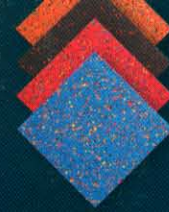


THE BEST OF
Fine Homebuilding



◀ **Stylish
sinks**
p. 70



◀ **Bath-friendly
floors**
p. 58

BATHROOM

PLANNING GUIDE 2013

Design a better bath

**Smart storage
solutions**

**A new shine on
traditional baths**

**10 ways to save
on your project**

Tile that turns heads

www.finehomebuilding.com

SPRING 2013

\$9.99 \$10.99 Canada



Fine Homebuilding is now available on tablets

Taunton Product #027035

DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 20, 2013





The best of **FineHomebuilding**

BATHROOM

PLANNING GUIDE 2013

Choosing materials

48 Tile backerboard options

53 Linear drains for custom showers

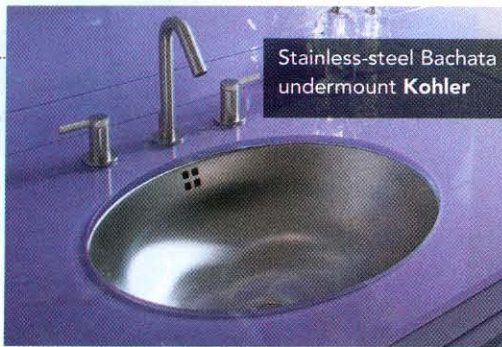
58 Smart choices in bathroom flooring

64 Miles of tile: how to choose

70 Bath sinks with style and sense

STAINLESS STEEL

Stainless-steel sinks come in several gauges, or thicknesses. Thicker metals are naturally more durable—and expensive. Stainless-steel lavs are available in high-end mirrorlike finishes, but it's just extra buffing that gives them that brilliant shine. Brushed finishes don't compromise durability.



Stainless-steel Bachata undermount Kohler

PROS: Stainless-steel sinks are tough and can withstand extreme temperatures.

CONS: Stainless steel scratches and dulls over time, and it comes in only one color.

"Stainless-steel sinks are very trendy, but they can be noisy and appear commercial and cold-feeling."

—Gary Uhl, American Standard

STONE



Jeton vessel in Nero Marquina marble Kallista

Bath sinks can be carved from an extraordinary array of natural stones—from granite and marble to onyx, limestone, and even petrified wood. Stone sinks are typically available in vessel (countertop) styles and in a variety of colors. Because stone is so porous, these sinks are often sealed before shipping. It's recommended that they be resealed every year; nevertheless, some designers advise against heavy daily use.

PROS: Few fixtures steal the show like hand-carved stone sinks.

CONS: It's not uncommon for stone sinks to chip, break, or stain.

"I did a half-granite rock with the middle scooped out. It was sculptural, but it weighed 150 lb. Reinforcing it required a structural engineer and thousands of dollars."

—Sophie Piesse, architect

ENAMELED CAST IRON

One of the oldest fixture materials, cast iron is also one of the most durable. When porcelain enamel (in a wide range of colors) is applied over cast iron, the result is a workhorse of a sink with incomparable gloss and shine. Because these sinks are made from such a trusted, long-lasting material, Kohler's come with a lifetime guarantee against cracks, chips, or burns.



Enameled cast-iron Tones basin Kohler

PROS: Enameled cast-iron sinks are solid, affordable, and easy to clean.

CONS: Installation may require extra support—and helping hands.

"Recycled iron (as much as 80%) is used in the manufacturing process, so these sinks are considered by many to be green products."

—Travis Rotelli, Kohler

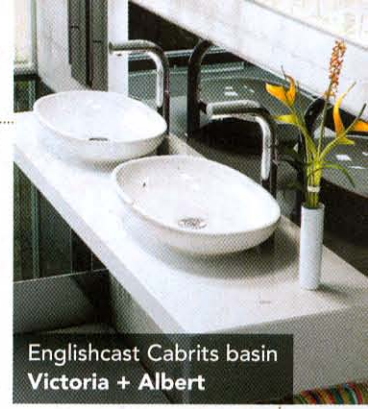
SYNTHETIC

Synthetic lavatories represent a broad range of price, quality, and appearance, from budget-friendly "cultured stone" to proprietary (and pricey) solid-surface materials.

At the lower end, ground stone is mixed with synthetic resins, molded, and finished with a gel coating. Pricier solid-surface sinks are made from a blend of natural minerals and high-performance acrylics. Consistent colors and patterns run all the way through, allowing solid-surface materials to be cut, carved, routed, and inlaid to create a variety of designs. Because of a disparity in the quality of synthetic materials, it's important to do your research.

"Although they've been around for some time, there are newer solid-surface materials that are worth a second look."

