

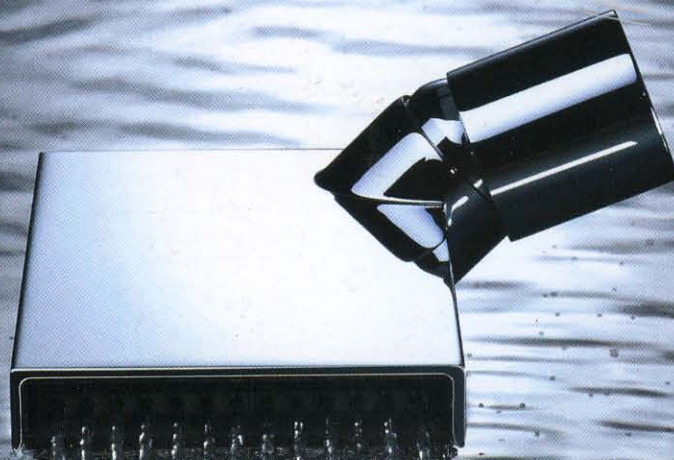
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Personal Best

Simplicity and individuality rule in today's decorative hardware

With the economy still sluggish in its recovery, simplicity remains king when it comes to our homes and our kitchens. The aesthetic is cleaner, the cabinetry less fussy and the decorative hardware? Well, that may depend on whom you ask. Knobs and pulls, after all, are like jewelry for the kitchen. And as more consumers remodel for their own pleasure, their hardware choices are also becoming increasingly personalized.

Not surprisingly, the trend toward understatement in the kitchen has led to a demand for simple hardware designs with a modern or transitional bent. Even in parts of the country that tend to be more traditional, such as Louisiana, "contemporary sales are increasing rapidly," said David Tyler, VP of marketing for Top Knobs. Similarly, straightforward geometric shapes continue to dominate, "but now they're modified with smooth rounded edges," giving them softness and greater versatility, said Nicole Fisher, senior marketing coordinator for Berenson Hardware.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Lest simple be boring, streamlined shapes are also getting a helping hand from a wider array of finishes, many of which have taken on more complexity and warmth. Dual-toned antique or "vintage" finishes are enjoying considerable popularity, noted Fisher, as they can offer greater depth than old standbys such as oil-rubbed bronze and brushed nickel, both of which may or may not be on the wane, depending on the style of hardware or, more importantly, whom you query. Some experts are still seeing interest in gold, but in a more muted variety, and though there have been rumblings about a brass comeback, "I have yet to see much evidence of it," said Fisher.

In addition, manufacturers are marrying finish to form with greater abandon. Just as the growing emphasis on personalization has led to "the blending of styles...within one room," noted Jessica Wolma, director of marketing—cabinet and drapery hardware for Amerock, Levelor and Kirsch, Old-World-inspired finishes are showing up on modern pieces, adding warmth and broadening their appeal. Conversely, classic designs, according to Adrienne Morea, CEO of Atlas Homewares, are finding new life in, say, polished chrome.

For consumers who truly want to distinguish themselves with their cabinet hardware, companies are experimenting with a variety of materials and shapes. Glass is ever popular and, in fused colors or mixed with decorative elements, can "really 'tie a bow' on a project," said Morea. Those who like a hint of history may gravitate toward cup pulls and pendants, which Wolma noticed "are gaining in popularity." Like your hardware bolder? At this year's KBIS, Richelieu Hardware unveiled designs featuring irregular forms, raku ceramics, precious stone and porcelain, all of which are sure to make a statement in any kitchen.

SIZE MATTERS

And if not with material, then with size. Most experts agree hardware is trending larger. Morea's company, for example, "just designed a lot of 28-mm pulls that are 12 in. to 14 in. overall," she said. "That's big!" Wolma attributes the interest in oversized pieces to





the desire to "maintain balance and proportion within a space," especially as kitchens continue to open themselves up to other living areas. Moreover, Tyler said, "A long pull on a tall cabinet lends elegance to the visual line of the cabinet door." Staying with one size of pull or knob throughout keeps the look clean and is very much "in," said Morea.

