

NEW Products from the Kitchen & Bath Show

According to the buzz on the floor at the annual Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in Orlando, Fla., back in April, this is a great time to be in kitchen (or bath)

by Dave Holbrook

installations, remodeling, sales, or design.

Industry watchers are upbeat, and most are betting that the nesting, cocooning, stay-at-home phenomenon continues to strengthen.

As usual, the show was both eye-opening and fun: Browsing through magazines and catalogs can't compare to the experience of walking through the model exhibits, viewing design concepts and feeling the surfaces, cranking faucet levers and handles,

hefting hardware, and opening doors and drawers to check the quality and construction.

I was surprised that there were so few cabinet makers on the show floor, because cabinets are the first thing that comes to mind when I think of kitchen furnishings. But while there seems to be little compelling news in the cabinet department, this year's show did feature a wealth of innovative appliances. This is an area that many builders and remodelers could stand to learn more about. Whether you see appliances as part of your normal field of expertise or not, your clients will tend to look to you first for answers. Considering the money to be made in procurement, you might as well accommodate them.



Screen Doors

I still don't understand why a computer and a fridge belong together, although more than one eager rep has tried to enlighten me. But that's the built-in lure behind the Samsung *HomePad* (below left). A tablet-style computer/TV/DVD player docks in the door, which serves as a charger base. Watch DVD movies on the computer screen while you chop onions! Work on the Microsoft Word manuscript of your novel while you're standing in front of the refrigerator! Surf the web for cool recipes! For convenience, the wireless tablet can be better viewed and used resting on a table or countertop in its integral stand. The HomePad carries an \$8,000 price tag. Samsung apparently noted LG's successful rollout of the *Internet Refrigerator*, which debuted last year and also costs \$8,000 (above right). LG's tablet isn't mobile (unless you take the

door off the hinges). Meaningful communication between fridge and motherboard is minimal — these units are mostly made for the bragging rights.



Blowing Hot and Cold

Whirlpool's *Polara Refrigerated Range* isn't new this year, but, enhanced with a network card, it becomes a serious tool for the Type-A lifestyle. Picture preparing tomorrow's dinner the night before. You place it in the oven to keep it chilled. Right. Next day, at a preset time, the oven switches to bake mode, then to warming mode after the proper cooking time. However, if at noon, you learn that you have to work late, a simple call from your digital phone resets the works — everything's cool (unless you don't want it to be). The range won't let you forget, either — a text message to your cell phone asks if you're proceeding on plan. As a fallback, you can even instruct the Polara to cook the meal, then chill it for a later reheate. Talk about playing with your food.



Meanwhile, Back in the Future...

The retro-look fridge provides concrete proof that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Leave it to Beaver — no, wait — to Elmira Stove Works' *Northstar* line. The refrigerators are available in a wide range of fetching period colors, but beneath their nostalgic exteriors, these are fully featured modern appliances.



Cool Drinks

A wine cooler was my drink of choice back in the days when I survived on doughnuts and spaghetti. That was then — now it's a product that may as well go on your appliance allowance list. Marvel's \$2,400 *Modele Rouge* (top left) has a brilliant red interior and brass racks, visible through etched glass doors. Its *Luxury Series* (bottom left) features a gloss black interior behind a stainless-steel and glass door, starting at \$1,200. Door frame options include white, black, and custom wood.

Big, Big Chill

When it comes to late-night refrigerator grazing, this unit from Viking might be nicknamed the Serengeti Food Preserve. A side-by-side all-refrigerator, all-freezer combo (connecting 60- or 72-inch grille kit sold separately) introduces near walk-in capacity to the domestic appliance scene. These professional-styled units are available in 30- and 36-inch-wide models for a combined width of 5 or 6 feet. Features include a multichannel airflow system in the reefer unit to control ancient leftover odors and excess humidity. Electronic controls maintain interior temperatures within 1°F. The freezer offers a full-width ice bucket inside the door and a factory-installed ice maker. An alarm sounds on the refrigerator or freezer if its door is left ajar for more than three minutes. The 30-inch refrigerator or freezer costs \$5,025; the 36-inch models cost \$5,375. That's \$10,750 for 6 feet of chilled heaven. Tack on \$305 for the grille kit. The units will be available in the first quarter of 2004.