—Bill McKeone, Kallista



Englishcast Cabrits basin Victoria + Albert

PROS: Synthetic-sink options are endless and available at all price points. Expensive ones are durable and can be repaired and renewed by sanding.

CONS: Heat may discolor some of these sinks, and coatings may crack over time. Appearance varies greatly with price.

OTHER METALS

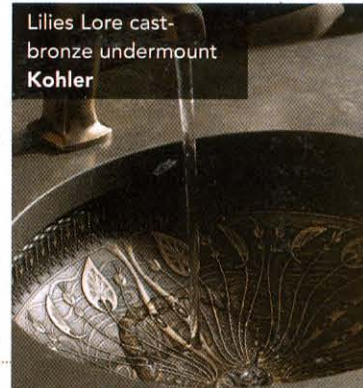
A metal sink made of brass, bronze, copper, hammered copper, or nickel is a true statement piece. Most are found at the higher end of the price scale, with hand-crafted bronze among the most expensive. Brushed nickel has a warm, brown-tone appearance and a vintage feel. Copper has natural antibacterial properties.

PROS: Most metal sinks age gracefully, developing a soft patina.

CONS: Constant cleaning and care are required.

"The choices are endless—from rustic metal to detailed patterns."

—Travis Rotelli, Kohler



Lilies Lore cast-bronze undermount Kohler

Natural stone yields a unique look

Lenova's Sand Stone vessel sinks are fabricated from blocks of natural stone, each with a unique color and grain pattern. "We call them the Fred Flintstone line," says Jay Beaumont, the company's national sales and marketing manager.

Artisans start each sink by roughly shaping and hollowing a stone blank before mounting it on a lathe and turning it to its final dimensions with diamond tooling. Then the 30-lb. sink is honed and polished.

Sandstone varies considerably in hardness, but Beaumont says that these sinks are made from hard blocks of stone that are nonporous and don't need a sealer, either at the factory or after installation.

The sinks, fabricated in China, are 15 in. by 15 in. by 5½ in.; the MSRP is \$350. They're part of Lenova's Eight Elements of Sinks collection, which includes stainless steel, porcelain, bamboo, bronze, copper, glass, and composite. For more about bath sinks, see pp. 70-77.

Scott Gibson, contributing writer



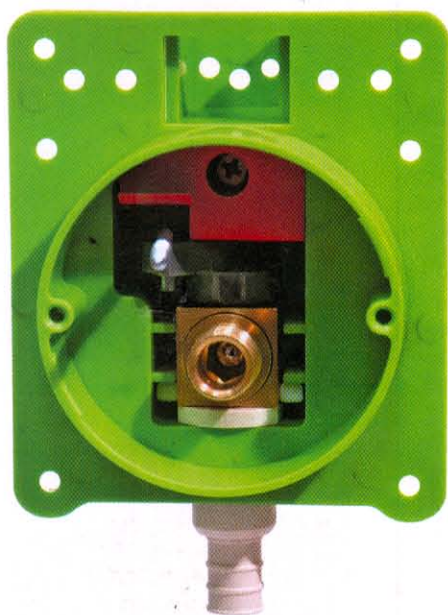
Simpler than stub outs

When plumbing a bathroom, you typically need to install a stub out, a bracket, an escutcheon, and an angle stop before running the flexible supply line to the fixture. The Pull Stop Box eliminates the stub out and moves the valve into the wall.

The rough installation is a cinch: Connect the water-supply line to the box, which has an integral brass valve, and screw it to a stud. When the drywall work is done, remove the debris cover, thread the braided supply line coming from the toilet or sink to the Pull Stop Box, and snap on the paintable trim cover. A knob on the cover opens and closes the valve; push in for water and pull out to shut off the flow.

The valve box is available in four different ½-in. connection types: sweat, CPVC, crimp PEX, and Wirsbo PEX. The standard version is about \$11, and the "lead-free" version (less than 0.25% by weight) is about \$13.

Sean Groom, contributing editor



Two new toilets in the ultra-high-efficiency category



ICERA Cadence

To achieve the 1-gal.-per-flush benchmark of the ultra-high-efficiency toilet (UHET) category, many manufacturers rely on an air-pressurized tank inside the porcelain one, but bursting pressure tanks (complete with porcelain shrapnel) have led to a recall of 2.3 million toilets in the United States. Toilet makers Toto and ICERA are betting that safety concerns and the loud whooshing and splashing of a pressurized flush will have water-conscious shoppers looking at gravity-flush UHETs instead.

