

Kitchen & Bath | Countertops | by Scott Gibson



Natural Choice. Kitchen-and-bath remodelers who'd like to offer wood countertops in something other than basic maple butcher block can choose from more than 20 wood species in Craft-Art's *Wood Countertops* collection. Choices run from standards like maple, oak, and black walnut to exotics like wenge, teak (shown), zebrawood, and iroko. A range of styles is available, including end-grain counters. Shapes can be customized; sink and cooktop cutouts are made at the factory. The maker says its counters are waterproof and food-safe. Prices vary by thickness and wood species: 1½-inch-thick hickory is \$75 per square foot, for example, and 1¾-inch-thick end-grain teak is \$160 per square foot.

Craft-Art Wood Countertops, 404/352-5625, www.craft-art.com. **Circle #1**

Bug Killer. The addition of an antimicrobial treatment to *Silestone* quartz composite countertops may resonate with customers worried about mold and bacteria. According to the manufacturer, the Microban treatment is unique in the countertop market and won't wear off with use. The counters resist stains and odor but not food-borne illness, the company says. Silestone comes in dozens of colors with both gloss and matte surfaces; Sonora Gold from the River Series is shown. Prices range from \$45 to \$105 per square foot.

Cosentino, 866/268-6837, www.silestoneusa.com. **Circle #2**



Virtual Stone. Although stone endures as a popular material for kitchen and bath countertops, not everyone can afford it. If you've got clients with big ideas but small budgets, consider steering them toward Formica's high-pressure laminates, which now include two stone look-alikes, the *Etchings Finish* (shown in Perlato granite) and the *Honed Finish*. Both mimic the texture of stone, the company says, with tiny fissures, cracks, and crevices. Or, if it's the look of concrete that the homeowners want, suggest the company's *Riverwash* laminates, designed to look like cast concrete burnished by flowing water. Prices for Riverwash and stone-look laminates range from \$20 to \$25 per square foot.

Formica Corp., 800/367-6422, www.formica.com. **Circle #3**

Kitchen & Bath | Kitchen Faucets



Reaching Out. Wall-mounted pot-fillers are great for busy cooks who get tired of lugging pots of water from sink to stove. Take, for instance, Danze's *deck-mounted filler*. An articulating arm that extends 22 inches from the base makes filling up pasta pots a snap. Unlike a wall-mounted filler, this faucet is plumbed from below, so walls don't have to be ripped out for a new water supply. The design also allows installation in a kitchen island. Part of the Opulence Collection, the pot-filler costs \$500 to \$675, depending on finish.

Danze, 877/530-3344, www.danze-online.com. **Circle #4**



Touch-Free Tap. Faucets that turn on automatically when hands get close are standard fare in public restrooms. Now Kohler has introduced its first version for residential kitchens. The company says the *Wellspring Touchless* faucet uses the same technology as an autofocus camera to trigger the flow of water at just the right time. Touchless faucets are handy when your hands are full, and Kohler says they'll also appeal to homeowners who want to minimize the risk of cross-contamination from food. The Wellspring costs \$740.

Kohler Co., 800/456-4537, www.kohler.com. **Circle #5**



Blending In. Stainless steel is a key design element in many an upscale kitchen; for customers who want a faucet with the same commercial aspirations, the *Vela L* from MGS Designs may fit the bill. It's equipped with a hand-held spray head at the end of a flexible stainless steel hose; a push button controls two spray options — needle spray and aerated flow. MGS says the fitting's all-stainless-steel construction (as opposed to the stainless-plated brass of many other faucets) enhances its appearance, durability, and recyclability. The Vela L costs \$1,500 to \$1,600, depending on finish.

MGS USA, 323/908-7618, www.mgsdesigns.com. **Circle #6**