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# kitchen & bath DESIGN NEWS

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**45 | COUNTERTOPS**  
CREATE EYE-CATCHING  
FOCAL POINTS

Design Update

**29 | SURVEY REVEALS GEN X & Y**  
DESIGN PREFERENCES

**40** Cover Story

# SUCCESSFUL SHOWROOMS DEFY THE ECONOMY





Photo: Courtesy The Grothouse Lumber Co.

▲ Grothouse Lumber Co. supplied this English wych elm counter with living edge for Val Wilson of Terrell Goeke, Inc.

the color, for the patina," he reports.

Of course, Kelly adds that while the client may appear to want something out of the ordinary, they must be willing to accept that it's not going to be perfect, "because materials like wood, concrete and metal are going to wear in such a way that you're going to see the wear," he states.

## GOOD WOODS

Wood, in particular, will show its wear – a desired characteristic for many who choose this material.

"Wood will not stay showroom perfect," warns Kelly. "It is a live product, and it is going to show wear and tear, have a nick, get a scratch or a ding. But, a gently used wood countertop adds a lot of the character to a design, as well as warmth. And what can be done with thickness and edge detail only enhances the beauty."

The wood arena is almost endless in terms of specialty woods, how the graining is done and the shape of the edges, he continues.

One client that Val Wilson, project manager for Terrell Goeke, Inc., in Chicago, IL worked with not only wanted a wood countertop for a peninsula in the kitchen that was to be used as a bar top, but wanted the piece to have a living edge. "It was up to us to find what they had in mind," he comments.

A piece of English wych elm from The Grothouse Lumber Co. "fit the bill really well," Wilson notes, adding, "the clients loved it, we loved it and it was the right size."

"Just like an island, a peninsula can be viewed from all sides, so it needed to work well in the space," he offers. Located between the kitchen and dining area, the

counter plays well with the contemporary kitchen, which features flat-front doors in dark oak and burl walnut and brown antique granite that resembles an almost charcoal gray color.

"It's very sculptural, and juts out into the middle of the space, so it becomes almost like a piece of art, as well as a functional countertop for a bar area," Wilson reports.

## STONY EDGE

Just as there are issues with wood, with the use of a natural stone, it is important to find out from the clients if an inconsistency in the material will be a problem for

Photo: Jamie Cobeldick



▲ The white marble in this kitchen was incorporated in a less-used application – the backsplash. On the perimeter counter, durable platinum Pyrolave bears the brunt of the prep work, along with a wood island.

them, stresses Karen Kassen, CMKBD, Allied ASID, principal and designer, Kitchens Unlimited in Memphis, TN.

"With the current popularity of real marble in kitchens, it's important to point out to the client that marble will etch as it is used," notes Kassen. "If the circles and spots caused by the etching bother them, then they might not be good candidates to use marble in their kitchen."

Karen Williams, ASID,



Photo: Ken Hayden (ken@kenhayden.com)

▲ The blue Pyrolave on the far counter in this kitchen by Karen Williams of St. Charles of New York features a custom color designed to mimic the ocean outside. The wood and marble island blends seamlessly with the design.

you don't need to worry about maintenance. Marble can be integrated on the backsplash, and the light gray countertops go so seamlessly with the marble that you don't even realize that there is a change of materials until you look at it closely," she remarks. "I then use marble counters in a coffee bar or in a perimeter area so that the main workhorse of the kitchen, such as the island, is the more durable Pyrolave."

Of course, engineered stone or quartz counters will provide the durability needed for the main areas of the kitchen, and each year the assortment of colors and patterns pushes the envelope.

One of Kassen's clients "fell in love with a piece of material that was on one of our showroom displays, and the whole kitchen was planned around it," she reports. Everything was selected to work with the countertop and highlight it.

Kassen wanted to make the piece, made from Caesar-Stone Concetto material, the most special thing in the kitchen. "By raising the top and cantilevering it around the back side of the island space, it became the center of the large room as well as an eating bar for the couple's three children."

"This client wanted something unique, something that no one else had and something that would provoke conversation," Kassen offers.

## STYLISH REFLECTIONS

When it comes to creating countertops as pieces of art, glass is a favorite material for kitchen and bath designers. There's a nearly endless selection of shapes and colors, and the natural shine and sparkle create a 'wow factor' unlike any other.

According to Hannah Niki, designers' assistant at Studio 3G Glass in Coquitlam, BC, Canada, most clients who





Rustic Chic from **Fairmont Designs** is a vanity designed to show off the beauty of its wood. The organic look is created using clean lines and tactile Weathered Oak veneers, accented with brass finished knobs. A variety of cabinet sizes and configurations is available. Circle 162 on Product Card

The Medicinehaus line from **Whitehaus Collection** features 14 anodized aluminum wall-mounted medicine cabinets. The cabinets feature double-faced mirrored doors, a mirror faced back wall, and height-adjustable shelves. Circle 163 on Product Card



flavor that is clearly their own. They are willing to pay for it – but only when they are comfortable the price is fair.”

