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BEYOND *backsplashes*

From countertops to cabinets, glass is a material of choice in the kitchen

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the functional benefits are equally important. "Glass countertops are about much more than just good looks," says Karl Desjardins, web and media consultant for ThinkGlass, www.thinkglass.com. "Because glass is a solid surface cast in a single piece, it has no cracks or weakness, unlike natural stone. Glass requires no annual sealants and can be easily cleaned with any commercial glass cleaner or with simple soap and water. The extreme durability of glass countertops, along with their textured finish that hides fingerprints and smudges, makes them an ideal choice for everything from residential applications like kitchen counters and islands to high-traffic commercial projects."

"Glass is a non-porous, naturally hygienic surface," Jayson adds. And, in terms of durability, it can be compared to granite in strength and

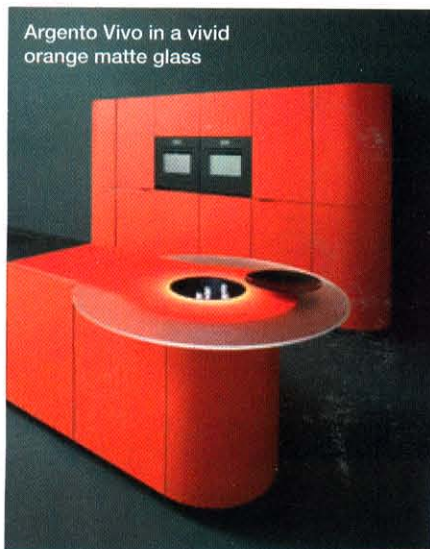
scratch resistance, "and can be supplied in tempered or laminated safety form for applications requiring extra safety and security," he says.

The use of tempered glass also protects glass against extreme temperatures, such as those created by hot pots and pans, Palderi says.

Challenges for the industry

Despite increased demand, glass in the kitchen is relatively new to many customers, presenting challenges for glass suppliers and glass shops. The additional cost and time required for some glass products is a surprise to many customers, Jayson says. "Homeowners are very interested in customization, but there is relatively little education on the significantly higher costs and increased lead times associated

NEW KITCHEN GLASS PRODUCTS OFFER AESTHETICS AND FUNCTIONALITY



Argento Vivo in a vivid orange matte glass



GLASS SIDE PANELS FOR KITCHEN CABINETS

To complement its line of thick glass countertops, ThinkGlass introduced glass side panels for kitchen cabinets. The textured glass panels offer strength and durability, and can be installed with options such as LED lighting, according to the supplier. ThinkGlass counters and side panels are made from recyclable glass; the recommended thickness of the ThinkGlass side panels is 2 inches. A selection of molded textures and hand-painted colors are available, and customers can personalize their design by selecting their glass thickness and edge treatments. The end result is a smooth, glossy finish that is as strong and durable as any natural stone or manmade countertop material, according to ThinkGlass officials.

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SCRATCH-RESISTANT COUNTER GLASS

Sevasa's LuxRaff Antiscratch glass resists scratches and stains, according to the supplier. Suitable for kitchen and bath countertops, the glass meets surface hardness certification of 5 and 6 on the Mohs scale. It is available in various finishes, including: LuxRaff Regular, LuxRaff Solid and LuxRaff Stone. The glass comes in thicknesses from 3 millimeters to 19 mm, and in standard sizes of 88 inches by 126 inches. Available colors include opticlear, clear, bronze, grey, green, blue and mirror. Because LuxRaff is non-slip certified, it is also suitable for flooring applications.

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GLASS KITCHENS

GD Cucine furnishes complete glass kitchens to contractors and homeowners. The company recently introduced the Argento Vivo kitchen, pictured, that includes glass countertops, curved glass cabinets, a double-sided prep area and circular glass dining table with a recessed wine cooler/fruit bowl at the end. Designed by Roberto Pezzetta, the Argento Vivo kitchen features crisp corner detailing and clean lines, while the tall curved glass cabinets act as a fully functional backdrop to a linear central island, according to the company. In addition to the vivid orange matte glass pictured, the Argento Vivo kitchen comes in yellow, blue or green, and more classic colors such as white, black or silver, either matte or glossy.

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