

Splashy New Products Debut at NAHB Show

by Patrick J. Galvin

Is your bathroom lavatory too high for the children or too high for you to wash your feet?

These problems can now be resolved with the new "Lift" lav by Villeroy & Boch. Offered with a choice of five different bowls, its surface is 35 inches above the floor. But a simple push with a lever locks it in place to as low as 19 inches above the floor.

This was a highlight of many new kitchen and bathroom products displayed at the annual convention of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), which attracted a record crowd of nearly 60,000.

American Standard's new Ceramix Electronix faucets also scored big. These, with single-lever controls, come in chrome, polished brass, bone, white, gold, and white with gold trim. But what really sets them apart is a solar-powered digital readout that tells water temperature.

("Solar-powered" here is a figure of speech. If the sun doesn't reach the collectors, room light is sufficient.)

These faucets are available in four-inch center set or single hole for lavs, or for wall-mounted showers and bath-shower combinations, kitchens and even bidets.

In cabinetry, the famous name of Mutschler was revived by Triangle Pacific. But instead of the traditional custom lines that established the name over the years, it now appears in 16 different European-style lines.

The company still does all custom work made to order, with four weeks delivery time. Products can be ordered from Tri Pac or IXL distributors or dealers.

The show also produced an apparent Japanese competitor for DuPont Corian. It is called "Silky Marble," by Nippoly Kako (209 Post St., San Francisco, Calif. 94108). As readers of this column know well, the important feature of Corian has been its easy repairability and its workability with woodworking tools.

It should be noted that several new competitors for this product have shown up at past NAHB shows, but they either disappeared or never materialized at all in the marketplace.

"Dome It" was a particularly interesting exhibit for builders and remodelers. This is a luminous lighting system for the ceiling that appears built-in but can be an easy add-on installation.

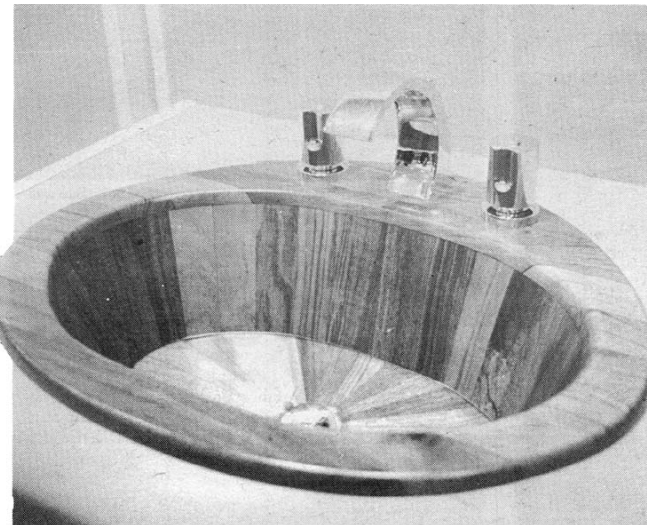
It consists of straight or curved diffuser panels attached to extruded metal tracks, and it fits to the perimeter of the room—either all the way around or on any number of walls. Included is a sheet to cover the remainder of the old ceiling. Behind the panels are continuous fluorescent tubes.

"Dome It" can provide plenty of light just on the lav wall of the average master bath. It is manufactured by The Original Dome Ceiling, Inc., 200 Goodlette Rd., Naples, Fla. 33940.

In kitchen appliances, Admiral showed the results of its new marriage with Italian suppliers, blending an attractive mix of built-in Italian refrigerators and freezers with its own appliance line, all under the Admiral name.

These come in small and large sizes, reminiscent of the old Revco units of a dozen years ago that made decentralization of refrigeration practical in the kitchen.

A new marketing program introduced at the show by Maytag is called "Builder's



This bathroom lav of teak had a matching toilet seat and water-closet cover at Eljer display.

Photo by Pat Calvin

Choice." It offers builders combination purchase and shipment of Maytag, Jenn-Air and Hardwick kitchen and laundry appliances from a new contract sales group administered by Jenn-Air.

This new family of related brands in-

cludes gas and electric ranges and wall ovens, microwaves, dishwashers, disposals, outdoor gas grills, down-draft ranges and cooktops, and washers and dryers.

D/G Mouldings showed builders a new product of interest for anywhere in home

Photos by Pat Calvin



Triangle Pacific brought back the old name of Mutschler, but all in Euro styles. This is V100, one of 16 lines.

construction. Called "Clearwood," it is a coating that gives total coverage of finger joints or blemishes and can be stained or painted. In prefinished board, there is no repeat of the grain pattern in any length.

In ceramic tile, American Olean brought back an old favorite: one-inch Hex, available in a kaleidoscope of colors and in the firm's Master-Set in one-foot-by-two-foot sheets. These are six-sided tiles that lend themselves to an infinite variety of designs.

But the tile story at American Olean, at Villeroy & Boch and others was as much in design as in new products. And here the story was graphics.

The graphics were bold and colorful—big zigzags that ran from floor to ceiling in some displays, or simply on the counter or wall in others. In all cases they were strong, which is in tune with today's design preferences.

All in all, the general tone of the exhibits for kitchen and bathroom was toward upgrading. It showed up particularly in the Eljer display.

Eljer always takes a large space, but in past years it simply has shown its products on the floor. This year the display was a two-story spectacular with a huge water curtain dropping about 20 feet around the new lavs and sinks, and with fully designed bathrooms rather than isolated products.

It was a more fitting response to the Kohler exhibit, which has been multilevel and one of the best for many years, and to that of American Standard, which maintained its characteristic look of quiet luxury.

Patrick J. Galvin is the author of Kitchen Planning Guide for Builders, Designers and Architects and the former editor and publisher of Kitchen & Bath Business.



The new "Lift" lav manufactured by Villeroy & Boch moves up or down with a simple push of a finger.



American Standard showed new lavs with solar-powered digital readouts of water temperature.