage space in the form of a shelf. The lighting system emits light upward and downward when wall mounted, and downward only when cabinet mounted. The length of the system is fully variable, and is 170mm deep and 60mm high. The lighting system can also be fitted with power points and a USB port, if needed. Circle No. 234 on Product Card



**DRAWER SYSTEM BOASTS MULTIPLE RUNNER OPTIONS**

The InnoTech drawer system from Hettich can be equipped with different runners, from the partial extension runner without soft closing to the full-extension version with Silent System or Push to Open. The partial extension runner is also the gateway to double-walled drawer systems with the option of upgrading to full extension. Circle No. 235 on Product Card



**OSCILLATING MULTI-TOOL KIT PERFORMS RANGE OF TASKS**

The GOP55-36C StarlockMax Oscillating Multi-Tool Kit from Bosch Tools is the company's most advanced and powerful Starlock tool. The kit contains 40 pieces, and users can sand, scrape, cut and everything in between, notes the firm. Circle No. 237 on Product Card

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# Former Pigsty Evolves into Sleek Kitchen

## BEFORE

The existing kitchen of this Guelph, ON home was built on what had been the pigsty of the original farm, which resulted in several surprises along the way. Dated, with various layers of wood tones, this kitchen did not reflect the simple, functional needs of the homeowners or provide a space to show off their prized travel mementos.



After photos: Jason Hartog Photography

## AFTER

Mike and Aileen Brown of Paragon Kitchens in Guelph, ON were faced with many challenges while remodeling the 100-year-old kitchen. Midway through the renovation, hidden within a wall, they discovered a beam that cut the room in half, along with an original rough stone wall. The designers and contractor needed to not only incorporate both elements into the overall design, but had to figure out how to vent the range hood through approximately 10"-thick rubble foundation walls and how to heat the kitchen without air ducts.

The original stone wall, made of natural materials from the surrounding farmland, became a strong focal point in the kitchen, and helped with the stylistic challenges of encompassing both the homeowners' simple, practical aesthetics and the rustic charm of the entire home. The contractors re-pointed the stone while the cabinet installer scribed around every crevice of the wall, which provided a seamless look. In order to minimize the appearance of the invasive overhead beam, the Browns designed a fully built-in refrigerator whose height could be accommodated by the beam, surrounding it with cabinet paneling. The designers left the overall cabinet design minimal with touches of rustic industrial to offer a counterpoint to all of the rustic farmhouse elements. Cement-look tile provided another industrial element and was juxtaposed with the quartz countertops.

**View more after photos at [KitchenBathDesign.com](http://KitchenBathDesign.com)**

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