

MAY/JUNE 2021

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF **NKBA + KBIS**

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LUXURY DESIGN TRENDS & PRODUCTS/NEW LIGHTING & LAUNDRY OFFERINGS

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• NKBA'S  
30S CHOICE  
AWARDS

• CREATING NEW  
REVENUE  
STREAMS

## TODAY'S *Luxury* CLIENT





## The Curated Home

*How to create a luxury design – and experience – at any budget*

**W**ITH CREATIVITY AND A LITTLE SAWY, even the simplest remodels can seem luxurious to the average homeowner. Whether turning the master bath into a more spa-like space or transforming it into a glamorous, teched-out suite, homeowners across the board are looking to be treated like top-tier clients, no matter how large or small their budget is. Anticipating their needs, knowing what's trending and ultimately delivering the design they envision are the keys to success.

“The luxury client is looking for a white-glove experience,” said Marlaina Teich of Long Island, N.Y.-based Marlaina Teich Designs. “My clients come to me because they understand that full-service interior design is a luxury and that by hiring my firm, they will have a beautifully designed space. They know they can also count on me to make the experience exciting and enjoyable – all while staying within the defined budget.”



### ABOVE SIGNATURE KITCHEN SUITE

's new undercounter wine refrigerator offers Wine Cave Technology, which minimizes vibration and temperature fluctuations, limits light exposure and optimizes humidity, protecting collections from wine's most damaging elements. Pricing starts at \$3,199 in stainless and is \$3,499 for a panel-ready appliance.  
[signaturekitchensuite.com](http://signaturekitchensuite.com)

### LEFT Harlow glass knobs from

JEFFREY ALEXANDER come in egg, button, sphere, square and faceted shapes and four finishes: brushed oil-rubbed bronze, brushed pewter, polished chrome and satin nickel. Attachment hardware is included for this upscale but budget-friendly look. The list price ranges from \$14.71 to \$26.73.  
[hardwareresources.com](http://hardwareresources.com)

[hardwareresources.com](http://hardwareresources.com)

By ERINN LOUCKS

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDOUT ELEMENTS

Today's homeowners are particularly drawn to one or two outstanding products that they will use and look at on a regular basis, such as a marble countertop if they enjoy baking or a freestanding tub if they love taking baths. Designers should encourage them to spend a good chunk of their budget there.

“When I think of luxury clients, I think of the man who incorporated a refrigerator drawer in his island just for sandwich supplies,” said Christina Kolb of Delafield, Wis.-based Kowalske Kitchen & Bath. “I also think of the woman who wanted more counter space, and the solution was to install a workstation sink.”

The true luxury client is someone who wants their space to be wonderful for them – not future homeowners. They want products in their home they have a connection with or enhance their daily life, whether that be a specialty appliance to bake bread or a massaging showerhead reminiscent of a resort spa they enjoyed.

Kolb recommends understanding the client's lifestyle and interests first and then doing the research to find items that will make their project truly special. The luxury client will pay to have new and innovative ideas put into their home, so it is worth the time to find these products and research what is required to install them. Smart home offerings that enhance a lifestyle, sustainable elements that save money in the long run and especially unique or customized items top the list.

“I love bringing new ideas to a luxury client throughout the whole process, knowing they won't be upset by a change order if it delivers a final product that they love,” added Kolb, explaining that she has suggested a range of unique products in the past for luxury projects, from saunas to handcrafted tile.

### GETTING THE LOOK NO MATTER THE COST

For clients with big dreams but small budgets, it is important to encourage them to focus first on the space's function. Put the most money into things that are difficult to change later when the budget allows – like the floor plan – and spend less on elements that will be easy to trade out at another time, like the countertops. The most important thing is to keep the overall design modern and clean.

“A client with a lower budget can achieve a luxury look by keeping the lines simple and investing the bulk of their budget in the high-impact finishes and appliances,” said Jill Bulger of Atlanta-based Crosby Design Group, adding that even the client with a limitless budget can end up with a terrible design if too many ornate or difficult-to-use products are implemented. “Good design and intelligent use of materials can go a long way.”

