

WHAT'S NEW?

In Kitchens...

It's hard to know who's who these days when it comes to kitchen manufacturing, particularly with regard to appliances, and to some extent cabinet and counter materials. Numerous mergers and acquisitions have changed some of the names involved, created new ones, and regrouped others. And it is hard to guess how much these changes will affect the products these names stand for.

Wheeling and Dealing

AB Electrolux, a giant foreign appliance manufacturer, recently bought its way into the U.S. market. When the Swedish-based company bought White

primarily at the kitchen remodeling market.

Deals for Builders

This amounts to an enormous roiling of the distribution waters. Kitchen distributors can no longer be sure of their product lines. Where once they might have carried KitchenAid dishwashers, Jenn-Air ranges, and Amana refrigerators, they now find each appliance name bringing out full lines that include all major appliances. Thus the distributor is caught in the middle, facing pressure to drop lines that distributors have established in the market and are now competing with.

variable proportioning of refrigerator and freezer space, its power module on top, and exceptional energy savings in the 1988 models. Defiance also has the most complete line with sizes from 18 to 42 inches wide, and any of these can be combined.

In free-standing models, Frigidaire styling in both gas and electric. It combines a cooktop with a dishwasher below and an oven above, all in a 30-inch width.

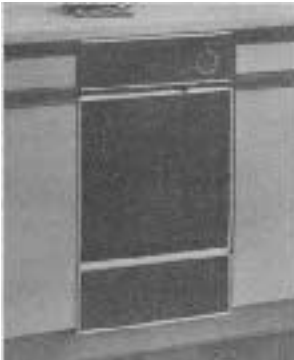
High-Tech Trends

The move toward high-tech showed up this year in another range, by Amana, which uses an 8-inch quartz-

Jenn-Air's new "tri-convertible" grill-range cooktop shows new emphasis on styling with rounded corners and edges, designer lines, and a mix of accent colors such as salmon, light gray, and red on a unit that is basically black.

New from Modern Maid is a new concept: a non-ducted downdraft range. Exhaust contaminants are pulled down through a filtering system and expelled from the toe-kick. Builders familiar with Modern Maid will be pleased to know this firm's "Cook-'N'-Clean" center is available with new

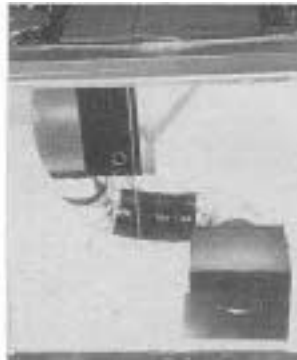
In kitchen cabinets, oak continues to be the most popular material, used in 43 percent of the cabinets shown at the



This new Frigidaire dishwasher is only 18 inches wide—great for condos or other small spaces.



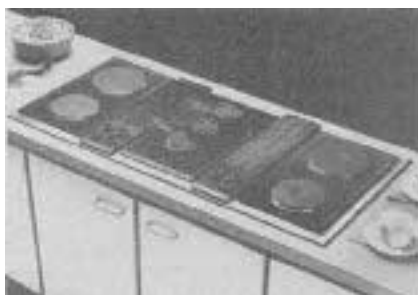
What is it, dishwasher or range? Modern Maid's new combo packs dishwasher, cooktop, and oven in one 30-inch-wide unit.



The first ductless downdraft range was introduced this year by Modern Maid. Cutaway model shows downdraft unit, ductwork, and filter, which ejects filtered air at toe-kick.



New refrigerators feature more specialized storage areas. This Frigidaire has specified places for canned and bottled beverages, a fresh-sealed compartment, more meat storage, and door-mounted microwavable dishes.



The emphasis in Jenn's Air tri-convertible is on styling—with line and color accents.



U.S. Brass's new cast-iron corner sink has two deep bowls and a fluted drain apron.



This triple bowl sink from U.S. Brass is made of a new silicon quartz material called AstraLight.

Consolidated Industries and merged it with its previous purchase Tappan, it became a major player here. This move put a lot of appliance brand names in the same stable, including Tappan, O'Keefe & Merritt, White, Westinghouse, Frigidaire, Gibson, Kelvinator, and several lesser names.

But that's only half of the story. With Tappan, Electrolux obtained an entire family of cabinet companies including Quaker Maid, Kemper, J-Wood, Schrock, Diamond, and Richwood.

In a similar vein, Whirlpool acquired KitchenAid, then took over St. Charles and Mastercraft to add these cabinets to its appliance family. Meanwhile Admiral, Jenn-Air, Magic Chef, Hardwick, Gaffers & Sattler, and Norge were bought by Maytag, and Roper by General Electric, which has also established an upgraded (Monogram) line of built-in appliances aimed

Where manufacturers put this kind of pressure on distributors, it can mean attractive pricing for builders. It can also lead to more appealing builder packages that may include one brand or several. Packages have always been available, but mixing brands used to be done only at the distributor level.

Functional Features

In addition, these behind-the-scenes changes and the pressure of competition from imports have led to new products and new features to make kitchens more functional, varied, and attractive.

