

By Elizabeth Richards

SINKS & FAUCETS

Spotlight Flawless Function & Personalized Style

Kitchen sinks and faucets are showcasing organic lines, durable performance, warmer finishes and a host of stylish matching accessories.

Kitchen sinks and faucets are a functional necessity, but the aesthetic appeal of these elements cannot be overlooked. As homeowners strive to create personal and unique spaces, designers must be tuned in to the options available to create exactly the right look.

"With the popularity of the 'home chef,' kitchens are not just a central gathering place for family and friends, but are trending toward chef-inspired luxury," says Lou Rohl, CEO and managing partner of ROHL, LLC in Irvine, CA. As such, spaces are filled with luxurious amenities, from top-of-the-line appliances and large prep islands to commercial-grade sinks and faucets, all of which create a space that can handle elaborate meal preparation without sacrificing style, he says.

"Livable design" is a leading trend in kitchens, according to Tim Maicher, director of marketing for German-based BLANCO, which has U.S. headquarters in Lumberton, NJ. This design style is transitional in feel, he says, but has organic lines that are naturally inspired and offer durability and easy-to-clean performance. "It's not enough to walk the line between traditional and modern. Today's styles must also be performance driven – they need to save water, last longer, be easy to use and easy to clean. They also need to offer organic lines – gently sloping and easy to match with today's surfaces, cabinetry and flooring. Even modern cabinetry is reliant on nature's palettes and textures, so the fixtures must match," he says.

The style of kitchen sinks and faucets selected varies greatly depending on the personal taste of each client. However, across the board, homeowners are looking for clean lines and efficient use of space, high functionality, accessories that customize their experience and the freedom to make a design statement all their own. So say manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.

PERSONAL SPACE

Designers aren't creating spaces to blend in with the crowd. Instead, their clients are demanding elements, including sinks and faucets, which reflect their own personal style. To achieve this, manufacturers must offer a wide variety of options to suit many different preferences.

"We're seeing that consumers ultimately want to better express their personal style, which means they're in need of even more design choices when selecting products for the kitchen," says Andrea Conroy, senior director of marketing, wholesale, for North Olmsted, OH-based Moen, Inc. "Increased options allow them to find just the right solution," she says.

"Most people use their kitchen sink and faucet between 10-30 times a day. That's probably more than any other appliance in their kitchen," says Rohl. "Because of the variety of styles, finishes and colors that are available in the market, consumers now have the ability to truly customize their water appliance based on their needs."

This current trend of customization includes the use of multiple finishes in a space, a mixing and matching of styles, and a push to achieve a more "historically relevant period look," says Jonathan Wood, v.p./sales and marketing for Brasstech, Inc. in Santa Ana, CA. "There is more freedom in design and the use of materials now than we have seen in years past," he adds. "The desire to have a mix of modern convenience and period design has allowed consumers to really customize their space."

INTEGRATED ACCESSORIES

Design that caters to individual needs is prevalent right now, and the accessories homeowners choose directly correlates to how they will use the sink/faucet area, meaning it's different for each end user. Manufacturers agree that, whatever



The Dahlia Double Bowl kitchen sink from **Barclay Products** is a farmer sink handcrafted from natural marble with a sculpted relief front. A recessed front panel emphasizes the carving of the projected floral design. The double-bowl sink is 33" in length and is comprised of a 20" large bowl and an 8" small bowl. The sink is available in either Polished Egyptian Cream Marble or Polished White Thassos Marble. Circle No. 155 on Product Card

New in Onyx stainless steel PVD, the Vela D from **MGS** features a single lever mixer, and is equipped with an integrated sleek dual hand-spray offering a minimalist design. MGS has also added a matching filtered water dispenser and stainless steel soap dispenser in Onyx stainless steel PVD. Circle No. 156 on Product Card



Strom Plumbing by Sign of the Crab presents a reproduction of the original farmhouse drainboard sink. This piece includes a 5' sink with cast iron and porcelain features, with a large drainboard area on both sides. Circle No. 157 on Product Card

Graff has introduced three kitchen and bar faucet collections – Conical, Bollero and M.E. 25. In each collection the bar faucet is a smaller version of the kitchen faucet. The Bollero (shown), incorporates distinctive lines, a swivel spout and pull-down spray head. The water-saving Bollero faucets are available in Olive Bronze, Polished Chrome, Brushed Nickel and Polished Nickel. Circle No. 158 on Product Card