For luxury in the kitchen, marble countertops, steam ovens and fireclay sinks are in demand, and in the bathroom, smart steam showers, bidet toilets and customized vanity storage are trending. Most of all, clients at both ends of the budget range are looking for high-end pieces that feel – or are – custom made for them. These range from one-of-a-kind backsplash patterns to hand-blown light fixtures and beautiful finishes. Daniella Hoffer of Springfield, N.J.-based Daniella Hoffer Interiors recommends after investing in the foundational pieces – like a tub or range – looking to places like Etsy and Instagram for interesting pieces from lesser-known craftsmen and artists to get that curated look.

“Art is another area where we see our luxury clients investing, and we work to educate our clients on new artists,” she added.

### CREATING THE WHITE-GLOVE EXPERIENCE

Part of catering to the luxury client is being flexible and able to adjust to their preferred methods of communication. However, all clients want their designer’s undivided attention and time from the first day until the project is completed.

“Being available for site visits or attending showroom appointments will show that you are in this with them,” said Mandy Carbia of Crosby Design Group. “It strengthens their trust in you and your capability to give them their dream home.”

According to Teich, the typical luxury client is not interested in – nor has time for – shopping around or being on hand for every install or delivery. Instead, they simply want quality selections, timeless style and an effortless – though curated – look and experience from start to finish.

“It’s all about thoroughly knowing the client and their world so we can build trust, anticipate needs and design accordingly,” said Teich. “We both want the same thing – a beautifully designed project that runs as smoothly as possible.”

During the pandemic, everyone was looking to upgrade their spaces but at first attempted to do it on their own. They shopped for luxury items online, but then discovered how difficult it is to put a kitchen or bath together without professional help. Now they are looking to designers to not only deliver the spaces they want but also for an easy and fun experience.

“You treat them like they are the only person in the world, and you drop everything for them,” said Scott Dresner of Chicago-based Dresner Design. “Excellent service is everything. It’s important to see your clients, understand who they are and treat them accordingly. ‘No’ is not a good word to use and is frowned upon.”

**RIGHT THOR KITCHEN**’s new series of professional range hoods is available in 30-, 36- and 48-in. sizes and heights of either 16 or 11.5 inches for a designer look without the price. The fan’s noise level tops out at a maximum 67 decibels for quiet operation. A large commercial-style, 430-grade, stainless-steel baffle filter maximizes air flow and grease filtering while the hood is in operation. Prices start at \$799. [thorkitchen.com](http://thorkitchen.com)

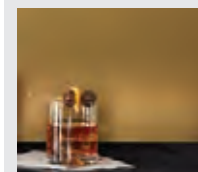
**BELOW** With its seamless flush-mount placement, **BLANCO**’s new Vintera Apron allows designers to fit an apron-front sink into standard cabinetry without customizing the cabinetry, which saves time and money. The 30-in. single apron is \$1,399, and the 33-in. double apron is listed for \$1,649. [blanco.com](http://blanco.com)



**RIGHT VINOTEMP**’s 24-in. Panel-Ready Dual Zone Wine Cooler features 14 gliding ouzo racks with black wooden lips, a black cabinet and a dual-pane glass door with panel-ready frame. In its dual-zone environment, the cooler has an approximate bottle capacity of 126. MSRP is \$3,999. [vinotemp.com](http://vinotemp.com)



**BLUESTAR BY DESIGN** is a process that allows its refrigerators and ranges to be turned into a unique work of art, using any inspired graphic, from a backsplash tile to an upholstery fabric to a favorite photo. This custom capability involves a heated overlay with an easy-to-clean satin finish, and the estimated price for the range shown is \$13,410. [bluestarcooking.com](http://bluestarcooking.com)



**FORMICA CORP.** has released 13 new metal visuals to its DecoMetal Metal Laminate Collection. These patterns include brushed brass (shown here), copper, light gold and black for a total of 37 metal laminate designs for an affordable but unique appeal. They are lightweight, easy to install and suitable for vertical applications in a variety of interior environments. Material costs range from \$5-\$15 per square foot. [formica.com](http://formica.com)



**VERONA** introduces the Designer Cooktop Collection to its line of cooktops. The collection ranges from 12 to 36 inches and offers luxury cooking options such as the highest-quality stainless-steel surface, continuous cast-iron grates, triple-ring brass burners and soft-touch rubberized round knobs. All cooktops are made in Italy, and prices start at \$599. [veronaappliances.com](http://veronaappliances.com)