Wilcox adds that Sagehill/Sunny Wood sees trend-setting styles first available at higher price points. “After they are introduced, the styles are reinterpreted in order to maintain the overall look but reduce the cost to manufacture. The process can be applicable to any style, but certainly cleaner, more casual-contemporary designs work well at the lower price points due to the simple lines, spare proportions and less complicated manufacturing methods.”

### SIMPLE STYLE

While today’s popular vanities run the gamut from ultra-modern designs and more ornate traditional looks to plain, clean styles, manufacturers agree that the more simple transitional styles are trending high right now.

“A clean look and lifestyle is trendy,” says James Lin, president – Bath Division for Fairmont Designs in Buena Park, CA. “In the higher-end market you can see casual traditional pieces instead of ornate traditional pieces.” He notes that ornate designs are still needed in some markets, but not across the board, adding that transitional styles still lead the trends, even though contemporary styles are getting more popular.

Wistrom sees the same trends. “There has been a definitive shift toward sleek, simple transitional looks in all areas of the home, and we have certainly seen our contemporary offering being used steadily for bathroom remodels. The sleek surfaces are easy to clean and the edgy colors, glosses and textures easily make a statement in the bathroom.”

Mark Cross, v.p. of sales and marketing for the Corsi Group,

a holding company for Greenfield Cabinetry and Corsi Cabinet Company in Indianapolis, IN, adds, “Clean lines with simplistic sophistication has been the trend we have seen through our dealers nationally.”

Liu has also seen a big shift from ultra modern styles to a more transitional look.

Jeff Ptacek, CKD, product manager for StarMark Cabinetry in Sioux Falls, SD, says that simple doors, which tend to be less expensive and easier to clean, are in high demand, along with furniture-style vanities.

People like the comfort of standing in front of a taller vanity, says Korsten, which lends itself to furniture-styled cabinetry, many times with open shelves in the lower area. He also agrees that in vanities, as with many other areas of the home, cleaner, simpler lines dominate.

Wilcox adds that, from a style standpoint, Sagehill/Sunny Wood sees two strong trends. One is a rustic look, featuring both light and dark finishes, with rough-hewn looking boards, natural edges and bolder hardware proportions. The second is what he calls “eco-hip” or “euro-casual.” This style is very clean, but features more of a natural-type wood finish, minimal or integrated pulls, and can have metal legs as accents. “Woods such as walnut, cherry and maple are used here due to their excellent grain and color,” he says.

### FINISHING TOUCH

When it comes to finishes, manufacturers say that darker tones lead the way, but there has also been a rise in white, natural and other finishes. Wistrom says they are also seeing a lot of exotic veneers being used for vanities, along with high-gloss

In addition to its grand European styles, **Habersham** is offering classically inspired yet cleaner, simpler cabinet designs with more transitional styling. Shown is a custom double vanity that provides ample under-sink storage, four drawers and a countertop curio. Circle 164 on Product Card



The Newcastle 42" bath vanity from **Ronbow Materials Corp.** features five soft-close, dovetail, full-extension drawers. Available finishes include White and Café Walnut, and matching finished interiors are standard. A matching mirror and medicine cabinet are available. Circle 170 on Product Card



**Xylem** now offers its Manhattan bath vanity in a 24" width. The Manhattan compact version with matching mirror features the same clean design as its larger counterparts. It is available in black or white finish, with White Carrara Marble or Dark Emperador Marble vanity top. Circle 165 on Product Card



This **Fieldstone Cabinetry** spa vanity was created with the Wayburg door style. It is featured in cherry with a Mocha finish. Circle 167 on Product Card



SalonCenter from **Armstrong Cabinets** is a self-contained pull-out system that allows for organization of hair dryers, curling irons and other vanity items. The system is shown here in the Waverly door style in a Vanilla Cream finish. Circle 166 on Product Card



The American-crafted transitional Inset vanity from **Strasser Woodenworks** combines a sleek, modern design with maximum storage. Shown with Shaker doors and drawers in Cinnamon Cherry, it is available with open spaces, cubbies or all doors and drawers. Circle 168 on Product Card



The contemporary Phantom vanity, part of the Nuvo Collection from **The Furniture Guild/Vanity Flair Collection**, is a modular offering that can be wall hung or freestanding. Offered in a pallet of eight matte and three high-gloss colors, with custom color matching available, the vanity is offered in standard sizes ranging from 20" to 48". Options such as stainless steel drawer system, soft-closing drawers, automatic internal LED light, internal power outlet and chrome legs are available. Circle 169 on Product Card



A transitional style Espresso Maple vanity cabinet from **J&K Cabinetry** features solid wood doors, plywood construction, dovetail drawers, concealed hinges and soft-closing options. Decorative accents are also available. Circle 171 on Product Card