The Metropole Collection by **Newport Brass** now includes kitchen faucets that feature the octagonal shapes and soft curves of the bath line. The line includes six products – a kitchen pull-down faucet, bar/prep faucet, wall-mount pot filler, hot and cold water dispensers, and an air gap. The kitchen faucet incorporates magnetic docking technology to hold the spray wand in place when not in use. Circle No. 159 on Product Card



Hansgrohe has incorporated multi-spray handshowers into its faucets. The Metris 2-spray HighArc and Prep, as well as the Focus 2-Spray HighArc and Prep kitchen faucets feature an extendable handshower with two jet types (laminar and needle). The faucet lines are available in Chrome or Steel Optik finishes. Shown is the Focus faucet. Circle No. 160 on Product Card



The Geo Arch is a single-lever pull-down kitchen faucet from **Kraus USA**. The faucet's two-tone design features insets in granite finish that reflect the natural beauty of stone. Circle No. 162 on Product Card



SCHOCK North America announces its new color treatment design called Vintage. Engineered with the company's high-performance material CRISTADUR, the antique look includes shimmering flecks of rose, copper and gold hues that burnish throughout the sink. Circle No. 163 on Product Card



ROHL's Allia Fireclay Round Single Bowl Bar/Food Prep Sink measures 18-1/8" in diameter and features 7-1/4" overall depth. The sink is acid, alkali and abrasion resistant, as well as stain and thermal-shock resistant. It is available in White, Matte Black and Pergame. Circle No. 161 on Product Card



accessories are selected, integrating these into the sink or faucet adds both convenience and style.

"Kitchen sinks and faucets allow for greater multitasking, intelligent use, and accessories that are both functional and efficient throughout the cooking process," says Lynn Schrage, senior channel manager for Kohler Showrooms at Kohler, Co. based in Kohler, WI. "The sink is now thought of as a multi-task work station, with new, enhanced in-sink accessories." Kohler offers a number of built-ins and add-ons that add efficiency to the station, such as stainless bottom basin racks that protect the sink's surface and add convenience to prep work, and their Reset Surface Swipe cleaning tool.

"Personalization in the sink and faucet category has created a strong demand for integrated accessories such as cutting boards, workstations, caddies and grids," says Maicher. Because everyone uses their sink area differently, the same accessories aren't called for in every kitchen. "Consumers and designers can personalize the sink area to match their needs for space, functionality and ergonomics," he says.

An integrated beverage faucet is one accessory that should be included at either the kitchen sink or bar sink, according to Conroy. Consumer research conducted by Moen shows that 38 percent of people looking to remodel their kitchens in the next 12 months have an interest in a filtered water dispenser, she says.

Rohl anticipates an increase in popularity of hot water faucets for 2015, particularly those that include an integrated tank filtration package. Adding these faucets means eliminating the need to wait for water to boil, as filtered hot water at a temperature of 190-210° F is available at a touch of the handle. "Whether you're brewing tea, preparing hot cereal or blanching vegetables, the water is ready when you need it. It's such a time saver for today's busy lives," he says.

DIVERSE SELECTIONS

The overarching desire to create unique spaces leads to a vast range of choices available in both finish and materials. While no one finish or material clearly stands out above all others, several standard options remain popular, and others are beginning to emerge as leaders.

The standard finishes, such as polished and satin nickel, are still very popular in the kitchen, says Rohl, but over the last year there has also been a resurgence and interest in warmer, gold brass tones. "We expect that to continue into 2015," he says. "When pairing these warm-toned faucets with sinks, there are more color/finish options than ever before," he remarks.

Judd Lord, senior director of industrial design for Delta Faucet Co. based in Indianapolis, IN agrees. "In faucets, we continue to see clean geometries paired with warmer finishes such as Brilliance Brushed Bronze, Cocoa Bronze, Champagne Bronze and Venetian Bronze," he says. "Brushed and polished nickels also remain strong choices, and matte black is gaining a small foothold, working as an updated alternative to wrought iron or as a contemporary statement."

Schrage adds, "Brushed stainless faucet-matched finishes continue to be a popular complement to stainless appliance selections, but oil-rubbed bronze and polished nickel finishes can make wonderful design statements at the kitchen sink."

