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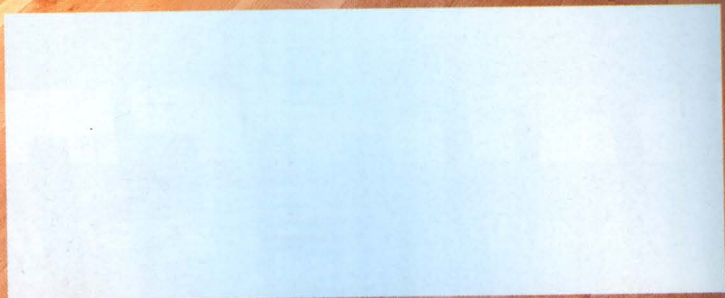
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL KITCHEN + BATH ASSOCIATION



2017 NKBA DESIGN AWARDS

KITCHEN & BATH TRENDS
KBIS PRODUCTS PREVIEW
SOAKING TUBS

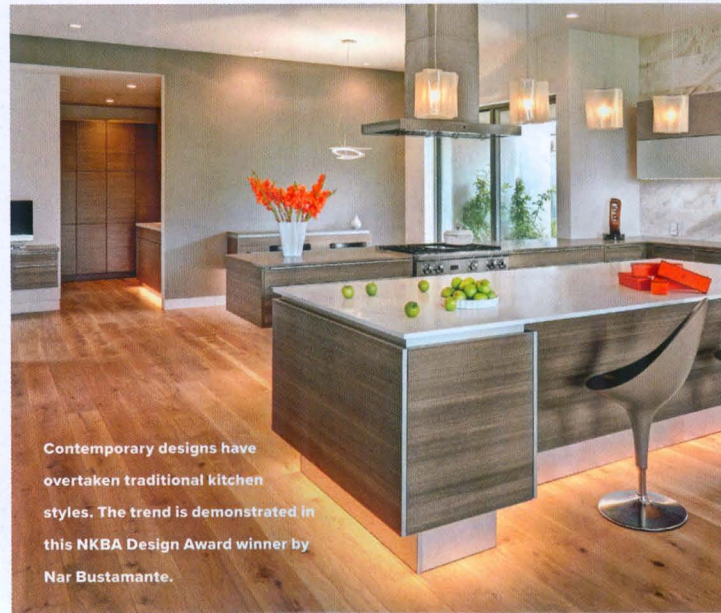
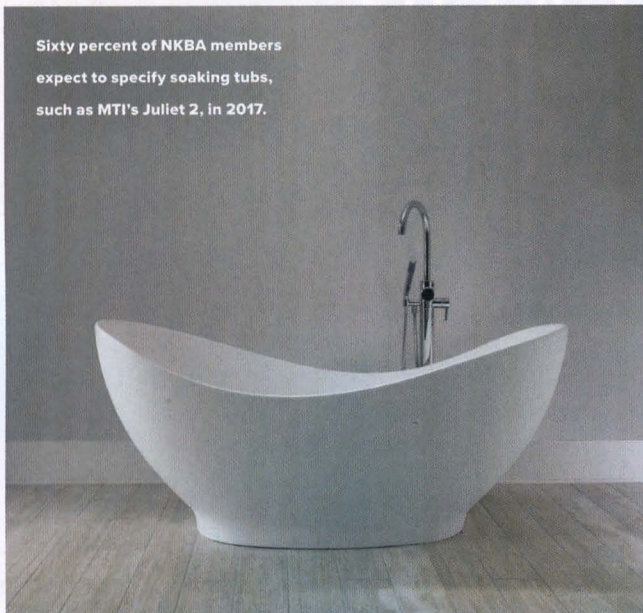
JANUARY + FEBRUARY 2017 / WWW.NKBA.ORG



Quartz, such as Caesarstone's new Georgian Bluffs, is popular with consumers.



Sixty percent of NKBA members expect to specify soaking tubs, such as MTI's Juliet 2, in 2017.



Contemporary designs have overtaken traditional kitchen styles. The trend is demonstrated in this NKBA Design Award winner by Nar Bustamante.

TASTE TEST

NKBA members weigh in on what's in—and what's out—for today's kitchens and baths

BY KATY TOMASULO & NORA DEPALMA

Soaking tubs? Hot. Granite? On the decline. Mix-and-match colors? Totally 2017. Overwrought decoration? Forget about it.

Each year, as every designer knows, consumer tastes and preferences shift. Material choices ebb and flow, color trends fade, technology emerges. And each year, NKBA keeps its finger squarely on that pulse, conducting an in-depth survey of its members to understand what's happening in the kitchen and bath industry. This annual examination reveals a true snapshot of the consumer psyche, providing an intimate look into the design styles, features, and products that are shaping the remodeling and new construction markets.

This year's study, conducted online in August and September, surveyed 562 NKBA members across North America, representing multiple industry segments.

Here's a look at the major trends the survey revealed:

Top 10 Kitchen Trends

1. Contemporary kitchens have overtaken traditional styles for the first time, with traditional design dropping to the third most popular style and anticipated to continue declining. Transitional designs remain the most popular. "[We're seeing] cleaner, more functional, workable space," noted one respondent. "Gone are the days of

the blinged-out, over-decorative kitchen for those who really cook."

In addition, industrial and mid-century modern styles are emerging.