**LEFT LG HAUSYS** two luxury vinyl tile collections, Grand Teton and Pike's Peak (shown here), both use high-resolution printing technology to create realistic patterns and visuals of natural wood and stone. Products within both collections are constructed with a 2.5-mm thickness and come with LG Hausys Floors' UV PUR double coating surface treatment technology for extra protection. Price is available upon request. [lghausys.com](http://lghausys.com)

**RIGHT** From **TOP KNOBS** in the Regent's Park Collection, the Kingsmill series of pulls and knobs draws inspiration from the royal grounds of Regent's Park in London. Comprised of knobs, pulls and an 18-in. appliance pull, the Kingsmill series is available in six finishes. MSRP ranges from \$9.40 to \$170.80. [topknobs.com](http://topknobs.com)



### WHAT DEFINES LUXURY IN THE FUTURE

While the trend of customization was ramping up before the pandemic, moving on clients will want designs that echo their personalities and interests even more.

"I believe it comes down to really thoughtful custom design that fits the current now of the contemporary family," said Kansas City, Mo.-based Jennifer Bertrand, adding that the pandemic has only made the upscale client all the more willing to spend on luxury home moments. "Everything will be even more customizable."

Color is one of the top ways they might do that. With more neutral, grounding colors trending as the foundational tones, clients will want to implement pops of bright, fun hues that express their personalities and bring them joy.

"In the future, I believe we will see more color in luxury design," said Mary Patton of Mary Patton Design in Houston. "Gray is over."

Going forward, the luxury market will include flexibility to accommodate today's families, who have changing needs and different activities taking place in the same environment. This was happening pre-pandemic but has escalated, inspiring homeowners to really think about how to make their home function best for their families going forward.

"The future of luxury design will be less about adding square footage and more about creating a curated home with detail that is very personal to the homeowners," said Kolb. "They are more likely to invest in items that will make their space truly special for them and make them love their homes again."

Gone are the days when high cost defined luxury. Today's homeowners can get that opulent look and feel without breaking the bank and still appreciate a white-glove experience from their design pro. Customization and personalization are key, and meeting changing luxury needs moving forward will be imperative. ●

**RIGHT INFINITY DRAIN's** Next-Day Custom program offers next-day shipping for wall-to-wall, custom drain installations for orders and signoffs received by 10 a.m. EST with no additional rush upcharge. Next-Day Custom linear drains are available in lengths up to 72 inches in two finishes, three grate styles and for all installation waterproofing methods. Price is available upon request. [infinitydrain.com](http://infinitydrain.com)

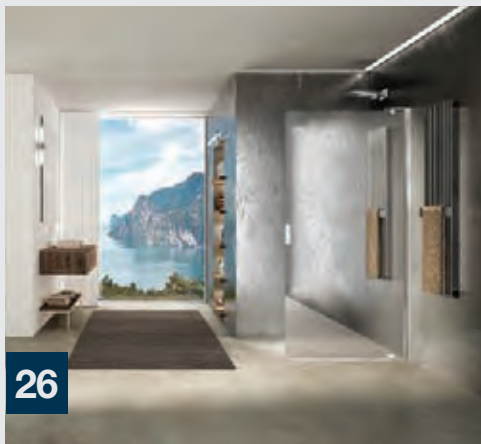


**ABOVE MTI BATH's** new Metro Sculpted Finish tubs come in three sizes, including 60, 66 and 72 inches, with an 11-in. larger extended deck on one side for a safe and convenient ledge for entering and exiting the bath. The handcrafted Sculpted Finish allows customers to finish one to four sides of the tub. The tub starts at \$4,960 as a soaker with one side sculpted and goes to \$12,565 with Microbubbles and three sides sculpted. [mtibaths.com](http://mtibaths.com)

**LEFT THERMADOR** is introducing a new model of affordable luxury with its all-new Leap Into Luxury Appliance packages. The packages are designed to allow for easy upgrades to any kitchen without the need to reconfigure cabinetry or layout. To fit an array of consumer needs, preferences and budgets, Leap Into Luxury offers nine package options at three price tiers starting at just under \$10,000. [thermador.com/us](http://thermador.com/us)