Both Toto's Drake II 1G and ICERA's Cadence adopt the flushing technologies used by their respective manufacturers' 1.28-gpf toilets. For the Drake II 1G, that means Toto's double-cyclone action, which dispenses with rim holes in favor of two horizontally oriented jets on each side of the rim to create a swirling washing action that corkscrews around the bowl. The Cadence, which includes ICERA's Hyperion flushing system, uses more traditional rim jets that direct the water straight down the sides of the bowl.

Both toilets have 2½-in. fully glazed trap ways designed with gentle bends to prevent clogging, and



Toto Drake II 1G

each has a proprietary antimicrobial glazing to make the bowl as slippery and stain resistant as possible. These toilets are WaterSense certified and have chair-height seating (17 in. from the floor) for easier sitting and standing.

Available in white only with left- or right-side flush handles, the Drake II 1G lists for \$335. The Cadence (about \$350) has the smooth outside appearance of a skirted bowl and is available in white, bisque, and black.

Sean Groom

Concrete giant enters niche countertop market

Quikrete, the largest manufacturer of packaged concrete in the United States, recently launched its own line of concrete countertop mix. Requiring only the addition of water, the mix includes a superplasticizer additive and other key ingredients to provide a flowable mix at a low water-to-cement ratio that greatly reduces the need for mechanical vibration. In other words, it's perfect for precast and cast-in-place countertops.

This commercial-grade concrete mix comes in standard gray or as a light-colored tint base for use with Quikrete liquid cement colors. For a decorative look, glass or colored stone can be added to the mix. For a proper finish, the manufacturer recommends a minimum of 18 hours for curing and, after any desired sanding and polishing, the application of a suitable countertop sealer for sanitary purposes and improved acid resistance.

Each 80-lb. bag yields approximately 0.6 cu. ft. of mixed cement, which translates into about three bags per 10 sq. ft. of 1½-in.- to 2-in.-thick countertop. If it's not a stock item, the mix can be special-ordered from any store that carries Quikrete products. It retails from \$13 (gray mix) to \$16 (white mix) per bag.

Anthony Autuori, a freelance writer in Fairfield, Conn.



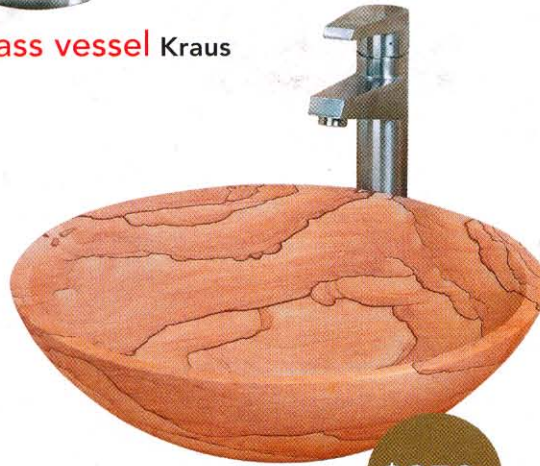


\$115

Clear glass vessel Kraus

Style at any price

With such a wide variety in materials, manufacturers, and designs, prices for bath sinks vary widely—even within the confines of a single type. Here's just a small sample of what's available at various price points in the category of bowl-shaped vessels.



\$350

Sandstone vessel Lenova



\$595

Aztec glass vessel Xylem



\$1007

Rectangular oil-rubbed bronze vessel Belle Floret



\$4995

Wavelet decorative vessel in copper by Robert Kuo for Kallista

bath designer from Fort Lauderdale, Fla. “The sink you choose depends on the theme of your bathroom,” says Morris. “With so many materials out there, you can make your sink the focal point of your powder room.”

To be clear, we're talking about a little-used powder room, not the one the family runs in and out of on a daily basis. “You can be really playful in the powder room, as long as it's used for just a little bit of hand-washing,” says North Carolina architect Sophie Piesse. “In my house, the first-floor powder room is used by my kids all the time.” Clearly, that's not the best place for a pricey vessel sink.

Master bathrooms offer opportunities for beauty and drama, but once again, it's important to consider purpose. Do you wash your face, shave, and brush your teeth there? Or do you also blow-dry your hair and apply makeup? If so, how much counter space do you need? Do you wash your hair at your sink? If so, depth may be a concern.

Budget comes into play here as well. While twin sinks have been in vogue for some time now, ask yourself if you really need them. Two sinks mean two faucets and twice the plumbing, which can be costly. Twin sinks also cut down on counter space.

What does all this variety mean for homeowners? Today's sink options are so exciting that it's hard not to have some fun when choosing them. “It's important to do what you like. Remember, you're the one who has to use the sink,” says Travis Rotelli, an interior designer for Kohler. “I understand that people think about resale, but I believe that done properly, a bath sink can be beautiful and functional—and be something that the next guy will like.” □

Maria LaPiana is a freelance writer who specializes in home design. Photos courtesy of the manufacturers.