

kitchen & bath DESIGN NEWS[®]

The leading business, design and product resource for the kitchen & bath trade

12/12

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COUNTERTOPS ARE KING

Reader requests determine the 20 most-asked-about products for 2012

There's no denying there are a lot of products available to help kitchen and bath designers take client spaces from ordinary to extraordinary. Throughout the year, *KBDN* highlights hundreds of products in its Product Trend Report, New Product and Product Review sections – everything from appliances, hardware and Universal Design accessories to sinks, faucets, cabinetry and lighting. But if *KBDN's* annual "Most Asked About Products" list is any indication, countertops were of special interest this past year.

To close the year, *KBDN* is providing a review of the hottest, most interesting products – the most-asked about items as selected by tallying reader requests throughout the year. This year, countertop materials – anything from glass and quartz to wood and stainless steel – garnered six of the top 10 spots, and were represented in an additional four places in the top 20.

While half of the most-asked-about products came from one category, the remaining 10 products provide a mix from six different categories. Not surprisingly, Universal Design products showed a strong representation, with four products designed to promote safety and ease of use for clients of all ages and abilities. Hardware, which historically generates a lot of interest, was well represented in 2012 as well, with styles that offer a high level of personalization.

Peruse this and the following two pages to find out more about which products and materials captured the most interest among dealers and designers this past year.

For additional information about these and other products, visit ForResidentialPros.com.

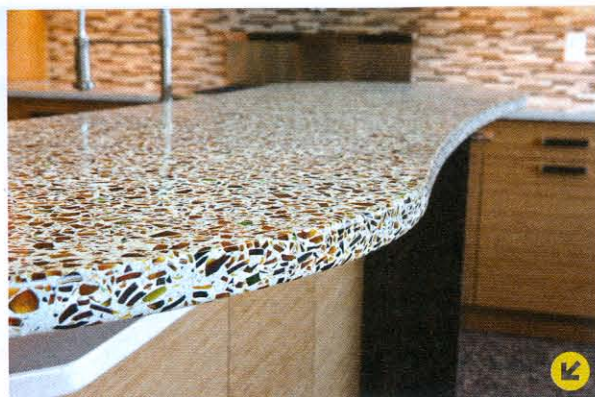
STONE COUNTERTOP GUIDE

(tie) 1. The *Convenient Guidelines for Stone Countertops* technical guide from the **Marble Institute of America** provides standards, guidelines and recommendations for residential natural stone countertop installations.

"We've taken the 'technical speak' out of countertop installation and tailored it to the residential audience," says Garen Distelhorst, communications director for the Marble Institute of America. "We've made those specifications more readable. That's important because everyone wants to make sure countertops are installed correctly."

Several specification sections have been updated and include clarification on the differences in lippage on countertops vs. islands and peninsulas.

Circle No. 200 on Product Card



RECYCLED GLASS SURFACES

(tie) 1. **Curava** offers recycled glass surfaces available in its Standard and Splendid Collections in 20 colors. Each slab is made from at least 70% recycled glass. The manufacturing process allows for particulates to be spread throughout the product for a three-dimensional quality.

Circle No. 201 on Product Card

ZERO-THRESHOLD SHOWER BASE

4. The Zero-Threshold TZ3260 Shower Base from **Jason International** is crafted to meet Universal Design needs.

"This shower base makes remodeling easier and makes bathrooms safer," says Jennifer Jacuzzi-Peregrin, v.p., Jason Corporate Development. "Millions of Americans are adapting their homes to live more comfortably as they age, and a specially designed, stainless steel linear drain is recessed into the front of the base, removing barriers and allowing easy access upon entering and exiting."

A built-in lip provides a water-tight installation. The shower also includes a slip-resistant floor and integral seat. It is available in a 60"x32" size.

Circle No. 203 on Product Card



ARTISTIC GLASS COUNTERTOPS

3. **ThinkGlass** Artistic glass countertops are custom designed and manufactured using 100% recyclable glass. Painted to suit client specifications, they create a surface that is also a work of art.

