

Kitchen & Bath

More Problem-Solving Products

by Dave Holbrook

Staggering down the aisles of a kitchen and bath industry show or through the labyrinth of an indecisive client's mind can leave your head reeling and your energies depleted. We're practically drowning in an overabundance of choices. But choices must be made, and your clients look to you for help and guidance. Enter the ever growing pile of product flyers and press releases on my shelves, floor, desk, computer, and chair. Tear this article out, add it to your own pile of product literature, and see if you can't settle at least one selection. Good luck.

Hidden Helper

Perhaps it would seem punchier if you referred to the feeble 1.6-gallon-flush toilet metrically, as a "6-lpf unit." Well, we seem to be stuck with them, and consequently the primitive "plumber's helper" has been selling hotter than ever. But there's no need to put it on display. Nope, the aptly named *Hy-daplunge* 24-gauge-steel cabinet recesses neatly and discreetly into the wall — it's 4 inches deep — and can be



painted, papered, or even paneled to match its surroundings. Optional wood-panel doors are available at extra cost. The cabinet ships for \$50.

Helber Industries
970/523-6935
www.hyda-plunge.com

New Kid on the Block

About the last thing I want to get bogged down in is plumbing fixture selection. Correct me if I'm wrong, but so-called suites all seem to look pretty much the same from one maker to the next. But find a "premium brand" line with high-quality features like solid brass castings and



ceramic disc valves, standard and popular styles and finishes, ready availability, plumber-friendly (read nonmetric) parts, and a competitive "down-to-earth" price point, and you're approaching a solution. Domestic newcomer *Danze* aims to satisfy these requirements with a line of more than 400 products for the kitchen and bath. If you've already heard of the manufacturer, you're one up on me, but it looks like nice stuff.

Danze
888/328-2383
www.danze-online.com

Refrigerator Facelift

Refrigerators aren't cheap. Just because yours has become a little frayed at the edges doesn't mean it's no good anymore. Said to be endorsed by virtually all the major appliance players, Frigo offers *panel sets and one-piece frames*, made to order for the job by make and model, in over 200 colors, stainless steel and copper, most wood species (available custom stained to match surrounding cabinets), bold graphics, and even woody camouflage for the rugged individualist. Or convert the face of the fridge to a chalkboard message center. While you're at it, spruce up the dishwasher, too — all the same options apply.

The company also offers custom 16-gauge-stainless-steel or -copper countertops on ³/₄-inch-thick particleboard substrate. The stainless steel costs \$139 (islands \$159) per linear foot; copper costs \$199 (islands \$229) per linear foot. The manufacturer says the average fridge conversion takes about 40 minutes and costs between \$400 and \$800, depending on surface type. Orders are fulfilled within 30 working days.



Frigo Design
800/836-8746
www.frigodesign.com

► Kitchen & Bath

Clip and Slide

A JLC colleague takes the position that most builders don't install their own cabinet hardware, and he may be right, but that never stopped me when I was in the field. So I'm a sucker for a high-quality set of full-extension slides (a good upgrade item, by the way). Liberty's *ball-bearing drawer slides* employ steel, not nylon, bearings for durable, quiet performance. Socket hardware makes face-frame installation simple. They're available in 75-pound single-



extension, and 100- and 150-pound full-extension models; the suggested retail price for a pair of 100-pound full-extension slides is a surprising \$6. The 3-way-adjustable Easy Clip Concealed Hinge line covers all the applications I can think of. A full-overlay, 120-degree hinge retails for 60¢ (boxes of 100 only). You order essential base plates separately, at 34¢ each. Inset, half-overlay, face-frame, pie-cut corner, glass, and 26mm minihinges, and opening swings from 95 to 165 degrees, flesh out the line. To find a nearby distributor, get in touch with the manufacturer.

Liberty Hardware
800/542-3789
www.libertyhardware.com

Lock Box

Okay, I bit. The manufacturer promotes this item as "the new home appliance." I'm going along, because you can conceal this *fire-resistant safe line* inside a standard cabinet. Features include an electronic touch-pad lock,



a fire rating of 1200°F for 30 minutes, a predrilled bottom for bolt-down security (anchor kit included), and three standard sizes: 4, 8, and 12 cubic feet, priced at \$500 to \$900. It's a great place for clients to keep your final payment secure — do you take gold bullion?

Liberty Safe
800/247-5625
www.libertysafe.com

Nature Buffs

Perhaps not yet wildly popular in the cold-climate states, outdoor showers are nonetheless springing up in backyards all over this great nation. Build your clients a nice enclosure and thread a cool-looking *S Curve*



Adjustable Showerhead onto the goose-neck arm fitting. The spray surface measures 5½ inches in diameter to give bathers a full rain-shower drenching. The head is made for existing shower conversions and costs a reasonable \$40.

Aquatek, Seneca
800/640-4139
www.aquatekinternational.com

Outward Bound

Is it an indoor-air-quality problem, or what? Kitchens are moving outdoors, too. A new line of *modular outdoor kitchen cabinetry* may have the racoons washing up at the patio sink before raiding the fridge. This handsome, high-end cabinet line is built around a PVC-based construction panel and clad in a rugged stainless-steel shell to stand up to the weather. The cabinets are also available "unclad" side and back for insertion in site-built masonry surrounds. The line includes standard and custom-size cabinets as well as grill, refriger-



ator, beer-dispenser, entertainment center, and towel-warmer (for pool-side pampering) modules. At least you won't need a vent hood, but get out your platinum-clad checkbook — did I mention "high-end"?

