

CAST POLYMER

Spring 2019

CONNECTION

What's popular in the kitchen and bath

ALSO:

- An interior designer's perspective
- The history of the association
- The long life of Al-Co

GUIDE TO
POLYCON 2019

PREDICTING TRENDS IN ANY INDUSTRY that makes products for the home can be a guessing game—what’s popular is based on regional tastes, personal preferences and today—the significant influence of HGTV and other home shows, online design sites and blogs read by people seeking design ideas.

It’s a game everyone in the surfaces or kitchen and bath product-making industry plays gladly, however, because it affects the bottom line.

To help us “play,” we turn to interior designers, design consultants and online web sites that make their living telling people “what’s hot and what’s not.” Each year, these experts give their guesses about what might be popular in the coming months.

Sometimes one source or expert directly contradicts another. More often, they agree.

Here’s a few tidbits on what’s been forecast for 2019 and beyond:

Give me more height

Several sources say one of the hot trends in kitchens these days is bigger backsplashes and accent walls. Home & Garden magazine said more full-height backsplashes will be



Looking at 2019 kitchen and bath trends

BY GENILEE SWOPE PARENTE

used, a trend backed up by Houzz articles that forecast remodeling trends for 2019. Houzz says tile is rising from the countertop to the ceiling, often behind features such as floating shelves and flanking range hoods. Elledecor.com adds that big backsplashes are also being used in smaller areas of the home such as powder rooms.

Larger background areas could be significant for companies that create them because, according to the 2019 U.S. Houzz Kitchen Trends Study, nine out of ten renovating homeowners (87%) are installing a backsplash.

That survey found that the most popular materials for these features are ceramic or porcelain tile (55%), followed by natural stone (23%).

Color me pink maybe?

Several sources said that one of the big trends in kitchen and baths today are colors that pop. For several design firms, that translates into accenting the kitchen using bright colors such as pink, burnt orange and neon green. In some cases, it means using those colors for wall accents or counter appliances, but pops are also showing up as cabinetry, in fixtures and in other areas of the kitchen or bath. Living Etc. magazine said such colors are



Designers are bringing mother nature indoors by situating outdoor patios/decks off the room and using rolling screens and other tools for separation. Designed by Sandra Gjesdahl

ALL PROJECTS PHOTOGRAPHED ARE 2018 AWARD-WINNING PROJECTS FROM THE NATIONAL KITCHEN AND BATH ASSOCIATION.

Large, curbless showers are in style. Designed by Shea Pumarejo



part of the retro movement inspired by designs of earlier years such as the 1930s and 1950s. The magazine referred to what's popular as "candy pop colors." Meanwhile, Pantone's color of the year is Living Coral, which the company describes as "an animated, life-affirming shade of orange with golden undertones." Last year's shade was ultra violet, a deep purple hue.

Keep some dark and moody

While pops of color are touted all over the web, another trend designers say is occurring throughout homes is darker walls and colors that are deeper and richer to create moods and contrast with light colors. Houzz forecasting articles predicted colors such as navy and forest green joining black as favorite paint colors, a reaction to the whites and brights that have dominated the design world the last few years. Houzz also identified a new trend in kitchen islands: the use of colors such as emerald and deep teal.

Quartz rules

For the first time since Houzz began tracking data four years ago, engineered quartz is more popular than natural stone, according to the Houzz kitchen trends study. That study shows that 48% of people renovating their home favor quartz, making it more popular than natural stone at 43%.

Meanwhile, granite has declined considerably: 40% of renovating homeowners upgrading their counters chose this material two years ago, compared with 30% who are choosing it now.



Backsplashes are reaching towards the ceilings while upper cabinets are giving way to windows or features such as cooking hoods. Designed by Kurt Hakansson

Meanwhile Décor Mag agrees the most frequently requested countertop material designers are asked for is quartz and less and less people want concrete because it is both hard to maintain and "tends to date kitchen décor."

The trend to engineered materials carries to the floor. Engineered wood, vinyl and laminate has become nearly twice as popular (40%) as natural hardwood (24%), according to the Houzz.

White wins for surfaces

Also winning in the area of countertops is white, according to Houzz' kitchen trends survey. Nearly one in three upgraded counters (31%) are done in various shades of white, which now include creams and off whites. That compares to just two years ago, when white held only 22% of the market.

White is also popular for backsplashes with 35% choosing that material compared to 20% multi-colored and 14% gray.