"There is certainly a trend toward adding a glass accent piece in the kitchen," says Bertrand Charest, president, ThinkGlass, noting that the addition of lights is becoming increasingly popular. "Seventy percent of our sales include LED [lights] for lighting the tops, and for changing the mood of the kitchen."

"Glass is a wonderful material," he continues. "It will not change under sunlight, or with age or exposure to the environment. It is always present in our lives (windows, drinking glasses, etc.). Selecting it to be visually more present is an obvious choice."

ThinkGlass recently added side panels to its product line. "The streamlined look leaves the kitchen open and uncluttered," he continues. "The glass is beautifully textured and scatters the light in a continuous flow, adding drama and interest. The transparency of glass countertops and their continuous side panels illuminated by LED lights literally lights up any kitchen with sophisticated style."

Circle No. 202 on Product Card



By Elizabeth Richards

hardware

PROVIDES ESSENTIAL ACCENTS

Today's decorative hardware trends favor larger-scale pulls, seamless, elegant designs and ease of access with soft-close and touch-to-open functionality increasingly in demand.

Though decorative and functional hardware may not top consumers' lists of design considerations when remodeling kitchens and baths, it is a crucial element in the end product. That's because hardware provides both critical functionality and a touch of style that can dramatically enhance the look and feel of the space.

In fact, according to manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*, hardware is often the one design element that pulls the entire look together.

"Generally, hardware decisions are secondary to the cabinets, surfaces and other elements in a design," says Kathy Dustman, owner of Notting Hill Decorative Hardware, in Lake Geneva, WI. "However, when a great deal of effort is put into designing the kitchen...finally choosing the right hardware is critical to pulling the look together."

Mihai Subran, product manager for Decorative Hardware, Richelieu Hardware in Montreal, Canada, agrees. He believes that the right hardware has the power to change not only the look of the kitchen, but the value perception of the space as well, with quality hardware enhancing the sense of elegance that consumers desire.

Although hardware trends have evolved from elaborate "jewelry" effects to quieter accent pieces, this doesn't change the importance of its impact, according to Daniel Tripp, product marketing manager for Hafele America Co. in Archdale, NC. He states, "Today, hardware complements the look and design that is going on, as opposed to being the star of the show." But while he notes that the trend is toward understated hardware, Tripp adds that this

accent role still has a significant impact on the room's design by tying the look together.

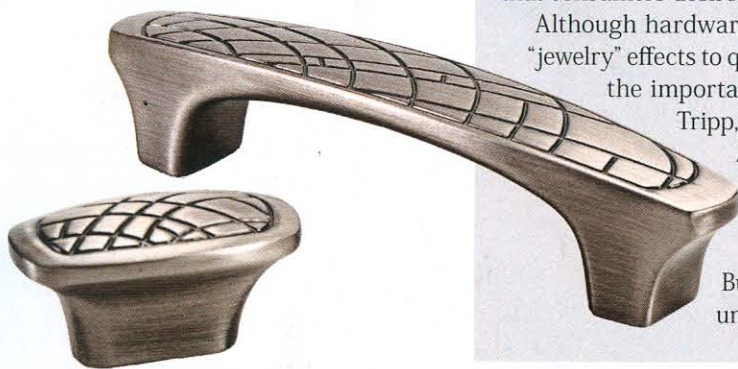
Doug Mockett, CEO of Manhattan Beach, CA-based Doug Mockett & Company, Inc. agrees. "The main role of hardware is to accent the overall design. Subtlety is key—encroaching on the design is not the idea. While the role of the hardware is simply to enhance, not to take the spotlight, it is extremely important not to overlook the hardware. A key piece of hardware can turn an otherwise ordinary piece into a stunning one."

Hardware is also an easy element to change out, creating a fresh look without much fuss. "Designers and homeowners can showcase a variety of styles through their choice of form and finish," says Katie Hindman, brand manager for Amerock in Atlanta, GA. "Budget-conscious consumers will often opt to change out their hardware for a fresh new look."

David Tyler, v.p./marketing at Top Knobs in Hillsborough, NJ, agrees. "Hardware is such an economical and easy way to update that it should be an after-sale promotional idea for designers looking to draw new business from existing customers."

