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Fresh & Clean

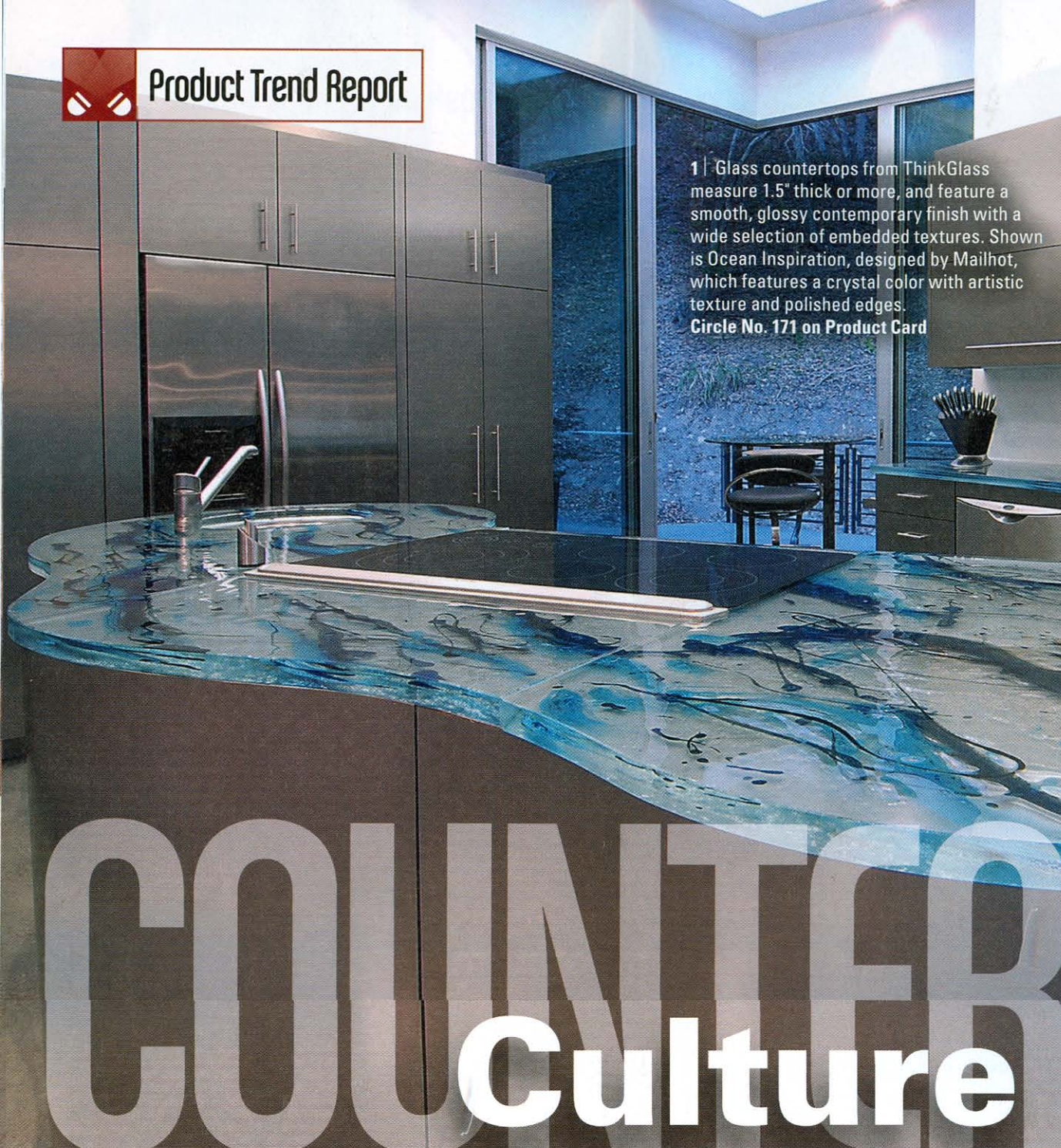
Master bath trends for fall favor soothing spaces that offer fresh and clean appeal

