

Trends Talk

new countertops, sinks and colors accelerate transformation of kitchens

**KOHLER® Cast Iron and Stainless Steel undermount sinks lead trend,
new colors charge kitchens with emotion**

AN INTERVIEW WITH
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Q: What's the biggest trend you are witnessing in the kitchen?

ROENITZ: The use of undercounter sinks — both cast iron and stainless steel — has been steadily rising over the last five years. And that interest has coincided with an explosion in choices and some falling prices for countertop materials. So whether it's concrete, granite, marble, laminate, hardwood, or fabricated solids, we're seeing new countertop looks in the kitchen — plus undercounter sinks.

GLUCKSTEIN: We've seen several trends in countertops over the years: in the '70s, it was laminates; in the '80s it was fabricated solids; then kitchens went almost exclusively granite. Now we're seeing more marble. Marble requires a little more care, but people still want it. It offers a softer look. And marbles develop a patina that works better in a traditional kitchen than shiny granite. We're also seeing the use of soapstone counters, which feature a green-blue matte. Limestones are popular too. All these materials have a softer look — that's the current countertop trend.

Q: And what is the desired look of undercounter sinks?

GLUCKSTEIN: We use undercounter sinks almost exclusively. We don't do very many self-rimming or drop-in sinks anymore. The drop-in sinks were great when you had laminate tops, but when you are using solid surface



KOHLER **Undertone™ Trough** kitchen sink
Clairette™ pull-down spray kitchen sink faucet



KOHLER® **Verity** undercounter apron-front stainless steel kitchen sink
 KOHLER **Vinnata**™ pull-down spray kitchen sink faucet



KOHLER **Verity**™ countertop-mount stainless steel kitchen sink
 KOHLER **Essex** kitchen sink faucet



KOHLER **Swerve**™ stainless steel kitchen sink
 KOHLER **Undertone**™ Trough kitchen sink
 KOHLER **Essex** kitchen sink faucet



KOHLER **Poise**™ stainless steel kitchen sink
 KOHLER **Clairette**™ pull-down spray kitchen sink faucet

counters, there's no reason. Our clients really want to be able to wipe debris from their counters right into the sink. There are two types of undercounter sinks we use: 90 percent are completely undermount and 10 percent are apron-front.

ROENITZ: The undermount sink is functional, beautiful and very easy to install. It's also very likely to be stainless steel. Kohler Co. has been leading the stainless steel kitchen sink trend over the last few years by creating innovative shapes and styles. Kohler introduced three new substantial stainless steel sinks with very artistic design lines in 2003 — Poise, Undertone Trough and Swerve — and then followed with two more new sinks in 2004 with the Verity apron-front sink collection.

Poise is a dramatic and unique undermount sink design with geometric lines, a beveled edge and an optional mirror-finish design. The Undertone Trough sinks are slim, rectangular bar or prep sinks that can be installed virtually anywhere in the kitchen to create customized workspaces. Kohler has also introduced the Verity stainless steel sinks inspired by traditional farmhouse sinks made of cast iron and vitreous china. Verity is functional, stunning and versatile. It's available as a countertop-mount sink or as an apron-front style. Kohler has also introduced Swerve, a self-rimming, single basin sink that looks great in kitchens that have the "commercial kitchen" feel that is so popular now.

GLUCKSTEIN: We're very interested in the new Verity apron-front stainless steel sink from Kohler. Stainless is our number-one choice for both sinks and appliances. People want a professional look for their kitchen. It's a look that works in both modern and traditional kitchens. In fact, we don't use white appliances anymore; and we rarely use black. The only time we're not using stainless steel appliances is if a client is using, say, a European stove — those big cast iron ones that come in retro colors like red, blue and green.

What's happening now is that three to five years ago stainless steel appliances were priced very high. Now you can get stainless steel ovens and refrigerators across all price points. All those great details and designs from

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the high end are trickling down to the mass market. The popularity of stainless steel has also had a big impact on faucet finishes. We’re seeing greatly reduced interest in polished finishes, and instead a big trend toward brushed chrome, brushed nickel and brushed bronze. There’s even a new KOHLER® Vibrant Brazen Bronze finish. Soft, brushed finishes like these blend with stainless steel appliances and sinks and organic countertop colors.



KOHLER **Vinnata**™ pull-down spray kitchen faucet in KOHLER **Vibrant® Brazen Bronze** KOHLER **Iron/Tones**™ undercounter kitchen sinks in **Black 'n Tan**

Q: What about color trends in the kitchen?