Modern Times

A face panel this sleek and minimal wouldn't look out of place among stereo components, let alone kitchen appliances.



The controls are concealed behind the dark glass and stainless-steel door of Sharp's *R-426HS* 1.6-cubic-foot, 1,200-watt microwave oven. A 14¹/₈-inch turntable accommodates larger casserole dishes and two-plus-person pizzas. An optional stainless-steel build-in kit stretches the oven's 21⁵/₈-inch exterior profile to 24 inches for stacking over a standard wall oven. According to the manufacturer, *Keep Warm Plus* technology means that foods can be kept hot up to 30 minutes after cooking with "no loss of food quality." The suggested retail price for the oven alone is \$270, although I've seen quotes as low as \$194 on the web.



Combo Cooker

Sharp's *High Speed Oven* offers users the benefits of both microwave and conventional cooking — speeding up conventional baking with microwaves, while browning, crisping, and convection otherwise limp and steamy microwave results, all in record time.



Smart Microwaves

The *Scroll & Cook* microwave from LG Electronics (above) contains a database of generic cooking settings for hundreds of food items, from fresh to frozen, found by pressing and turning a dual-function selection dial that controls the LCD screen menu.

Westinghouse's sophisticated *Beyond* microwave (right) actually reads instructions — just swipe the UPC code on any of 4,000 packaged food items, and



the microwave cooks the item "perfectly," according to the manufacturer. Connected to a proprietary home network hub, the oven can update itself automatically online with another 20,000 bar code settings. The retail price for the oven is about \$180.

Responsive Radiant

Caldera's new *Dial 2000* cooktop uses radiant ribbon burners, said to come to full power in three seconds and be more responsive and easier to clean than cooktops fired by conventional halogen elements. Forty-four selectable power levels offer unusually precise temperature regulation, and under-glass touch-pad controls eliminate knobs entirely.



Wide Range

I just helped prepare an unscheduled meal for my hungry teens and their five friends and had to wonder how high-volume households handle the feeding night after night. The answer, in part, may lie with a setup like Dacor's *Epicure ERD60* (as in 60 inches) range, which combines a high-output eight-burner cooktop with a pair of dual-fuel ovens. Plan on a freestanding installation and minimum ventilation of 1,200 cfm for this unit. Ceramic gas broilers and electric convection elements in each oven leave baking and broiling options wide open. Oh, you'll want a wide-open appliance allowance, too: This item clocks in at a suggested retail price of \$9,400.

Hot Little Item

You don't see too many pro-style ranges in space-challenged kitchens, but it doesn't have to be that way. The full-featured *Five Star* is a 24-inch all-gas range that installs flush with standard counter depth and has four full-size burners capable of cranking out 400 to 1,050 Btus, as well as a convection oven.

