



Walnut & Silver kitchen collection from Smallbone of Devizes.

KITCHENS AND BATHS

DESIGN'S NEW FOCUS

Consumers today have a broader view of kitchens and baths than in years past. With less time for themselves, friends and family, and increased experience with spas and top hotels, they're using these two rooms of the house for much more than just their primary, utilitarian purposes.

The three most important elements are top-of-the-line performance, ecological correctness and good looks that reflect people's personal aesthetic. In the kitchen that means leaning away from stark minimalism toward a cozier mood, and in the bathroom toward more luxury. The price points may differ, but the range of products being offered that meets these needs — from sinks and tubs to flooring, lighting and fixtures — has never been so vast or interesting.

This special advertising feature is sponsored by participating advertisers. It was prepared by Michele Keith and did not involve the reporting or editing staff of The New York Times. © 2008 The New York Times

SMALLBONE OF DEVIZES
5.0 COLS 154.0AL

KITCHENS ...

The hub of the home

Scott Bromley of New York's Bromley Caldari Architects says, "All the new condos feature open-plan kitchens. This is where more and more entertaining is taking place because everyone—friends and family—wants to participate in the entire dining/entertaining experience." Some of the ways Bromley sees this being played out are large, deep sinks "to hide dirty dishes from the crowd, more

Chappell adds, "Customers are increasingly design-oriented. They're aware of the many ways to express individuality in the home and are searching for styles that correspond, especially in the kitchen." The company's extensive new range of finishes for cabinet fronts, what Chappell calls "the face of the kitchen," meets those needs. The collection includes black acrylic, aluminum, metallics, glass and the new textured, teak-wood laminate that is eco-friendly, an aspect crucial to

homework at the kitchen table whilst we prepare supper. We answer our e-mails from a laptop on the countertop. Everything in our homes has become so much less formal that this multitasking is now completely accepted."

With all this activity going on, the kitchen is one of the most significant rooms in the house—urban loft or country estate—and therefore, needs to combine luxury with practicality. This can be as discreet as having mirrored backsplashes or cabinets



Oak Kitchen from Smallbone of Devizes.

cabinets and drawers for glasses, dishes, and pots and pans, and double-duty appliances like ovens that also function as microwaves."

In step with the concept, "Poggenpohl U.S. developed two new technology-driven products," says the company's president, Ted Chappell. One is the "plug-and-play" audio-video system with the electronics of the LCD module hidden behind glass so there's no worry about dust or splashing water. The other is the company's automatic, handle-less, closing mechanism called +Motion Drive, available in all its cabinetry, kitchen and bath.

"FRIENDS AND FAMILY WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ENTIRE DINING / ENTERTAINING EXPERIENCE."

"Another trend we've noticed," Chappell continues, "is the growing number of men interested in kitchens and cuisine." The company partnered with luxury brand Porsche Design to create the Poggenpohl Porsche Design Kitchen specifically for this demographic. Featuring an aluminum titanium framework, built-in electric appliances operated with sensor keys in place of buttons, and user-friendly dialogue displays, it will be available in the U.S. this summer.



Poggenpohl +Segmento kitchen in new Teak Quartz and Teak Lava finishes. Photo © Poggenpohl

the 116-year-old firm that has always prided itself on high environmental standards.

"Multifunctional and multitask are the words I hear most," says Charlie Smallbone, chairman of Smallbone of Devizes, headquartered in England. "The trend for multifunctional kitchens is all to do with lifestyle. We cook for a dinner party with our friends in the kitchen so we can chat with them at the same time. We sit our kids down to do their

made of wood more commonly associated with fine furniture, such as black walnut and burr maple. Or it can be more obvious, such as having polished silver handles and countertops made from a slab of green tourmaline or imperial blue quartz. State-of-the-art appliances, usually on a grand scale, and advanced wine storage are "must-haves."

The company will launch its newest design, "The Soane Kitchen in Macassar Ebony," in June.



Poggenpohl and Porsche Design introduce the new P7340 kitchen. Photo © Poggenpohl

POGGENPOHL US INC
5.0 COLS 154.0AL



New 15 Union Square West development designed by Vicente Wolf. Photo: Vicente Wolf

It signals a return to ovals and convex curves as key design themes for such pieces as center islands and cupboards.