2. Expect white and gray painted cabinets and color schemes to continue to dominate. Emerging cabinet styles include blue painted and high-gloss units. For overall color schemes, blue and black are moving upward.
3. There are emerging trends of mixed colors, including varying countertop materials and mixed cabinet finishes. "Exaggerated two-toned effects are popular," said one pro. "No subtle tone-on-tone combinations, [but] darks with lights and lights with darks." Several respondents mentioned blending quartz countertops with wood.
4. While wood cabinets dominate current tastes, metal cabinetry, currently a small segment of the market, appears to be growing. Metal cabinets are most frequently specified by younger and male designers.
5. Furniture-look pieces, rollouts and pullouts, and under-cabinet lighting are all popular cabinet features. Use of crown molding is declining. Also on the downswing? Built-in desks. "Simplicity, flat-panel doors, flush inset" are trending looks, noted one respondent. "Drawers are big; the bigger the better," noted another.
6. Kitchen and bath pros were very enthusiastic



PHOTO: FRED DONHAM, PHOTOGRAPHERLINK

Tubs

Still, manufacturers have decked out the simple soaker—typically 60 or so inches long with still water for a peaceful experience—in a range of styles, from elegant to artistic to ultra-contemporary. “It’s a great visual in the room,” says Witts. “It gives a great focal point under a window.”

The stark, hard lines that were the trademark of oversized soakers just a few years ago have softened, says Reyes, whose company owns the Aquatic brand. Even homeowners who favor a sleek, contemporary bathroom style complained that tubs fashioned with sharp lines are uncomfortable to soak in, he says.

“We still make the tub look contemporary,” he says, “but with a softer feel.” That includes a contour for the back, a place to rest the arms, and a shelf for the bather’s drink. Plus, Aquatic soakers once had sides as high as 24 inches, which users deemed too steep to climb over. The sides of newer models are 19 to 22 inches, Reyes says.

Witts advises builders and remodelers to choose transitional styles unless they know the prospective buyer’s preference. “It’s a nice selling feature to have in the master bathroom” that combines a separate shower with a stand-alone soaker, she says.

Stunning showpiece tubs such as Chadder & Co.’s low-tech, mosaic-encrusted clawfoot and Kohler’s high-end cast-iron models are most popular in the Northeast, South, and far West edges of the country, says Tracy Jaeger, Kohler’s director of marketing for bathing and showering products. More popular nationwide, however, are solid acrylic tubs, which have some heft but are easier to install. Bathtubs weighing 400 or more pounds are out, Witts advises. “They’re heavy to try to carry up the staircase and turn the corner,” she says. “When you get bigger, they’re very difficult to maneuver.”

And while some homeowners are opting for the no-frills tub, bathers wanting to turn the soak into a hydrotherapy experience are choosing features such as inline heaters, gentle air bubbles, swirling currents, and built-in stereo systems. Upgrading to an air bath, for example, adds a blower that creates tiny air bubbles and circulates them around the body. Aquatics’ DriftBath and MTI’s Stream Bath incorporate dozens of ports that release individual streams of water and create a gentle current in the tub. Inline water heaters save the bather from having to warm up standing water by turning the spigot back on.

Kohler’s 66-inch Sunstruck model has a heated surface, as well as VibrAcoustic, a feature that allows the bather to plug in a smartphone, tablet, or MP3 player. The music’s vibrations move the water in the tub.

“People are starting to realize how stressed we are as a culture,” says Jaeger. “Bathing gives us alone time. The bathroom is one of the only places in the home where you have alone time.” ■



TOTO

The Neorest Air Bath SE with Hydrohands features 15 individual jets with a final surge cycle for each. The rectangular tub features a cascading faucet, shoulder warmers, pillows, underwater lighting, a hand-held shower, and Hydrohands, a hydrotherapy massage system created by flowing water. totousa.com / CIRCLE 863



MTI

Part of the manufacturer’s Designer Collection, the Stream bath line features directional currents of water flow without turbulence or bubbles. The tubs contain vents and pumps to move the water toward the bather. An optional inline heater maintains the water temperature at 104 degrees. mtibaths.com / CIRCLE 864



POGGENPOHL

+STAGE is a flexible cabinet system that provides a variety of functions based on use. The company offers complete theme packages of “bar,” “office,” “breakfast,” “wardrobe,” “kitchen,” and “tea” as a design basis. Trade customers or consumers work with the company’s design team to lay out the space and to choose the products, materials, and appliances. Four freestanding units are available. poggenpohl.com / **CIRCLE 875**



KOHLER

Professionally inspired, the Tournant faucet is a reimagined classic, the company says. It features a coated hose, a removable coil for easy cleaning, and a three-function pull-down sprayhead. The faucet comes in four finishes. kohler.com / **CIRCLE 876**

MCN FAUCETS

Resembling pipes taken from an old factory or warehouse, the industrial-inspired Nature Cross Collection captures signature elements of the style, including cross handles capped with balls. Fixtures are available in a variety of configurations, including a widespread, a Roman tub set with hand-held shower, and a tub spout. mcnfaucets.com / **CIRCLE 877**



RONBOW

Stack is a new suite of vanities and side cabinets that is named for its vertical and asymmetrical appearance. Design elements include rectangular brushed nickel stainless steel legs and a contrasting American walnut platform base. The 54-inch vanity features a built-in bench and an 8-inch-tall white ceramic sink; mirror cabinets include touch-activated LEDs, two electrical outlets, and two USB ports. ronbow.com / **CIRCLE 878**