Materials continue to focus on stainless steel and brass, says Wood. "Regarding finish, we see a continued strength in stainless steel and a resurgence in uncoated brass products that age over time," he says.

Moen is seeing brushed finishes as the most popular choices in the kitchen and bath for the first time, says Conroy. "Chrome has been king for a number of years, thanks to its versatility and durability. However, there are now a number of advancements

Lenova's Apogee kitchen sink is formed of heavy-duty 16-gauge, type 304 nickel-bearing stainless steel. The new sink features high-density sound absorption pads covered with a thick rubberized insulation layer on all bottom surfaces. The sink measures 32-1/4"x18-1/8" overall and features a depth of 9". Circle No. 164 on Product Card



Mila International's Atelier line of stainless steel sinks features a patent-pending technology that allows the sink to be mounted completely flush with the countertop, creating a seamless transition with any countertop material. A new flush-mounting option was created with these sinks. Circle No. 165 on Product Card

Brizo's new collection of articulating kitchen faucets feature a spray wand that can be easily docked and undocked, and the arm can be positioned at various heights and angles for different tasks. When the faucet is undocked, the spray wand can move around the kitchen sink. When docked, the wand stays in place with Brizo MagneDock Technology. The articulating arm is now available on the Artesso (shown) and the Solna faucets. Circle No. 169 on Product Card



SpecialtyStainless.com provides customizable stainless steel countertops and sink options. Shown here is a retro modern countertop design in custom stainless steel featuring a large built-in sink, integral drain board and marine edging. Circle No. 166 on Product Card



Danze, Inc. has added the Parma Cafe kitchen faucet to its contemporary line of kitchen products. The faucet is a tailored, compact piece designed for smaller spaces, and measures 1-3/4" in diameter, with a spout diameter at 22 mm versus 30 mm. To add to the streamlined design, Danze placed the lever higher on the faucet's base. The faucet operates at 1.75 gpm to meet water-savings and CalGreen requirements. It's available in both Chrome and Stainless Steel finishes. Circle No. 167 on Product Card



Kohler's stainless steel Prolific kitchen sink has three different work zones and five accessories, allowing each user to customize the sink. Five functional accessories fit securely on the beveled edges of the Prolific sink to allow further customization. Circle No. 168 on Product Card

Product Trend Report



Offered in stainless steel as well as fireclay, the Orchard collection of kitchen sinks from DXV by **American Standard** brings flexible installation options to today's kitchen. The stainless steel models are suitable for undercounter, flush countertop or above-counter custom installation. The fireclay version features a reversible design, with sink finished on all four sides. The fireclay sink is available in White, Oyster and Chenille Gray. Circle No. 170 on Product Card



GROHE has launched a dual-spray pull-down kitchen faucet within its Parkfield collection. Drawing design inspiration from nature, the lever of the faucet has a fluid form that is reminiscent of the shape and curves of a leaf, while the bottom of the faucet resembles the shape of water droplet, according to the company. Circle No. 172 on Product Card



The transitionally designed Notch kitchen suite from **Moen Incorporated** features a high-arc kitchen faucet and matching bar/prep model – both featuring a pull-down spout and 45-degree angled handle. The faucet features a soft diamond shape that is continuous from base to spout. The pull-down models feature Moen's Reflex system, which offers a spray wand designed to put itself away, as well as three functions. Circle No. 173 on Product Card

The Countryhaus by **Whitehaus Collection** can be used as an apron-front or above-mount sink for the kitchen. Fashioned from vitreous china, the sink is chip-, stain- and scratch-resistant, according to the firm. The sink's design features a high backsplash for additional shield when washing. Circle No. 171 on Product Card



Dornbracht's new digital control concept – Smart Water – allows the user to turn water on and off with a foot sensor, and preprogram settings so that water always turns on at the desired temperature and volume. The electronic drain opens and closes, eliminating the need to put hands in dirty water. Smart Water controls include a simple display switch and two control knobs for volume and temperature. Circle No. 174 on Product Card

available within brushed finishes that improve the overall look and experience at the sink," she says.

Sink materials are as varied as faucet finishes, and though stainless is still a top seller, other less traditional materials are up and coming.

"In the kitchen, stainless steel still has volume, but the trends now favor non-traditional alternative materials," says Lord. "Finishes are really based on personal style and the room's look, but the trends we are seeing more and more lately are textured and tempered metals, such as a clean copper, paired with marble to add a feeling of luxury and warmth."