Mick de Giulio, owner and president of de Giulio Kitchen Design in Chicago, says homeowners are seeking originally and creative use of space and a holistic design for their kitchens that integrates it into the “fabric” of the house. Functionality is a given. The goal, he believes, is to make it “warm, inviting and totally you.” As opposed to thematic designs of the past—Scandinavian woods in the 80s, European country farm houses in the 90s—this new concept is “more difficult to pull off, but can be achieved by balancing modern and classical elements together with a touch of whimsy. A Chinese wedding cabinet next to contemporary cupboards is a good example.”

Kitchens are getting bigger, he says. People might not be cooking dinner every night, but they’re using kitchens for everything else. This has led to more fireplaces, overstuffed chairs and love seats, desks and televisions. Another result has been the popularity of such interesting items as the free-standing, wood-burning pizza oven. Made with traditional Italian innards, its exterior can be designed to work with nearly all décors.

Great strides have been made in the aesthetics and eco-friendliness of any number of elements, adds de Giulio: The granite used for countertops has been revisited with new finishes, including one that is polished and brushed to emulate shale. Energy-saving, long-lasting LED lighting now has a warmer glow and is getting less expensive. For that reason it is seen more frequently as accents and under the counter. “Soft” floors—linoleum that resembles wood or terrazzo—are popular, too, while tile, although considered tiring to stand on for long periods of time, is still desirable when laid out in interesting patterns.

BATHS ... Beyond spas

On the West Coast, Jeffry Weisman of San Francisco’s Fisher Weisman says the spa-like bathroom is the norm for his clients: “We’re going beyond that into an increasingly dressier mode, away from white rooms that look as though they could be hosed down, and into luxe, polished wood paneling, wallpaper—not the washable kind—dramatic lighting and fully upholstered furniture.” He adds that hardwood floors are often used for their attractive cost and durability, and that stone and tile floors are always heated.

“Bathroom remodeling is very important,” says Sheldon Malc, director of showrooms at Davis & Warshow. “The market is tightening up and houses are becoming more difficult to sell. Therefore, people are updating them and making them more comfortable by installing products that

bring the spa experience of renewal and revitalization home.” One of several products accomplishing this is the air tub invented by Bain Ultra. Made of acrylic and available in many sizes and shapes, it features small pin holes along the perimeter of the bottom. Warm air is pumped through to massage the entire body along with body oils if desired.

“THE BATHROOM IS BECOMING AN EXTENSION OF THE BEDROOM OR DRESSING AREA.”

Another product that enhances the spa experience is Kohler’s new, digitally controlled DTV II shower system with four heads and a chromatherapy ceiling that can provide a sunrise in the morning, sunny skies with clouds, and even a thunderstorm. There are also water-resistant, sound-tile speakers for the complete stereo experience.

As for appearance, Malc agrees with the move toward luxury. One splendid example is THG Paris’ Art Deco bath tub. It is wrapped in Hermès leather in the color and pattern of your choice, and can be inlaid with Lalique crystal or ebony, among other materials. Finishes complete the picture. Some popular choices in the New York Metro area? Chrome-polished and brushed nickel, platinum and matte bronze.

In Atlanta, Suzanne Kasler of Suzanne Kasler Interiors says her clients go for timeless, classic bathrooms, “a collected look unidentifiable by era.” She does this with a gamut of whites that incorporates wood and tile of different materials or textures, and mixes in furniture, such as an antique vanity and chair, a marble-topped chest or an ottoman. “Free-standing tubs and separate WCs complete with a door are among the newest must-haves,” Kasler says. “When it comes to color, I prefer to save it for powder rooms, guest baths and the accessories in kids’ baths. The latter allows the design scheme to evolve along with their changing tastes.”



Left: Custom showering that controls water, music, lights and steam (Davis & Warshow). Right: Louis the Who bath shower mixer. Photo: Lefroy Brooks

LEFROY BROOKS
5.0 COLS 154.0AL



Poggenpohl suspended vanity. Photo © Poggenpohl

“There’s a definite swing away from minimalism,” says Warren Pearl, president of Lefroy Brooks USA, “and toward authenticity and historically referenced products; warmer with softer curves.” His three top lines for the season are Louis the Who, which is whimsically 1910 French in attitude and most popular in 14k gold; transitional, 1930s Art Deco-inspired Mackintosh; and XO, labeled “the first classic of the 21st century.”