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Survey Reveals
What Dealers Want
From Suppliers
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Tactile, Durable
Define Today's
Countertops
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LEED-Certified
Home Focuses
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1 | Glass countertops from ThinkGlass measure 1.5" thick or more, and feature a smooth, glossy contemporary finish with a wide selection of embedded textures. Shown is Ocean Inspiration, designed by Mailhot, which features a crystal color with artistic texture and polished edges.
Circle No. 171 on Product Card



2 | Sterling Grey by HanStone Quartz from Hanwha Surfaces features a distinct modern appearance. The quartz surface features warm undertones.
Circle No. 172 on Product Card



3 | Artisan Group's Reclaimed line of Heritage Wood countertops recycles wood from original sources, including barns, factories and warehouses. The line features a variety of designs and customization options with 24 species and 29 edge choices.
Circle No. 173 on Product Card

COUNTERTOP Culture

The hottest new countertop trends include fresh and clean color schemes, eco-friendly options, durable materials and the addition of texture – both visual and tactile.

By Steven Shaw

As the market has seen vast changes, so, too has the role of countertops. Texture is now a hot trend; the ever-popular granite is increasingly sharing the stage with quartz, solid surface, glass and wood; splashy colors are ceding to monochromatic hues, and eco-friendly products continue to grow in popularity.

With smaller-scale remodels growing in popularity, consumers are looking for affordable yet visible ways to update their kitchens. And changing out the countertops offers an upgrade that combines powerful aesthetic appeal with strong functional benefits. Manufacturers have responded to this demand with choices that mix visual appeal, ease of maintenance, green sensibilities and value.

ON THE SURFACE

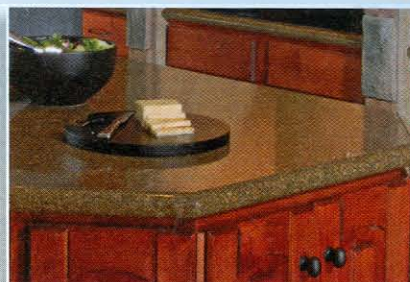
According to the manufacturers interviewed by *KBDN*, countertops with texture are the next big thing.

"The hottest trends in countertops at the moment are fashion-driven textures and colors," says Ed Rogers, director of business development for CaesarStone USA, in Van Nuys, CA. CaesarStone recently launched a line called Motivo, which comes in both Lace and Crocodile patterns. "This is definitely on trend for fall/winter," he says. "These patterns are right off the runway."

Lisa Herreth, product designer at Hanwha Surfaces, in Atlanta, GA, believes that countertops are going to become even more exciting in terms of texture and color. "We're going to see them stand out as a design element rather than blend in," she says. "Exotic patterns are going to be making a debut."

"We're seeing that consumers, particularly in Europe, are gearing towards surfaces with texture, such as the Volcano Finish," says Lorenzo Marquez, v.p./marketing for Cosentino North America, in Stafford, TX.

Rogers believes that color and pattern can only take a manufacturer so far, and sees a movement



4 | Viatera Quartz Surfaces from LG Hausys are produced by combining 93% natural quartz with technologically advanced polymers. LG has expanded the Viatera offering to include 15 new colors, a range that includes high-tech metallics.
Circle No. 174 on Product Card



5 | Grothouse Lumber Co. produces custom wood countertops crafted from a variety of wood species. Photo courtesy of Grothouse Lumber, Design by Karen Trinchere and Marie Baily of A Designer's Touch, LLC.
Circle No. 175 on Product Card



6 | Pyrolave's enameled lava stone can be used for countertops, as well as tabletops, shower bases, fireplaces, pools and walls. The stone is available in any shape and color – matte or glossy – suitable for indoor and outdoor use.
Circle No. 176 on Product Card



7 | A-Line by Advance Tabco offers a complete line of stainless steel countertops with a variety of edge styles. The tops incorporate a steel 'hat channel' understructure and can be manufactured with back and side splashes as well as sink bowls.
Circle No. 177 on Product Card



8 | The Volcano Collection from Cosentino showcases an orange-peel-like texture on five of Silestone's most predominantly design-oriented colors of quartz. The series currently consists of Haiku, White Zeus, Kensho (shown), Gray Expo and Nuit Bleu.
Circle No. 178 on Product Card



9 | Lamitech has introduced six vibrant solid colors to its line of high-pressure laminates: Fuchsia, Red, Tangelo, Caribbean, Neo Green and Yellow. GreenGuard certified, the laminates feature a high-gloss finish.
Circle No. 179 on Product Card

toward more interesting textures than what are traditionally found in hard surface materials. "We are investing heavily into developing new textures that turn the countertop from not simply a visual expression, but a multi-sensory experience that will now include touch," he says.

