SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS A CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

COLONIAL BRONZE MAKES A STRONG BUSINESS CASE FOR GOING GREEN

SELLING GREEN CAN HELP THE EARTH AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE
THE GREEN REPORT:
How Sustainability Impacts the Luxury Decorative Kitchen and Bath Market
By Linda Jennings

Sustainability is not a trend but a new way of living. More and more consumers are seeking ways to reduce negative impacts on the environment, and their product purchases are reflecting this forethought. They are educated and very conscientious. But they also have impeccable taste and high design standards...so it’s no longer enough to just go green.

To keep up with the diverse offerings in the marketplace and the growing sophistication of the green buyer, products today need to have a serious design edge when it comes to sustainability. It’s all about rethinking green — kicking it up a notch and giving the consumer luxury choices. The result is a new wave of eco-products that are extremely creative and will surely have consumers green with envy.

A number of leading DPHA manufacturers are experimenting with mixed sustainable materials like the striking Elliptical soaking bath, which combines stainless steel with bamboo pole skirting for an eclectic look rooted in texture and style. Unlike many other engineered materials, the stainless steel vessel shell is 100 percent recyclable without degradation making it fully “sustainable” and a true champion for the environment.

Bamboo sinks are also getting sophisticated with new shapes and sizes. Featuring organic warmth and natural beauty, these surprisingly durable sinks can easily withstand the rigors of daily use. Known for its peak density, color clarity and sustainability, bamboo is an undeniably green product that fits naturally into both the kitchen and bathroom environments. Products made from this renewable resource are a fabulous way to combine responsible living with fashionable style. It’s green with a creative twist.

Leading tub companies are turning to volcanic limestone mixes to create minimalist styles that are sustainable. As a result, there is a new wave of seamless egg-shaped organic baths that excel in modern design with contoured bottoms and clean, sleek lines. As the stone-rich alternative to both cast iron and acrylic, the tubs are cast in one seamless piece that won’t crack or flex. The high-performance materials are naturally insulating, durable and stain resistant. The tub is warm to the touch, water stays warm longer and there are no nasty cold shocks when getting into the tub.

The building industry is advancing to a new level of sustainable awareness and bath manufacturers are meeting those needs with tubs that are superior in design. Ecology-minded manufacturers are shipping the baths in recycled cardboard on pallets made of reclaimed wood, with strapping made from recycled bottles.

Other designers are reclaiming stainless steel and copper to craft freestanding bathing vessels and door pulls with fabulous high-end design results. Metal delivers superb quality and durability, guaranteeing no boundaries when it comes to design requirements. This allows engineering teams the flexibility to create the
industry's most design-savvy products the market has to offer.

Even customizable vanities and bath storage furniture have gone stylish and are offered in materials that minimize pollution, conserve energy and reduce waste. Sustainable woods like Clear Carmelized Bamboo, an architectural plywood made from 100 percent rapidly renewable bamboo, provide green options in cutting-edge vanity designs. Lyptus hardwood products are also an excellent option when selecting an exotic species grown to sustainable forest certification standards. Lyptus offers all the benefits of a tropical hardwood but is eco-friendly.

As concern for the Earth has clearly become a key issue with consumers, designers are heeding the call. Some companies will even custom create door hardware on request to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards, the rating system devised by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC).

More and more products are created from natural materials. Leather has made a huge comeback as renewable materials in organic forms fuse to create eco-friendly kitchen and bath products. Employing organic materials, quality construction and timeless design are keys to offering smart, ultra-luxe and green products that consumers are craving.

Sustainable design is here to stay. It’s not a passing phase. It’s a revolution!

According to The American Society of Interior Design (ASID), “Clearly we are on our way toward adopting sustainability on all levels of our projects, our businesses, our lives — something is happening and it’s both an exciting and challenging opportunity for our industry. Individuals and business leaders are making decisions everyday that support the economy and lighten their environmental footprint toward attaining sustainable results.”

The consumer has evolved when it comes to green living. And so manufacturers really have to raise the bar when it comes to design. It’s not enough to just be green — products have to be ecocious!