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**25. PITT COOKING** now offers burners for the outdoor kitchen. Available for any outdoor kitchen size and setup, PITT Cooking Systems are offered in 6,000 BTU, 10,000 BTU and 650-17,000 BTU power. UMRP is \$2,892 for the two-burner model shown. [pittcooking.com](http://pittcooking.com)

**26. DUKA's** new shower enclosures are made with chromium mirror glass, a reflective surface that changes the spatial perception of a room. Chromium mirror glass is manufactured with a complex vacuum, chrome-plating process, cathodic spraying and with no application of silver or aluminum on the surface. Price is available upon request. [www.duka.it](http://www.duka.it)



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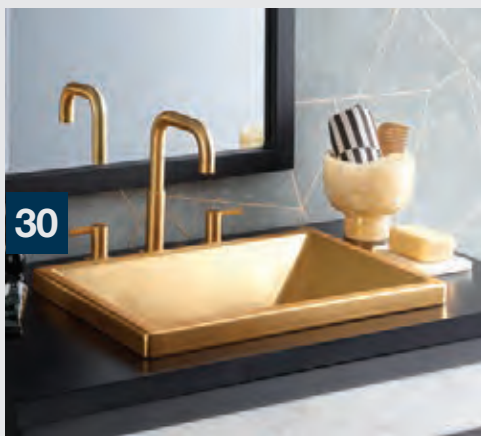
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**27.** The Foil Collection from **CERAMICHE REFIN** includes porcelain stoneware tiles that look like metal plates with small scratches and marks reminiscent of antique cars. These effects are hand-beaten, creating a post-industrial and retro charm. Price is available upon request. [www.refin-ceramic-tiles.com](http://www.refin-ceramic-tiles.com)

**28.** The Quad Collection from **ARTAIC** showcases intricate mosaic alignments in geometric composition, as seen with Herringbone. The collection can be used in grid-style, classic and modular alignments. If specified in vitreous glass, designers can customize Quad using a palette of more than 180 colors. Price is available upon request. [artaic.com](http://artaic.com)



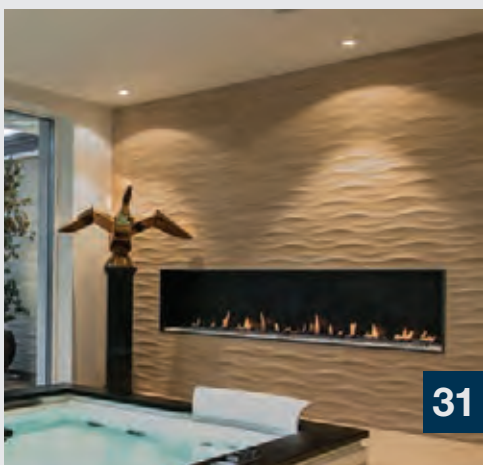
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**29.** The new wall-mounted version of the VOLA 500 Series from **HASTINGS TILE & BATH** has a spout that is available in 6-, 9- 12-in. sizes, as well as custom sizes. This particular version is also ADA compliant when used with the medium-sized handle, because the control can be placed toward the front of the sink for easy access. VOLA 520 is shown here in matte white for an MSRP of \$2,735. [hastingstilebath.com](http://hastingstilebath.com)

**30. NATIVE TRAILS'** Precious Metals fireclay sink collection was launched in celebration of the company's 25th anniversary. The sinks are fired twice, then glazed by hand with 24K gold, platinum and silver and fired a third time. The collection includes such designs as the Rendezvous and Dreamer kitchen sinks, Reveler bar and prep sink and Bliss and Amara (shown here in 24K matte gold) sinks. MSRP is \$1,998. [nativetrailshome.com](http://nativetrailshome.com)



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**31.** From **LITHOS DESIGN**, Fondo is a refined 3D wall covering that draws inspiration from the patterns created by the motion of waves. The version shown is oca sabia stone. Price is available upon request. [www.lithosdesign.com](http://www.lithosdesign.com)

**32. RUVATI's** newest addition to the Roma Series of workstation sinks is the Siena. Created for compact spaces, the Siena includes accessories that fit into the basin, such as a stainless-steel colander and a hardwood cutting board. The Siena is offered in sizes from 15 to 25 inches and starts at an MSRP of \$289. [www.ruvati.com](http://www.ruvati.com)