FLEXIBLE DESIGN

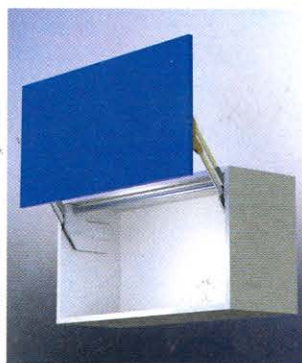
Design preferences vary widely, and while the hottest trends generally lean toward simple, clean lines, there's still some demand for decorative details, manufacturers say. "Complex designs make for an interesting landscape, but the idea is to keep it clean," says Mockett. "If even the most complicated designs can still somehow maintain a simple elegance, then it is a very effective tool in enhancing the overall aesthetic. A clean, sophisticated look will always rank more favorably as a timeless classic. Even with the demand for extravagant designs on the rise, it's important



Composition is one of five new decorative hardware collections in the Inspired Designs series from **Berenson Hardware**. The collection is a reflection of simple industrial elements and decorative details, and features a geometric pattern and transitional profile. The collection consists of eight pulls and four knobs in Brushed Nickel, Vintage Nickel, Weathered Nickel and Weathered Verona Bronze. Circle No. 155 on Product Card



Doug Mockett & Co.'s PCS34 series power and data system for kitchens now has an optional trim ring accessory to cover the clear rubber ring that creates the water-tight seal for the unit. The trim ring is available in Satin Aluminum or Black. Circle No. 156 on Product Card

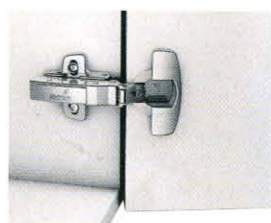


The swing lift-up SLU-ELAN from **Sugatsune America** allows easy and light opening and multiple stops at any desired position, notes the company. A built-in damper allows soft and silent closing. Circle No. 157 on Product Card



Designed by Scot Laughton for **Du Verre Hardware**, Series 3 decorative hardware is ergonomic and features elegant styling. Made from environmentally friendly recycled aluminum, the knobs and pulls are available in Antique Brass, Black Matte, Oil Rubbed Bronze, Polished Aluminum and Satin Nickel finishes. Circle No. 158 on Product Card

The new Sensys generation of hinges from **Hettich America** allows for automatically soft-closing furniture doors from an unusually wide opening angle of 35 degrees. The hinge's new design includes a styled cover cap that hides the hinge cup. Circle No. 159 on Product Card





Inspired by its Couture doorknob and lock collections, the new Couture Appliance Pull from **Baldwin Hardware Corp.** features elegant design and detailing. Forged in premium solid brass, the pull is available in five decorative finishes ranging from Satin Nickel to Venetian Bronze.
Circle No. 160 on Product Card



The new Tandem plus Blumotion runner from **Blum Inc.** offers four dimensional adjustments, increased load capacity, better side stability and many additional new features and improvements, according to the company. Blum is adding tool-free side-to-side adjustment in the locking device and at the rear of the runner for ideal gaps in inset applications. New mounting holes on the cabinet profiles allow the runner to be mounted to a fixed shelf or flush-bottomed cabinet. The piece offers smooth running action and soft-close.
Circle No. 161 on Product Card



Nice Knobs! offers a line of wood knobs, cabinet pulls and appliance pulls available in many shapes and sizes, as well as 11 wood species. Shown is a set of Cherry knobs and pulls that work with many styles of cabinetry.
Circle No. 162 on Product Card



With distinctively simple and organic twists and turns, the decorative knobs and pulls in the Motif Collection from **Soko Products by Jaye Design** offer a timeless look. Hand-cast and made in the U.S., the hardware is fashioned from bronze and high-grade marine quality stainless steel and available in 10 finishes.
Circle No. 163 on Product Card

to maintain some level of simplicity.”

Subran says, “Transitional designs are the big thing now, a switch from classical intricate details, because end users are more conscious about their budget and shop for long life products.” He says that Richelieu predicts that “the Art Deco influence of the ‘20s and ‘30s will be more present in the next two years, accompanied by silver colors.”

Hindman sees forms becoming more simple and clean. At the same time, she says, “Subtle textures and patterns are being used to create interest and balance.”