Danver
888/441-0537
www.danver.com

Outperforming Stone

Fred and Barney never saw this coming. *Cambria* is made of resin-bonded 93%-pure natural quartz, and its man-

Kitchen & Bath

ufacturer makes some remarkable claims. The hardness of quartz — 7 on the Mohs Hardness Scale, to a diamond's 10 — makes this composite material impervious to knife scratches, and its density and the 7% resin content eliminate the porosity of solid stone. Impenetrable by food stains or bacteria, the product is also claimed to have high heat, chip, and crack resistance, and soap-and-water-only surface maintenance. What's more, the mater-



ial, made in 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-centimeter thicknesses and 30 shades, is fabricated in both countertop slab and floor tile profiles, so clients can match coverings. My sample piece has stony heft and a highly polished, gemlike natural appearance, with real depth to the surface. The material must be cut and polished with diamond-edged tools, and thickened countertop edge profiles require special treatment. Countertop and large slab configuration is limited to your friendly neighborhood certified fabricator, few and far between at the present time, hampering availability. The installed cost is said to be from \$60 to \$75 per square foot (\$10 to \$15 per square foot for floor tiles).

Cambria

866/226-2742

www.cambriausa.com

Tough Enough

Evidently, I'm slightly out of touch with today's bathing habits, but if your project requires a shower floor



that will resist stains, burns, chemicals, and impact, you need look no further than the *Terreon Shower Pan*. Acrylic-modified polyester resin lends its bring-'em-on characteristics to two standard-size pans, 32 by 36 inches, and 36 by 36 inches, in white or bone. A ribbed bottom for added strength and a chrome-plated brass drain assembly are standard. The 36-inch-square model costs about \$800, but prices vary by distributor.

Bradley Fixtures

800/272-3539

www.bradleycorp.com

Room-Expanding Windows

You can add both space and light to a client's kitchen by installing a garden window, and the Revival Series



does it in style. These *built-to-order windows* can be customized to fit "any" existing window opening. They come fully assembled and are available in five wood species: Honduras mahogany, western red cedar, cedro (Spanish cedar), California redwood, and Philippine mahogany. The standard 16-inch projection can be expanded to 24 inches. Twenty-four standard awning and nine standard casement window styles form the line and provide the starting point for custom sizing. These high-end units are not for the faint-of-budget, however, at \$3,000 to \$8,000 for the standard sizes. That's actually cheap for a virtual room addition.

Renaissance Conservatories

800/882-4657

www.renaissance-online.com

Universal Cabinets

Addressing universal access head on, the *Bracebridge cabinet line* includes a wheelchair-accessible sink and cooktop base with "plenty" of knee room, a raised dishwasher cabinet, and a lowered island breakfast bar. The maple cabinets are available in four finishes, and the company offers over 70 hardware choices, making this a potential one-stop shopping experience. The company offers a ten-day



■ Kitchen & Bath

turnaround on all cabinet orders, including custom modifications.

HomeCrest Cabinetry
574/535-9300
www.homecrestcab.com

Cabinet Combo

Despite its presence and active role in nearly every kitchen today, the microwave oven tends to be the forgotten appliance, left to fend for itself on the countertop. The countertop is neither a practical height for access, nor a good use of precious



space. Instead, install the microwave in a *dedicated cabinet*, to the left of one of those popular tall, swing-out pantry units. (Microwaves are always hinged left.) A microwave should be installed with its interior shelf no lower than 24 inches and no higher than 48 inches above the finished floor. A conventional wall oven works well enough somewhere below that level, as they're seldom used, according to statistics. And you've still got room for a nice drawer underneath. Bingo, we've solved one

design problem. How much? Ask your local distributor.

Schrock Cabinetry
812/482-2527
www.schrock.com

Bathing the Bambinos

Some kids love baths, some kids hate 'em. But the *Thermo-masseur air bath* should entice most kids into the tub, regardless of predisposition. Air-only jets are said to eliminate potentially dangerous water circulation and suction. Automatic jet purging is intended



to eliminate the concern about bacteria lingering in the pipes. The jets can run on little or no water for hours, enabling safe and shallow fill levels (although kids should know that dry cleaning is not an effective option). The all-acrylic Thalassa Sensation tub shown has 40 jets and a 20-inch depth for advanced bathers. It costs \$1,925.

Ultra Baths
800/463-2187
www.ultrabaths.com

Stainless Forever

Design trends come and go, and the fixtures you thought were cool ten



years ago suddenly look dated. But install a *stainless-steel sinktop* with integral bowl, and the next remodel may be worked around it. The Marquis Series is produced in 16-gauge, type 304 stainless, offers an integral backsplash option, and features a raised countertop edge to prevent spill runoff. Customizing options include L-, U-, and corner-shaped formations, as well as range-top cutouts and backsplash cutaways for electrical outlets. Complementary Wall Panels, available in a quilted pattern or standard satin finish, make an excellent backdrop for a pro-style range or cooktop.

Just Manufacturing
847/678-5150
www.justsinks.com