ROENITZ: Color is coming back to the kitchen, and one way to carry color into the kitchen is with a KOHLER Cast Iron undercounter sink. KOHLER has made beautiful cast iron products since its early beginnings in the late 1800s. Popular designs include Executive Chef™, Iron/Tones and Clarity™, and Kohler just introduced the stylish Cape Dory cast iron undercounter sink with a large, deep single-basin. Cape Dory is available, in a broad array of colors from Kohler, including a new kitchen color for KOHLER Cast Iron — Thunder Grey, a neutral that’s a great alternative to stainless steel. The durable high-gloss enamel finish provides years of functional beauty. Kohler offers other neutral colors including Black Black™, Sandbar and Cashmere™ that perfectly complement the most popular granites and marbles.



KOHLER **Cape Dory**™ cast iron undercounter kitchen sink in **Thunder™ Grey** KOHLER **Clairette**™ pull-down spray kitchen faucet

Kohler has also introduced Black 'n Tan, another new color for the kitchen. Black 'n Tan is a three-dimensional intermingling of blacks, browns and tans created by a hot enameling process. All these colors perfectly complement granite, marble, metal and wood without competing with the other colors or patterns of the room.

GLUCKSTEIN: Whether it’s appliances, sinks or cabinetry, clients are becoming very conservative with color in any permanent fixture fittings. But they’re interested in being adventurous when it comes to the decorative details. So they’ll give a green light to great paint colors, wallpaper, upholstery, drapery to add a personal touch. I always recommend to my clients: stay classic with the things that are expensive to change. That’s why stainless steel appliances are so popular. They never go out of style. A can of paint is cheap, and you can always change that.

THE PULL-DOWN FAUCET TREND

What do consumers want in a kitchen faucet? Great looks and function. Among the most popular choices for KOHLER® kitchen faucets are pull-down spray models like Vinnata and Clairette. These beautiful faucets feature high-arch spouts for generous clearance and ergonomic pull-down sprays. A unique swivel joint at the end of the sprayhead easily directs the water stream with a simple turn of the wrist. Both faucets offer two spray options — stream or aerated — and come with the KOHLER MasterClean™ anti-calc sprayface to prevent calcium buildup.



KOHLER **Clarity™** undercounter Cast Iron kitchen sink in **Thunder™ Grey**
KOHLER **Clairette™** pull-down spray kitchen faucet

Q: What is the impact of color in the kitchen?

ROENITZ: Color is emotion. There's certainly a continuing trend for the commercial look in the kitchen, but there are people who want a different look, a Tuscan kitchen or an Art Deco kitchen, for example. Here at Kohler we see that color is being stimulated from cultural and geographic influences and that the use of color is becoming much more sophisticated. Color provides an opportunity for an emotional atmosphere or expression.



KOHLER **Iron/Tones™** undercounter Cast Iron kitchen sink in **Black 'n Tan**
Vinnata™ pull-down spray kitchen faucet in **Vibrant® Brazen Bronze**

A good example would be a comparison between a stainless steel sink under a dark granite countertop and, say, a KOHLER Cast Iron sink in Thunder Grey under that same granite top. The stainless steel look is cooler and more neutral; the Thunder Grey is richer, warmer and more evocative. The use of subtle colors that are near-neutrals is another very strong trend because you can build off it in a lot of different ways without competing with other colors and decorative details in the kitchen.

I think color trends in the kitchen demonstrate how much the kitchen has changed. As the kitchen increasingly becomes more of a living space, the desire to make it more comfortable and more beautiful is accelerating change. Consumers and designers are choosing from a dramatically different world of materials and palette of colors to achieve this.

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“Stainless is our number-one choice for both sinks
and appliances. People want a professional look
for their kitchen.” BRIAN GLUCKSTEIN

Q: How else is the kitchen changing?

GLUCKSTEIN: We're seeing the kitchen and the family room becoming one — that's probably one of the biggest trends in the home. The days of the kitchen being closed off from the rest of the house are gone. We don't want to live in closed off compartments. Most people are entertaining on a more casual basis and cooking has become entertainment. We're seeing seating in the kitchen: big comfy chairs in front of a kitchen fireplace. We're seeing the dining room table right in the kitchen. It's the same way bathrooms have changed from being utility spaces to becoming "livable."

ROENITZ: The kitchen has literally become the center of our homes and our lives. Whether it's day-to-day family life or weekend entertaining, it's all happening in and around the kitchen. The kitchen is becoming more flexible in both function and space. Now, more than one person is preparing different meals. The party always used to end up in the kitchen, but now it starts there.

ABOUT KOHLER CO.

Founded in 1873 and headquartered in Kohler, Wis., Kohler Co. is a world leader in products for the kitchen and bath, and one of the oldest and largest privately held companies in the United States.

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