

A selection of tools & materials to enhance your kitchen & bath jobs



•Cast-to-Order Solid-Surfacing Material

A cement-based composite of natural minerals and recycled materials, *Syndecree* has twice the compressive strength of ordinary concrete at less than half its weight. Solid slabs for tubs, counter or vanity tops, basins, back-splashes, and flooring are precast to your specifications to be finished and fitted on site. Available in densities ranging from 35 to 100 lb/cf, this material has the workability of wood — surfaces can be ground, polished, or textured like Italian terrazzo. Syndecree is resistant to staining, corrosion, and impact damage.

Contact: Syndesis, 2908 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404; 310/829-9932; www.syndesisinc.com.

•Solid-Surface Bathtub Wall Kit

Swanstone is a premium-strength, modified acrylic material, compression molded with natural minerals. It's available in wall panel systems and surround kits designed to significantly reduce installation time and cost. The SSIT-60-3 kit, for example, includes three panels with integral molded trim, two bathtub trim strips, and two corner moldings. Panels fit a standard 30x60-inch bathtub and will install over virtually any substrate, including existing ceramic tile. Swanstone is impact and stain resistant, can be repaired if scratched or gouged, and comes in 30 colors that are molded throughout.

Contact: The Swan Corp., One City Centre, Suite 2300, St. Louis, MO 63101; 800/325-7008; www.theswancorp.com.



•Custom-Made Countertop Edging

For the contractor who needs decorative beveled-edge products to match laminate or solid-surface countertops, Kuehn offers a variety of styles in any color and brand, including Formica, Nevamar, Wilsonart, Corian, and Surell. Pieces are cut, routed, and glued in place on site. Tape every 3 inches to align, remove tape when dry, and lightly sand top of molding. A solid-surface back-splash is also available.

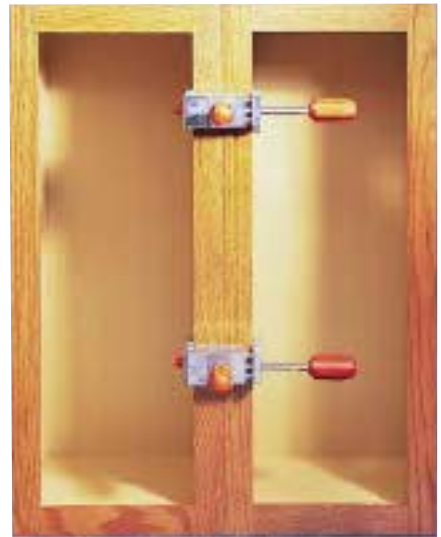
Contact: Kuehn Bevel, 111 Canfield Ave., Randolph, NJ 07869; 800/862-3835; www.kuehnbevel.com.

by Joe and Rita Randazzo

● Cabinet Face-Frame Clamp

The *Pony Cabinet Claw* is a unique tool that combines several steps into one easy process. The all-in-one design tightens and aligns, and allows predrilling and fastening without repositioning of the clamp. The clamp, which is furnished with a 1/8-inch drill bit for predrilling fastener pilot holes, will hold two stiles from 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide and up to 1 1/2 inches thick. The aluminum claws and alignment plate sport protective rubber pads to prevent marring of surfaces.

Contact: Adjustable Clamp Co., 417 North Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60622; 312/666-0640; www.jorgensenclamp.com.



● Radiant Heat on Wood

A new panel system offers an economical alternative substrate that makes it possible to add in-floor heating without altering existing structures. The 1/2x7x48-inch *Quik-Trak* panels have a built-in aluminum heat transfer sheet contoured to accept Wirsbo's PEX tubing. The material's shallow profile can be placed over almost any existing floor, including concrete.

Contact: Wirsbo, 5925 148th St. W., Apple Valley, MN 55124; 800/321-4739; www.wirsbo.com.

● Spiral Saw Makes the Cut

The *Roto Zip Spiral Saw* has a unique cutting action that slices cleanly rather than using the ripping action of traditional saws. The down-spiral parabolic flute of the bits eliminates the need for pilot holes, and carries dust away from the line of sight. The saw is ideal for plumbing rough-in in ceramic wall tile and the backs of cabinets, vent holes for range hood fans, and sink cutouts in laminate countertops. It works on virtually any surfacing material up to 1 inch thick. A circle-cutter accessory is also available.

Contact: Roto Zip Tool Corp., 1861 Ludden Dr., Cross Plains, WI 53528; 877/768-6947; www.rotozip.com.



● Adjustable Range Hoods

Trying to connect a range hood to an off-center duct is a real hassle. NuTone has addressed the problem with its new line of *Allure* range hoods, featuring an adjustable duct connector that slides up to 1 inch left or right. Allure is available in five finishes and three sizes – 30, 36, and 42 inches — all adaptable to any ducting configuration. Sound levels have been dramatically reduced in these units, and they're easy to clean thanks to a nonstick surface from Dupont Silverstone. Two halogen floodlights provide full illumination for cooking.

Contact: Broan-NuTone Group, 926 W. State St., Hartford, WI 53027; 800/558-1711.



● Portable Lift for Solo Work

Designed by a cabinet installer, the *Gil-Lift* makes it possible to raise, position, and fasten up to 300 pounds of overhead cabinets singlehandedly. This compact four-part tool is made of anodized aluminum, fits neatly into your van, and assembles in seconds on site. The base rolls on casters and supports a two-piece mast; a platform and winch ride up and down the mast to position cabinets precisely. Also provided is an alternate base padded with carpet to allow installation of upper cabinets after base cabinets and countertop are in place.

Contact: TelPro, 7251 S. 42nd St., Grand Forks, ND 58201; 800/448-0822.