Naomi Neilson Howard, founder/CEO, Native Trails, Inc. in San Luis Obispo, CA has seen increased demand for nickel finish sinks. "Our brushed nickel-plated hammered copper kitchen basins have maintained a disproportionate growth in comparison to other products, even with their higher price point," she says. Additionally, the firm's recently introduced NativeStone Collection of sustainably made concrete sinks seems to have struck a chord, she says. "People are loving the earthy yet fresh and clean feel of the concrete."

Durability is an important consideration in sink construction, making stainless and fireclay popular choices, manufacturers say.

"Stainless steel continues to be the most popular sink material for consumers," says Conroy. "It offers a uniform, wear-resistant finish that's durable and withstands chipping, cracking, staining or peeling."

Rohl says that fireclay sinks remain one of the most popular choices due to their extreme durability. "Authentically crafted fireclay sinks are resistant to acid, alkali and scratches, and often outlive the very spaces for which they were created," he says.

"Granite sinks are on trend as they fit the model of livable design [with granite being] organic, durable, functional and con-

temporary," adds Maicher. Top-selling colors are brown, grey/black and beige, and the fastest-growing colors include warm grey, grey/black and metallic grey, he says. "Grey is one of the fastest growing neutrals in both warm and cool tones," he adds.

ECLECTIC DESIGN

With the strong pull toward customized spaces, styles are moving toward a more transitional feel, with plenty of room for unique faucet, sink and accessory choices. Open design has also impacted the look and feel of the space.

"More relaxed and open kitchen designs require sinks and faucets that can complement any look and remain timeless in the space," says Schrage.

Open floor plans make a standout sink more desirable than ever, says Neilson Howard. "Apron front sinks are in high demand, as they can be the focal point of a kitchen," she says. She adds that transitional designs that marry modern and traditional elements continue to grow in demand. "Textural materials are also quite popular, meeting the elemental human need to touch and feel what is around them. Hammered copper, with its distinctive texture, has a very tactile draw and works well in a transitional setting," she says.

Designers are also streamlining the space, and working to create a clean, seamless feel, Lord says. As a result, he is seeing more single-basin sinks, which offer a cleaner look. He adds that homeowners are also finding ways to increase spatial efficiency while still touting high design.

"Open kitchen designs have called for chef-inspired faucet designs that are lower in height and more transitional in design," says Maicher. Matching fixtures, such as bar faucets and accessories, are also in demand, he says. "Many kitchens are featuring multiple stations or prep areas and sinks. A two-sink kitchen may have a prep faucet and a super single. Both require matching fixtures and accessories," he says.



The Galley has a new collection of Ideal Workstations that feature models available in various sizes, ranging all the way from 2' to 7' lengths. All models include a fabricated one-piece 10" deep, double-tier single bowl stainless steel kitchen sink with a custom "Angel" finish and a complimentary Culinary Kit, which includes accessories such as colanders, mixing bowls with lids, cutting boards and drain racks. Circle No. 175 on Product Card



The Wave Front sink from **Stone Forest** has the pattern of flowing water on its apron-front. Carved in both Carrara Marble and Honed Basalt, the sink is suitable for indoor or outdoor use. Circle No. 176 on Product Card



Featuring a sleek design, the Trinsic kitchen faucet from **Delta Faucet Co.** now features Touch2O Technology. The touch-activated faucet turns on and off with a touch on the spout or handle, and features an automatic water flow shut-off after one minute. ADA compliant, the faucet features Delta's Diamond Seal technology and Magnetite Docking for the pull-out. Circle No. 178 on Product Card

InSinkErator showcases the All-in-One kitchen tap. Italian-designed, the 3N1 All-in-One kitchen faucet combines a contemporary mixer tap with a steaming hot water dispenser to provide unfiltered cold and hot water, or filtered, 208 degree F near-boiling water. Finishes for the tap include chrome and brushed steel. Circle No. 177 on Product Card



The Farmhouse Series of hand-hammered copper kitchen basins from **Native Trails** are forged from premium 16-gauge recycled copper. The five basins showcase an apron-front farm design, are available in a single or double basin and range in sizes from 25" to 40". The sinks are fashioned from salvaged electrical wire and copper tubing and handcrafted by local artisans. Shown is the Farmhouse Duet Pro double-bowl farmhouse sink. Circle No. 179 on Product Card