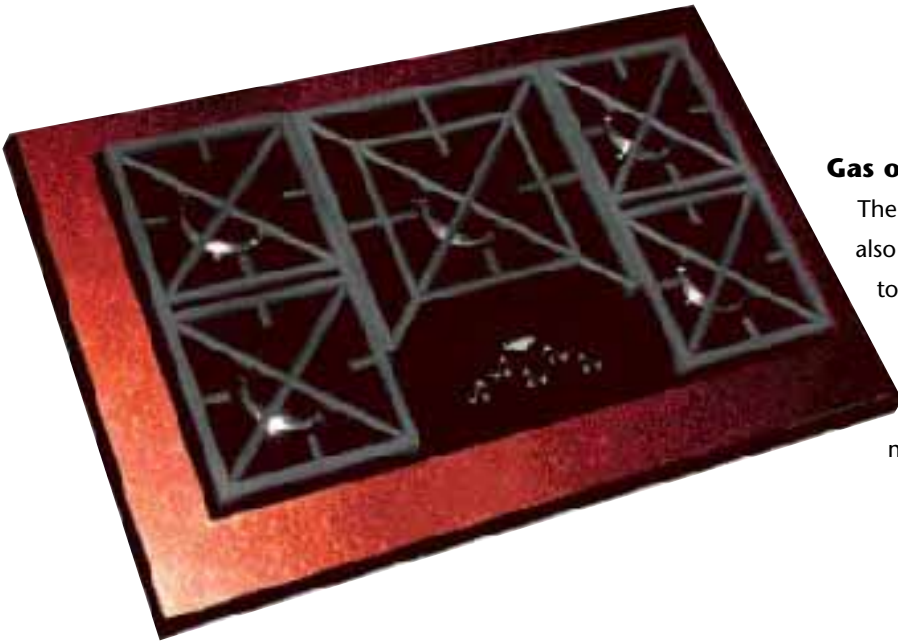
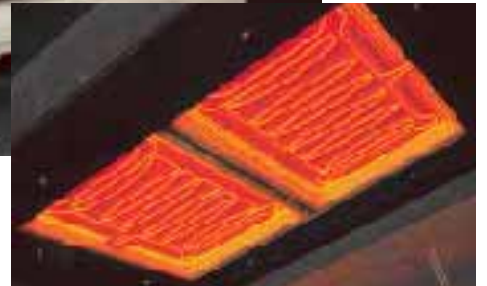


Free-Range Hood

Our ancestors' caves were naturally drafty and free venting, but we can spend as much or more on a vent hood as the range it serves. Zephyr's unique stainless-steel-and-glass *Torino* wall-mount range hood provides 715 cfm at a quiet six sones and starts at \$2,300. The island version starts at \$3,400. Glass can be ordered clear or colored.

Switch Hitters

Coil-top ranges are rare in restaurant kitchens, which is why gas says “gourmet” more than electric. But most chefs consider electric ovens to be more reliable than their gas counterparts. Heartland’s *Metro* and *Legacy* (below) range ovens feature gas burners and a three-element system in the oven: a bottom element for baking, a rear element for convection, and an “instant heat” radiant broiling element under glass (inset below), creating a fast-heating, flush oven ceiling that makes cleaning easier. For serious cooks with a nostalgic bent, Elmira Stove Works offers a dual-fuel option in a distinctively retro package (left).



Gas on Glass

The new *Arrow Series* ceramic-glass gas cooktop, also from Caldera, is the first to combine digital touch controls with gas burners. The cutting-edge cooktop features silent ignition (no snapping noise) and 21 precision flame settings. Three microprocessors constantly monitor the flame, temperature, and gas flow.

Wider Washer

Perhaps because I've developed a great deal of skill and artistry in stuffing my dishwasher, it hadn't occurred to me that a bigger unit would be nice. But a bigger unit is nice — Dacor's



Epicure dishwasher is 30 inches wide and claims a 40% increase in capacity over standard 24-inch models. That's worth the extra 6 inches of cabinet space. Controls are concealed along the top edge of the door, a trend also seen on other brands.



Sink Washer

A dishwasher in the sink is so logical, it's never been done before. KitchenAid's *Briva* offers selectable rinse, short wash, and standard wash cycles and has the capacity to handle an average dinner load. The unit occupies one side of a double-bowl sink, which is easily converted back to a standard sink by removing the rack and spray arm.



Kitchen Command Post

A diverse group of appliance manufacturers and technology providers calling itself the Internet Home Alliance (831/648-1001, www.internethomealliance.com) is currently looking into ways to integrate varied technologies into useful, consumer-friendly packages. One product of this collaboration, the *iCEBOX*, is a compact, flip-down unit that provides TV, DVD-CD, FM radio, and touch-screen web connectivity — functions that used to occupy separate stations in the well-equipped kitchen, if they existed at all. Both keyboard and remote control are washable. The *iCEBOX* mounts in an undercabinet position and costs \$2,300.



Sources

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www.calderacorp.com

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www.dacor.com

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Five Star

800/553-7704
www.fivestarrange.com

Heartland Appliances

800/361-1517
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iCEBOX

877/463-7637
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800/422-1230
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800/243-0000
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