There are more built-in appliances now (these are high-end upgrades, not like the built-ins popular 30 years ago). GE's Monogram line now even offers ice and water through the freezer door, unique in a built-in. KitchenAid offers a built-in refrigerator/freezer. But Defiance still is the idea leader with its

halogen heating element along with three conventional electric elements. The halogen element has vacuum-sealed quartz glass tubes filled with halogen gas, producing instant light and heat when turned on.

High-tech showed up in materials also, with several new cultured marbles of the machinable type, similar in performance, though not in composition, to Corian. Joining such names as Formica 2000X, Nevamar Fountainhead, and Avonite were GemSurf by VT1 and Goldenite 2000 by Goldline Kitchens. Shows a trend toward more specialized storage areas, including door-mounted storage dishes that can go directly into the microwave.

Frigidaire also offers a new 18-inch wide dishwasher that will appeal to condo builders with limited space. This size has been available for several years from Thermador and Waste King.

Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in Washington, D.C., in March. Cherry was the next most popular wood at 14 percent, and decorative laminates were used on 18 percent of the cabinets. These included high-gloss polyesters by two firms, and high-gloss melamine laminates by several.

Kitchen sinks also make big news this year. Some models from U.S. Brass made waves at the Kitchen and Bath Show. One was a cast-iron corner sink—the only one available today. It featured big, deep bowls and drain grooves on one apron. The firm also offers a triple-bowl sink in a new silicon quartz material they call AstraLight.

Throughout the industry, the trend is toward upgraded products and materials - at upgraded prices.

And Baths...

Bathroom products have, been continually upgraded over the last ten years. In 1988, the trend continues with upgrades to the upgrades.

This shows up in fancier jetted tubs, jazzier lavatories, still more choices in faucets, many more counter materials in more colors, and a variety of accessories such as luminous packaged soffits.

Seas of Sinks

This year the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in Washington, D.C., which has become the prime showcase for these products, had seas of sinks, faucets, and jetted tubs. Few, if any, were in the low price range.



Eljer's Pearlescence seems to glow in several colors under light. Spout is integral, with gold or chrome handles.

Improved Synthetics

Technological progress in petrochemicals has brought hand-tool machinability to cultured marble. Many of the new products also have more durability than standard cultured marbles.

Many of the new entries are locally manufactured, locally available products, but two new names on the national scene are GemSurf, by VTI, and Goldenite 2000 by Goldline Kitchens. Goldenite showed an Isis bowl in Bombay Black overlaying a counter of the same material in Mist Gray. Goldline, out of Phoenix, a new name nationally, also offers a full range of vanity and

This is significant for home builders because now they can do the bathrooms the right way without having to adapt kitchen wall cabinets or resort to carpentry. The new vanities come with a full range of accessory cabinets including lighted medicine cabinets, hampers, and others.

It all offers an opportunity for builders to finish houses more fully, making them more marketable, and more profitable. ■

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To satisfy the taste for the exotic, U.S. Brass is offering a sink made from henoki wood, available only on one Japanese island.



Jacuzzi's new Allusion jetted tub is designed to swoop up from the floor, eliminating the need to frame and finish around the tub. Two sets of pumps and motors allow bathers individual control of either side.



Goldenite 2000 is one of the new hand-workable materials for tops, sinks, and other applications. This is a Bombay Black lav in a Mist Gray top.

Jacuzzi is an example, and it is fitting, since this firm originated jetted whirlpool baths. Jacuzzi took notice of the trend to build framework around raised tubs, whether jetted or not, so it decided to offer tubs with a similar "built-up" look built-in. Its new Allusion model—84x84-inches square—is designed to "come out of the floor." It has two sets of pumps and motors so bathers on either side can adjust the jets differently, and sells, incidentally, for \$5,995.

Eljer went for iridescence in its new lav, the Carrington, calling the material Pearlescence. The lav seems to glow under light, reflecting it back in muted colors, and it has an integral faucet rising from the back. Faucet handles can be either gold or chrome.

Several products from Eljer, Kohler, and others hark back to olden times with wood lavs and other fixtures. One of the most luxurious is the henoki wood lav by U.S. Brass. This wood is available only from an island off Japan, according to a spokesman, and the lav has ten coats of marine finish.

kitchen cabinets. The firm has been a big producer of cultured marble and other counter products in the West.

These products are similar to Avonite, Formica 2000X, and Nevamar Fountainhead, all of which are expanding their color selections.

DuPont Corian, which enjoyed a monopoly on these workable materials for 20 years, differs in that it is an acrylic monomer, whereas all of the newcomers are polyester-based. But Corian is keeping up with the times with its new dark and light granites and a new pink coral, sierra sandstone, dawn beige, and dusty rose.

Vanities Now Available

The other noteworthy development in bath products is the proliferation of vanity cabinets. Vanity cabinets come in shallower depths than kitchen cabinets to fit the smaller space usually allowed for them. Small vanities have always been available from custom manufacturers, but are new from stock cabinet companies. Just about everyone has them.