Meanwhile, white remains by far the top choice for remodeling kitchen cabinetry, according to Houzz' 2019 kitchen survey. It constituted 43% among choices compared to wood at 25% and gray at 11%.

Mixing it up

While white and dark colors are both part of the design buzz today, one of the trends most frequently discussed for kitchens the last few years is contrasting materials and colors such as dark cabinets mixed with warm woods and white cabinetry with dark counters and accents. Many designers refer to the "tuxedo" look (black against white) as particularly popular this year.

Tiles in new shapes

Houzz says that in kitchens, subway tiles and offset brick patterns used as backsplashes are starting to see some design fatigue. Carl Mattison Design and other interior designers have recently said the larger-format tiles in herringbone, chevron or stacked patterns, which offer some variety as well as less grout lines, are a fresh look now sought by homeowners.

Meanwhile, in the bathroom, unusual tiles such as Moroccan blue tiles are being used as the centerpiece of design efforts, sometimes starting on the floor. Then the rest of what's there in the room, including surfaces, is designed to fit the colors (e.g. warm gray, light blue-gray, charcoal, powder blue to match Moroccan designs).

Accessibility for boomers

One of the key conclusions in the 2018 U.S. Houzz Bathroom Trends Study is that boomers changing their bathrooms are

considering what they can do to make their lives easier as they age. More than a third of those surveyed said this was an immediate concern and nearly a quarter (22%) said they are planning ahead for future needs. Among those with renovations already underway, almost half said they have changed the bathroom layout. Other upgrades include installing accessibility features such as seats, low curbs, grab bars and non-slide floors in upgraded showers and bathtubs.

For the 2019 kitchen study, the numbers were even higher with over a third (37%) of boomers reporting they were considering aging needs during kitchen renovations. In that room, they are putting in better lighting, more accessible cooktops, touch free faucets and other tools.

Meanwhile, a study of people ages 51 to 69 done for Hartford insurance found that boomers are looking at a number of tools to make their lives simpler in old age such as countertops at different heights (42% of respondents) and walk-in showers with little or no threshold (47%).

To tub or not to tub

Experts seem to disagree whether bathtubs are in or out these days. Houzz's 2018 bathroom trends forecast found that 80% of homeowners were planning an upgrade of their bathtubs with soaking tubs the most popular option (69%), while many design sites tout the use of "destination" tubs today as centerpieces of design. Home & Garden says room for those tubs and the extra space needed to house them is coming from hall and bedroom closets.

At the same time, one third of those quizzed for the Houzz bathroom study said they'll remove the tub completely, while several online bloggers say boomers do not want tubs and in fact, fear that the thinner edges of some of the newer spa-like tubs create safety problems.

What happened to my cabinets?

Many sources reported in 2018 that for 2019 and beyond, a trend in kitchen design is to get rid of upper level cabinetry, as well as glass shelving. Gates Interior Design said the reason for this choice is the popularity of minimalism, and several designers mentioned that instead of upper cabinets, designers are putting in windows for extra light. Meanwhile, the functionality that used to be above the countertop is now found via the closet: more and bigger pantries are being requested for storage. Designers are also getting cleverer in creating concealed storage areas such as deep drawers on perimeters and base cabinets.

Give me Mother Nature

House Beautiful says more and more home owners today



An increasingly popular feature for luxury bathrooms are destination tubs. Designed by Raul Saldivar

want canvases influenced by Mother Nature, which means they want features such as waterfall edges on kitchen cabinetry, colors that are earth tones and accents such as stone work. Meanwhile, Houzz experts say that one trend today is to have the kitchen open to the outdoors, especially in warmer climates. Houzz predicted more decks and patios immediately available to the kitchen through collapsible doors and window walls.

Down on the farm

For several years now, contemporary design has been giving way to the farmhouse look in kitchens. According to Houzz' 2019 kitchen trends survey, transitional remains at the top (21%, down from 26% last year), while contemporary has dropped to 15% (down from 21% just two years ago) and farmhouse has risen to 14% (from 11% two years ago).

Stay tuned for more

One of the most-cited sources for predicting trends in kitchens and baths is the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show. This year's show was late in February (too late for publishing in this issue) but **Cast Polymer Connection** will follow up this summer with reports on what else is happening with consumer tastes and designer responses. Executive Editor Genilee Swope Parente asks members who attended the show to please contact her and tell her what trends you saw (gsparente@verizon.net). ■

GENILEE SWOPE PARENTE is executive editor of **Cast Polymer Connection**. Send your ideas and suggestions to gsparente@verizon.net.