● Low-Voltage Under-Cabinet Lighting

Fixtures as small as hockey pucks have now become standard in cabinet design, and low-voltage halogen lights are the clear choice for high-intensity illumination with less power consumption. These *Häfele* units have the advantage of snap-in plugs, so you don't need an electrician to install them, and they're designed as a complete system consisting of transformer, lights, and dimmer switches. Their small profile is especially suited to under-cabinet lighting applications. The lights are available in a variety of finishes and design options for cabinets and other furniture, and are UL-listed for the U.S. and Canada.

Contact: Häfele America., P.O. Box 4000, Archdale, NC 27263; 800/423-3531.

● Senior-Friendly Fixtures

Multigenerational households are becoming more common, adding to the challenge of recommending fixtures that will work for the whole family. *Assure* kitchen sinks, *Freewill* barrier-free showers, and *Morningside* lavatory sinks are product lines that meet ADA requirements while offering attractive styling. The *Assure* double-basin sink was designed specifically for wheelchair accessibility, with input from physically-challenged individuals. *Freewill* bath and shower modules include grab bars, seats, and nonslip surfaces. *Morningside* lavatories feature touchless electronic faucets. All products are available in a range of styles and colors to match existing fixtures.

Contact: Kohler, 444 Highland Dr., Kohler, WI 53044; 800/456-4537; www.kohlerco.com.



● Appliance Refacing Kits

These panel and trim kits are for customers who'd like to keep a favorite appliance, but want it to fit in with the colors of their new kitchen remodel. The kits are available for refrigerators, dishwashers, compactors, and freezers, and fit virtually all makes and models made as far back as 1942. With 21 days lead time, Frigo will custom-make panels in acrylic, stainless steel, satin alloy, solid surface, and wood. Options include more than 85 color and pattern finishes, including reflective mirror.

Contact: Frigo Design, 5860 McKinley, Brewerton, NY 13029; 800/836-8746; www.frigodesign.com.



● 3-D Design Software

Imagine being able to walk your customers around their "virtual" new kitchen or bath so they can see exactly what it will look like before you order materials or lift a hammer. The *Planit Millennium* presentation software displays your design, showing cabinets and appliances as if they were already installed, with extremely sharp graphics. Other features include an automatic design check to confirm that dimensions meet NKBA standards, and a sales and order tracker with reminders of critical deadlines. Designed for Windows operating systems.

Contact: Planit-Autograph, 699 Perimeter Dr., Suite 300, Lexington, KY 40517; 606/269-8585; www.planitautograph.com.



● Architectural Accents

Urethane millwork accents are ideal for use in high-humidity areas, where wood is prone to decay, twisting, and cupping. This line of bathroom upgrades includes urethane pilasters and door head for a shower stall, a wall niche for the tub, and decorative mirror surrounds. In the kitchen, ceiling medallions, chair rails, cornices, brackets, and dozens of molding styles add a finished look to even a budget remodel. Lightweight and easy to handle, these millwork pieces require no sanding, priming, or sealing.

Contact: Style-Mark, 960 West Barre Rd., Archbold, OH 43502; 800/446-3040; www.style-mark.com.





● Luxurious Radiators

Standard in European bathrooms and entryways, these radiators not only supply heat and discourage mildew, but also warm towels and robes. Designed for use in foyers and mudrooms, the 60x22-inch *Heritage* radiator is equipped with brass knobs for holding hats, scarves, and overcoats. The unit is available in hundreds of colors in both electric and hydronic models. For bathroom use, a smaller 34x24-inch panel features an optional towel-drying rack.

Contact: Runtal North America, P.O. Box 8278, Ward Hill, MA 01835; 800/526-2621; www.runtal.com.

● Back-Saving Appliance Mover

Who says refrigerators can't float? The *Airsled* lifts up to 700 pounds and moves it on a cushion of air without wrecking your back or damaging newly laid flooring. The system is easily managed by one person — simply strap on the 8-pound blower and slip two aluminum-Neoprene "air beam" mats under the appliance. Turn on the blower and the load literally rises on air and moves along smoothly, even over expansion joints and cracks up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide. Includes a special rough-surface adapter for crossing carpet or brick.

Contact: Airsled, 70-A Aleph Dr., Newark, DE 19702; 800/247-7533; www.airsled.com.



● Kitchen Cabinets Use Space Wisely

Cherry Ridge is a new cabinet line that features solid cherry hardwood doors and a space-saving design. The cabinets make good use of narrow areas through the addition of a double row of spice drawers and a vertical slide-out cabinet on either side of the dishwasher. Available in burgundy or spice finishes, the cabinets are constructed in a modified full-overlay design with concealed hinges. Doors are hand sanded to remove cross-grain scratches, and stain is hand wiped into the wood to bring out the distinctive grain pattern. Other quality touches include $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-thick shelves and epoxy-coated steel drawer guides with 100-pound weight capacity.

Contact: HomeCrest Corp., P.O. Box 595, Goshen, IN 46527; 219/533-9571; www.homecrestcab.com.



● Universal Access Cabinets

As the population ages, a growing number of homeowners will be requesting handicapped-accessible kitchens. The new *Passport Series* is the only cabinet design that has been certified by the Institute of Technology Development. It offers many of the features specified by the Americans with Disabilities Act, including heights adjusted for lower counters and wall ovens, raised dishwashers and cabinet floors, and 9-inch toe-kicks. An affordable alternative to expensive custom units or tricky alterations to stock cabinets, Passport is built to order in a one-week production cycle.

Contact: KraftMaid Cabinetry, P.O. Box 1055, Middlefield, OH 44062; 800/814-0480 for a dealer; www.kraftmaid.com.



Joe and Rita Randazzo are freelance writers in South Burlington, Vt.