Given current consumer spending habits, one could also argue the entire category of hardware is, in fact, in. With budgets tighter, changing out knobs and pulls, as well as countertops and faucets, is an easy way to freshen up a kitchen. "The visual impact is dramatic, and the cost is much lower than replacing cabinets," said Tyler. ■

—Alice Liao

Opposite page:

With kitchens shedding heavy ornamentation for a simpler look, transitional styles, such as Candler from **Amerock**, are growing in popularity. Available in satin nickel, oil-rubbed bronze and the company's new antique silver finish (shown), it offers a 1¹/₄-in. x 1-in. knob with a 1¹/₁₆-in. projection, as well as 3-in. and 96-mm pulls. All come in a versatile design that allows them to swing both Old and New World with equal ease. **Circle No. 200**

Richelieu Hardware's Precious Materials line features pulls and knobs that incorporate a variety of precious stones, such as amber, onyx and mother-of-pearl. Pulls are offered in lengths ranging from 4³/₈ in. to 6¹³/₁₆ in., depending on the material, and knobs come in large and small rectangular and square shapes. **Circle No. 201**

Featuring solid pieces of blown glass, **Zietta Clara's** Sandblasted Beveled Sphere knob is very much like jewelry for the kitchen. Available in a wide range of colors, including ruby fuschia (shown), gold, ice mint, mushroom, silver, white and creme, it measures 2¹/₂ in. in diameter and extends 1³/₄ in. Metal components are offered in castle black iron, antique silver and polished nickel finishes. Custom colors and finishes are available. All pieces are custom made to order. **Circle No. 202**

This page:

For those who want to make a statement with their cabinet hardware, **Berenson's** newest is Biomimicry, a nature-inspired collection that takes its cues from insects and cell structures. Available in weathered nickel, Verona bronze and brushed polished nickel, it includes one size of knob and 3-in. and 96-mm pulls. **Circle No. 203**

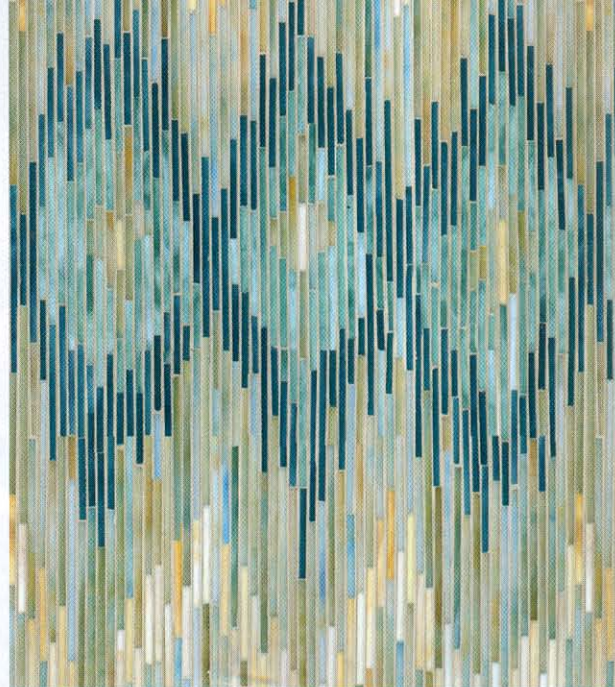
Glass gets a festive look in **Atlas Homewares' Dream Glass Collection**, which is comprised of three lines: Galaxy, Eclipse and Milky Way. Crafted of solid metal and glass, each offers knobs that measure 1¹/₂ in. in diameter with a 1¹/₅-in. projection and come in polished chrome or aged bronze. **Circle No. 204**

Streamlined and stylish, **Top Knobs' new Stainless Steel Collection** encompasses three styles of solid stainless-steel knobs—Ball, Flat Round and Indent—and three solid bar pull designs: Straight, Bent and Bowed. Hollow bar pulls are also available. Knobs come in 5/8-in., 1³/₁₆-in., 1-in. and 1¹/₂-in. diameters, and pulls are offered in 13 sizes, ranging from 2 in. to 37¹³/₁₆ in. **Circle No. 205**

What's Cool Everywhere Else



From **Cambria** comes the Waterstone Collection of quartz surfaces inspired by the movement of water over stone. Encompassing a broad range of hues and patterns, the line is comprised of 12 colors named after locations in Wales and England, including Aberdeen, Bellingham, Braemar (shown), Buckingham, New Quay, Newport, Praa Sands, Sharp-ham, Shirebrook, Torquay, Wellington and Westminster. **Circle No. 214**



New Ravenna Mosaics' newest, Ikat was inspired by leaf patterns in Uzbekistani textiles and comprises two designs: Loom (shown here in glass in Quartz, Aquamarine, Tanzanite and Turquoise colors) and Weft. Both are handcrafted to custom sizes. **Circle No. 216**



