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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL KITCHEN + BATH ASSOCIATION



LUXURY KITCHENS + BATHS

CHARGING DESIGN FEES IN A SHOWROOM
COUNTERTOPS / ELECTRONIC FAUCETS
CHICAGO ROW HOUSE REDO

SEPTEMBER + OCTOBER 2016 / WWW.NKBA.ORG



PFISTER

Part of the React line, the Lita touch-free pull-down kitchen faucet features Response Activated Technology, which allows users to turn water on or off by placing their hand in the sensor's range. It includes manual override to switch to handle operation. SmartStop technology automatically turns the faucet off after two minutes.

pfisterfaucets.com / **CIRCLE 852**



CINATON

Featuring five infrared sensors and 13 functions, the K2002 electronic kitchen faucet is free of handles and buttons; users can turn water on and off, adjust temperature, and change flow all without touching the unit. The contemporary-style, solid-brass unit comes in polished or brushed nickel. cinaton.com / **CIRCLE 853**

KWC

The minimalist Zoe Touch Light Pro kitchen faucet features touch-on/touch-off power and temperature control: one tap for cold water displays a blue LED light; two taps for warm water displays an orange LED light; and three taps for hot water displays a red LED light. A white LED ring integrated into the 19-inch-extension pull-out spray illuminates streaming water. kwc.us.com / **CIRCLE 854**



SENSOR SENSIBILITIES

Advancing technologies bring electronic faucets to the forefront of kitchen and bath trends

BY KATY TOMASULO

KOHLER

The Sensate kitchen faucet features Response Touchless technology that powers water on and off with the wave of a hand or object. The precision-designed sensor prevents false activations. The unit has a 15½-inch pull-down spout, magnetic docking system, and two-function sprayhead. kohler.com / CIRCLE 855

HANSGRÖHE

The Metris S electronic bath faucet features a sleek, angular silhouette. The battery-operated infrared sensor has a low battery indicator. The unit is ADA compliant and WaterSense certified.

hansgrohe-usa.com / CIRCLE 856

Whether washing hands after using the loo or rinsing off after prepping the Thanksgiving turkey, hands-free faucets offer homeowners a convenient way to lessen messes and reduce germ spreading. And, thanks to advancing technologies, performance and options for electronic faucets are better than ever.

Though the trend began in commercial bathrooms, hands-free faucets have proliferated to the residential side—and into the kitchen—with acceptance and availability growing over the past few years as sensors have improved and styles have evolved and expanded. Today, nearly every major bath fixtures manufac-

turer offers at least one electronic option for one or both rooms.

“Hands-free faucets ... are resonating with several consumer segments—particularly parents, cooking enthusiasts, and the universal design community,” says Michael Seum, vice president of design for Grohe.

Not having to touch the handles with dirty hands helps avoid contamination, not to mention fingerprints. With automatic shutoff, sensor-driven bath faucets also prevent users from leaving the water running while brushing teeth and other tasks, likely reducing water consumption in the bathroom. And like traditional units, many models are WaterSense cer-

tified to operate at a lower flow rate without sacrificing performance.

“Hands-free faucets are quickly gaining in popularity, particularly in the kitchen, where touchless faucet technology can help reduce the risk of cross-contamination in food preparation,” says Jean-Jacques L’Henaff, vice president of design at Lixil Water Technology Americas, American Standard, and DXV. “Electronic faucets are also very convenient in situations where the user’s hands are full or dirty, so it’s no surprise that this technology is taking off.”

Something for Everyone

Electronic faucets come in a range of models. In general, bath units

Faucets



DELTA

The Tesla single-handle vessel lav faucet features Touch2O touch-activated technology, sensor activation, or manual operation. The battery-operated unit meets ADA standards and is WaterSense certified. It comes in chrome, polished nickel, and stainless. deltafaucet.com / **CIRCLE 857**



AMERICAN STANDARD

The Beale high-arc hands-free kitchen faucet allows users to change to manual operation by gliding a door over the sensor; an LED indicator illuminates when hands-free mode is activated. Polished chrome and stainless steel finishes are available. americanstandard-us.com / **CIRCLE 858**

GROHE

The K7 kitchen faucet is available with foot-control technology that allows users to turn the water on and off via a sensor at the cabinet base. The unit features a pull-out spray that can be swiveled 360 degrees. Chrome and supersteel finishes are available.

grohe.com / **CIRCLE 859**



tend to use sensor technology, with the faucet turning on when the sensor detects the presence of a hand; temperature and flow typically can be adjusted manually when needed. Kitchen faucets may have sensors or may operate via touch, in which a gentle tap of the wrist against the spout or handle powers the faucet on and off. Taking it one step further, Grohe offers a foot-controlled unit that operates via an activation plate at the base of the cabinet, ideal for when a user's hands are full.

"The main differences between faucets for the two room settings are in styling and functionality," says L'Henaff. "For example, electronic faucets in the kitchen showcase pull-down spray heads with multiple spray patterns for optimum functionality [in these applications], but are not needed for bathroom sink faucets."

"Hands-free faucets make working in the kitchen easier and allow consumers to perform everyday tasks efficiently," adds Tim Burdett, territory manager for Pfister Faucets. "Plus, they help consumers keep a cleaner, healthier kitchen by minimizing the spread of germs, fingerprints, and water spots."

Along with convenience, much of the acceptance in the residential market is a result of performance enhancements, such as sensors that are more responsive to hands yet also less likely to turn on in error. "The technology of the sensors has greatly improved. The reliability has improved," confirms Patrick Vance, marketing manager for Cinaton.

Options abound, as well. Some faucets include features to disable sensing technology for clean-

ing and indicators for low batteries and maintenance. Cinaton's K2002 includes multiple sensors—one to turn it on, another for hands-free adjustment of temperature, and another for hands-free flow adjustment—helping to avoid all manual contact.

Also driving popularity is the growing number of style and finish selections. With both contemporary and traditional offerings, homeowners no longer have to sacrifice taste preferences—and don't have to settle for anything reminiscent of an airport bathroom.

But if hands-free faucets are to gain widespread acceptance, they will have to win over consumers who are skeptical of the products' reliability. Many people have had bad experiences in airports or restaurants with faucets that simply didn't work. In some cases, the motion-sensing infrared technology used by many faucets did not read dark colors well or was confused by shiny, reflective surfaces.

Manufacturers say the technical issues have been resolved. They have even made installation easier for the trades, adding quick-connect attachments and pre-configured sensors. For example, American Standard's Beale faucet comes fully assembled and fully configured from the factory.

Even as the technology for hands-free units expands, there is a lot yet to be explored, manufacturers say, predicting the category will continue to advance in the coming years. "We will see more and more executions of various electronic faucets as the category grows," says L'Henaff. "We see the category expanding into becoming more mainstream to include technologies and designs that fit the needs of various customer segments." ■