Chad Wheeler, division manager kitchen and bath for Hettich America L.P., in Buford, GA, adds, “We’re seeing more integrated handles being used that don’t take away from the look of the cabinets.”

Tyler sees multiple trends occurring simultaneously on the design front, from a rise in simple, clean design to a desire for crafted or artisan looks. He says, “The other day I heard a designer say, ‘With all of the options in the marketplace, why is it still so hard to find the one you want?’ This idea of personalization – or finding the pattern that matches your lifestyle – is really relevant.”

Flexibility is also a key consideration. Dennis Poteat, marketing communications manager for the Stanley, NC-based Blum, Inc. says, “[Designers] want to be able to use all of our solutions in [any] type of cabinet and door combination: modern or traditional cabinets, wood or aluminum frame doors, narrow or wide drawers, short or tall uppers, light five-piece or heavy, thick doors. We design our hardware to work with as many applications as possible to give the kitchen professional the greatest possible freedom in designing their kitchens.”

It’s also important to the design for hardware to be con-

cealed, such as undermount drawer slides that showcase the beauty of the drawer box or concealed hinges that give a clean finish to cabinet doors, according to Jan Fitzpatrick, customer and market relations manager for Grass America, Inc., in Kernersville, NC. “Clean lines, small gaps and tight reveals between doors and drawers are the job of functional hardware. Design demand for functional hardware is all about quality products in the kitchen,” she says.

FINISH LINE

When it comes to hardware finishes, the standards remain the same – nickel, stainless and polished chrome lead the way. At the same time, manufacturers see demand for antique finishes and bronzes, as well as some more modern finishes.

Subran says nickel still sells best, but every variation on the silver color is increasing in demand. They’ve also seen some call for bold, bright colors, such as red, yellow, orange and ruby, as well as a revival of antique finishes applied on large contemporary handles.

Tyler adds, “Of course Satin Nickel is still trending – but we’re offering more modern finishes in white and aluminum. At the same time, crafted Tuscan bronze and antiqued finishes are still holding strong.”

Mockett says polished finishes are making a big push in kitchen and bath hardware. “A polished chrome or polished stainless steel fixture can really enhance the surrounding design, especially in a very modern setting. Polished finishes can help complement any vibrant color schemes, especially white, black or bold primary colors,” he says. In addition, he calls satin stainless steel “a classic stand-by” that can be used on almost anything. “Stainless steel never seems to experience any



R. Christensen Hardware presents two concept series of decorative hardware that offer brilliantly colored updates for cabinets. One of the series fuses natural shapes and aesthetics with modern materials, including polished chrome metal and vibrant colors of lime green, tangerine orange, deep purple and azure blue, as well as gloss black and white.
Circle No. 164 on Product Card



The new Prairie Style Stained Glass Cabinet Hardware from **Glace Yar Stained Glass Design** features an Arts and Crafts style of stained glass in a cabinet knob. Each knob is hand cut and set, creating an individual piece of stained glass art.
Circle No. 165 on Product Card



The Homegrown Hardware product line from **Liberty Hardware Manufacturing Corp.** was created to support and highlight the work of U.S. artisans. The line features handcrafted knobs and pulls made from fused glass, iron and pottery.
Circle No. 166 on Product Card



The Riverside collection of decorative hardware from **Keeler Brass** takes its cue from the Arts and Crafts movement. The pieces, which feature stepped edges and rustic sand-cast textures, are available in White and Red Bronze finishes.
Circle No. 167 on Product Card



Sietto has introduced two new lines of glass decorative hardware – Skinny Glacier and Reflective. The Skinny Glaciers are similar to the company’s Glacier line, only narrower and sleeker. The Reflective line includes different colors of glass that reflect in the clear glass that surrounds them.
Circle No. 168 on Product Card



The Tab Pull Collection from **Atlas Homewares** features low-profile pulls that are mounted behind the cabinet or drawer so all that is visible is the actual tab when closed. Available in Brushed Nickel, Matte Black, High Gloss White, Polished Chrome or Matte Chrome, the pulls are available in lengths of 1.5", 5.15", 9.6" and 15.4".
Circle No. 169 on Product Card