Measuring 96 in. x 30 in. x 22 in., **Diamond Spas'** Sozo Bath was designed to use less water than other luxury models—just 60 gallons for an average-sized bather. Its interior features tapered walls and a shape that supports the user in a fully reclined position, thus requiring a lower overall depth for soaking. It is formed of 60 percent to 80 percent recycled stainless steel or 90 percent to 95 percent recycled copper. A coordinating sink is available. **Circle No. 215**



Newcomer **Evan Stone Art Decor** has introduced a line of artisan natural stone tiles that incorporate glass and decorative elements such as silk flowers and seashells (shown). The tiles are offered in 4-in. x 4-in., 6-in. x 6-in., 12-in. x 12-in. and 18-in. x 18-in. formats and can be custom designed. Metal and stone tiles are also available. **Circle No. 217**

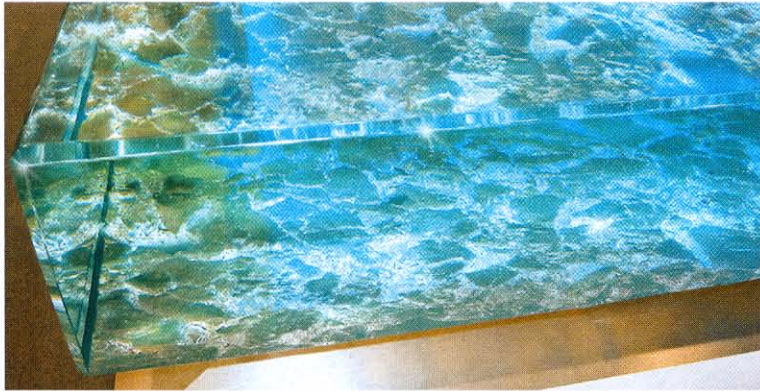
Contemporary yet timeless in look, **Victoria + Albert's** Barcelona Collection is comprised of a pebble-shaped tub in a rimless, double-ended design that measures 70¹/₄ in. x 34¹/₄ in. x 18³/₈ in. and is roomy enough for two. The collection also includes a 25-in. x 13³/₄-in. x 6¹/₈-in. vessel sink that is also rimless. Both are formed of Englishcast, a composite material formed of finely ground volcanic limestone, and come in white. **Circle No. 237**



The Flow high-efficiency showerhead from **Caroma** boasts a nominal flow rate of 1.5 gpm at 80 psi and features a precision-engineered nozzle that pressurizes the water to ensure a soft yet powerful spray. According to the company, it saves up to 10 gallons more water than a standard 2.5-gpm showerhead for a 10-minute shower, while an easy-slide spray adjustment allows users to adjust the spray coverage from wide to narrow. **Circle No. 238**



Swanlike in form, **Brizo's** latest is the Vuelo kitchen collection, which comprises a pull-down faucet, a high-arc pullout and a waterfall faucet with optional side spray. All incorporate the company's MagneDock magnetic docking technology, which locks the wand into the faucet spout, and are available with optional SmartTouch technology, which allows for touch control. The line is offered in polished chrome, Brilliance stainless and cocoa bronze with stainless accents. Available in late 2011. **Circle No. 239**