Textures aside, consumers are looking for products that will not only improve the look of their home, but also provide good value. "Stone is generally the most preferred look, but quartz is regarded as the best value because it has the stone look that everyone likes, but does not require any maintenance," says Summer Kath, director of brand for Cambria USA, in Eden Prairie, MN.

"We are seeing a shift in what consumers are choosing for their countertops," affirms Maureen McGeehan, retail marketing manager for DuPont Building Innovations, in Wilmington, DE. She says that homeowners are getting smarter about their countertop decisions, opting for surfaces that are not only beautiful, but durable and low-maintenance.

Both quartz and solid surface satisfy these demands, agrees James Rogers, residential marketing director, Surfaces Division, LG Hausys America, in Atlanta, GA. He notes that "hard and shiny" has emerged as the hottest trend in recent years.

"Granite had gained in popularity over the past eight years, however, its reputation as an 'aspirational' product has diminished as price has decreased, access increased and quality in general decreased," he says. "Quartz has been positioned to step in as the new, most desirable 'hard and shiny' surface. With new

quartz manufacturing technology comes dramatic new aesthetics, which further positions quartz as a trendsetter."

James Rogers notes that solid surface manufacturing has also stepped up to produce clear-chip technology, which replicates the look of natural minerals as well as colors and patterns that vary and have directional movement, similar to natural stone.

"Now consumers can have the look and feel of natural materials with the benefits of man-made advancements like no need to seal, repairability and manufacturer warranties," he says.

Some manufacturers, such as Samsung Staron, offer Quartz products that are comprised of 93% mined natural quartz crystals and 7% fillers and polymers. The result is an engineered surface that looks natural, but is consistent in look across slabs, according to Dale Mandell, director of sales – Surfacing Products for Samsung Staron, in La Mirada, CA. "This is important when you're trying to match an island to an outlying countertop area," Mandell notes. "And the surface of quartz has also been proven to be harder than granite."

Consumers are also looking for surfaces that are more functional, manufacturers agree. "As consumers increasingly dine in, they are selecting surfaces that [simplify] food preparation and are integrating knife slots, a secondary prep sink and waste holes to increase the function of the surface," says Denise Grothouse, owner of The Grothouse Lumber Company



10 | Transolid's Mystera solid surface material provides the look of natural stone and wood in a solid surface. Veining and coloration run throughout the depth of the product. Shown is the company's Cognac color from its Designer Woods collection.
Circle No. 180 on Product Card



11 | DuPont Surfaces has added 10 colors to its Corian line, including Designer White and Cottage Lane, as well as eight metallic shades. Shown is an Aqualite stripe, which features large gray-green particulates on an aqua background.
Circle No. 181 on Product Card



12 | Four Seasons Metals custom builds copper countertops to meet almost any dimensional or aesthetic requirement. The top is available in six finishes: Flamed (shown), Patina, Oak Leaf, Hammered, Blacked and Mirrored.
Circle No. 182 on Product Card



13 | The Imagination Series from Rynone Manufacturing Corp. includes designer cultured marble vanity tops that use a proprietary process that gives them the appearance of natural stone, quartz or marble. The tops are available in seven stock colors and 50 special order colors.
Circle No. 183 on Product Card



14 | J. Aaron's Wood Countertops are available in an almost endless array of profiles, in 16 different woods including African Paduak, Teak, Black Walnut, Zebrawood and Lyptus. Choose from thicknesses from 1-1/4" to 5-1/2", with distressed, rustic or standard finishes.
Circle No. 184 on Product Card



15 | Taylor Industries combines the natural stone Dolomite with Terephthalic Resin and proprietary components to create Tere-Stone. Similar to solid surface products, Tere-Stone maintains consistent color throughout, but is available in a high-luster as well as a matte finish.
Circle No. 185 on Product Card