“The biggest news in the industry,” Pearl adds, “is we’re no longer just about plumbing fixtures. We’re catching up with kitchens and understanding that customers want to buy complete bathrooms, not disparate elements.” Collections that have

“...FORM AND FUNCTION, EFFICIENCY AND ELEGANCE...”

everything from doorknobs to sinks create consistency, and because everything is grouped together, customers have an easier time making their purchasing decisions. The Lefroy Brooks showroom is geared to that concept. Furnished with carpets, furniture, wallpaper and other homey touches, it suggests an elegant English home. Among items that will be brought to market soon are jewel-like glass handles and many porcelain products—toilets, sinks, accessories—in colors correct for a particular era.

“Multiple shower heads and body sprays are just the beginning. Today nearly everything people have experienced in spas can be had for the home,” says David Lyon, managing director, showrooms at Blackman. “That, plus the return to elegance, especially of the 1920s, 30s and 40s, are the two biggest trends.”

It’s easy enough to achieve such sophistication if you decorate the bath as you would other rooms in the house—as attuned to beauty as functionality. Lyon says there is an extensive range of finely crafted vanities and dressing tables, such as those of rosewood from Burg fitted with sliding drawers, shelves and makeup mirrors; artful consoles made of glass to use with free-standing basins; and glass tiles for walls and floors created in every shade from soft mother-of-pearl to bright greens and purples. Perhaps chicest of all the new accessories are THG Paris’ Bernardaud and Lalique faucet collections. The first group of handles is made of porcelain—comparable to the renowned dinnerware bearing the same name—and the second is hand-carved of crystal with the same attention to detail as that of the company’s stemware. Each is signed and paired with brass faucets in any number of finishes from 14k gold to sterling silver to nickel.

Lyon adds that people are enamored with the sensual oval- and cube-shaped, free-standing tubs made of a stone and granite composite with a polymer base. Also popular are wall-mounted shower systems with exposed valves similar to those found in European hotels.

“The bathroom is becoming an extension of the bedroom or dressing area,” says Timothy Schroeder, president of Duravit USA, “and like the kitchen, more of a living area than a purely functional one. People are using richer textures and more varied materials. It has a greater sense of space, and employs more lighting and natural wood furniture.” The company’s e-mood collection was designed with this in mind. Shelving with hidden storage, mirror, cabinet and translucent room divider are combined with lighting—such as a clarifying fluorescent for shaving and

makeup application or atmospheric LED lights in red, blue and green.

A tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes technical support is being used to develop new types of plumbing fixtures and operational systems that allow the use of bathrooms as adjunct wellness centers and health clubs. “People don’t have time to travel to a gym. And if muscles are

“...BRING THE SPA EXPERIENCE HOME.”

sore, they prefer to treat them in the privacy of their own homes,” explains Schroeder. Remote- and surface-mounted controls are able to program anything from water temperature and pressure to direction and number of air jets. A shower that quickly converts into a two-seater steam cabin is another solution. Adding to its appeal is LED chromatherapy, aromatherapy, built-in sound, multiple shower heads and massage nozzles.

As to how the German-based company addresses the environmental issue: “Green is the new black,” Schroeder says. “Environmentally sensitive products are a prerequisite, stitched into the Duravit culture for nearly 200 years now, and we do everything possible to make the smallest footprint, use recycled materials and not harm the planet.” ■

RESOURCES

DAVIS & WARSHOW

Architects & Designers Building
150 E 58th St.
(212) 688-5990
96 Spring St.
New York, NY
(212) 680-9000
www.davisandwarshow.com

LEFROY BROOKS USA

16 Crosby St.
New York, NY
(212) 226-2242
www.lefroybrooksusa.com

POGGENPOHL

Architects & Designers Building
150 E 58th St.
New York, NY
270 Park Avenue South
New York, NY
(800) 987-0553
www.poggenpohlusa.com

SMALLBONE OF DEVIZES

135 E 65th St.
New York, NY
(800) 763-0096
www.smallboneofdevizes.com

DAVIS & WARSHOW
5.0 COLS 154.0AL