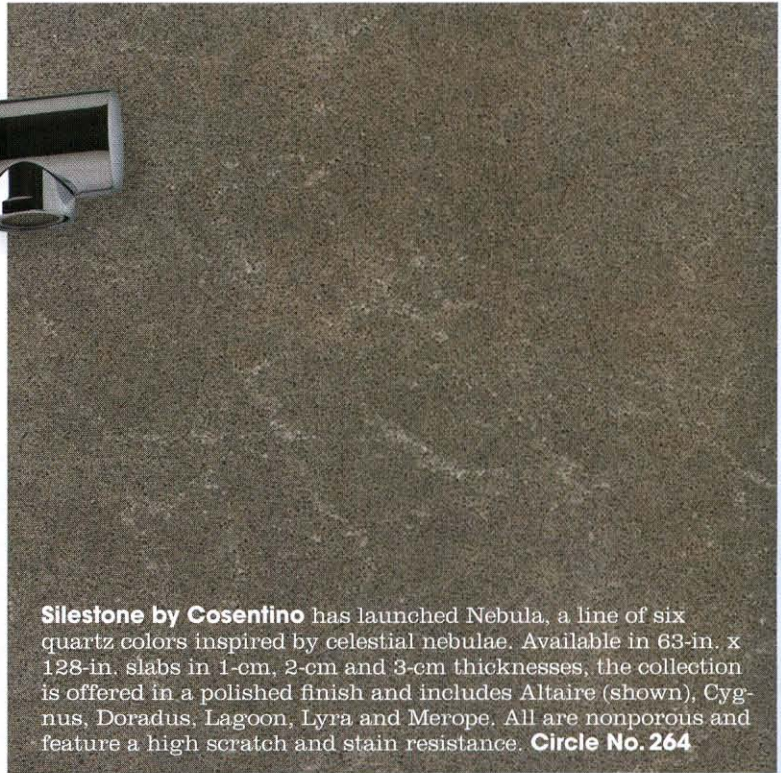


ThinkGlass has introduced glass countertops featuring a variety of new colors and textures. Shown is a 4-in.-thick countertop composed of multiple textured layers and illuminated with embedded LEDs. If desired, different lighting effects can be created and controlled via a remote. **Circle No. 261**

Franke's Model FFP110 kitchen faucet offers pullout convenience in a spare, angular design. It stands 11⁹/₁₆ in. tall, has a 10⁷/₁₆-in. spout and is available in polished chrome or satin nickel. **Circle No. 262**



Silestone by Cosentino has launched Nebula, a line of six quartz colors inspired by celestial nebulae. Available in 63-in. x 128-in. slabs in 1-cm, 2-cm and 3-cm thicknesses, the collection is offered in a polished finish and includes Altaire (shown), Cygnus, Doradus, Lagoon, Lyra and Merope. All are nonporous and feature a high scratch and stain resistance. **Circle No. 264**



Designed by Philippe Starck for **Duravit**, Sensowash Starck offers a variety of convenient features in a slim, flat design. These include a power-activated lid, a seat with three wash options differentiated for men and women, and a nozzle that can be adjusted for positioning and jet strength. The spray arm and nozzle are cleaned automatically before and after each use, and the water, air and seat temperature can be adjusted for individual preferences and saved into a wireless remote. The unit fits onto the Starck 3 toilet models. **Circle No. 263**



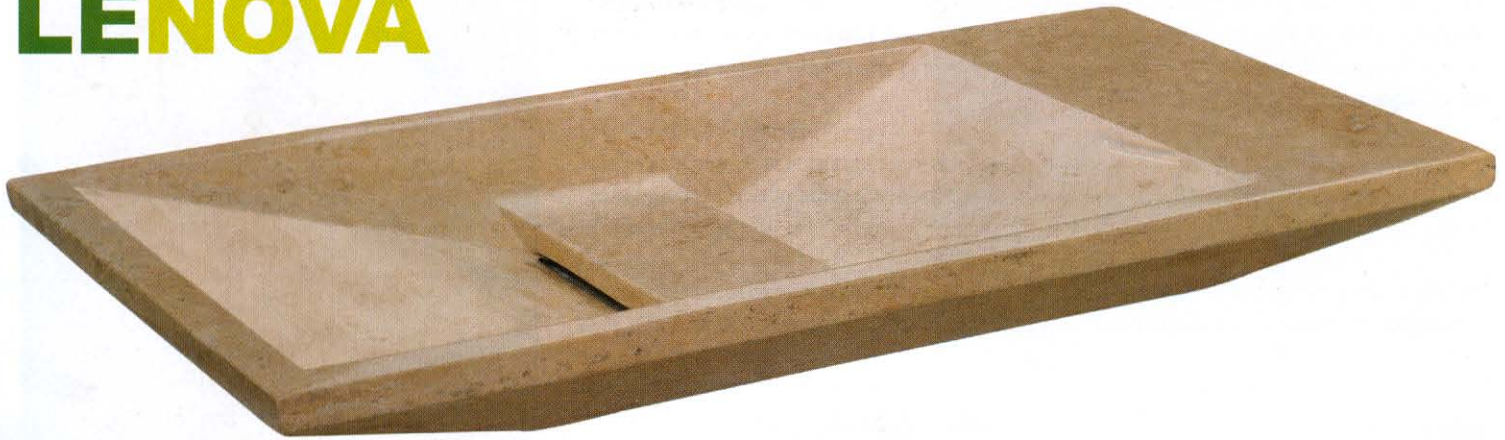
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