

Kitchen & Bath | Backsplashes | by Scott Gibson



Neo-Classic. Although an embossed-tin backsplash provides an authentic period look, installation can be time-consuming. ACP has an alternative: *thermoplastic panels* that look like tin and come in more than a dozen finishes and six embossed designs. They can be cut with scissors or a utility knife, and attach with adhesive or double-sided tape. Matching corner and edge trim finishes off edges. The 18-inch-by-24-inch panels cost about \$17 each.

ACP, 800/434-3750, www.acpideas.com.

Bamboo Galore. Bamboo comes in many guises these days — flooring, cutting boards, and now backsplashes. Totally Bamboo offers 4-inch-tall *backsplashes* with or without an inlay in both flat and vertical grain patterns with a caramelized finish. The integral bullnose cap measures 1¹/₈ inches wide. The material also can be ordered in ³/₄-inch-thick 8-foot-long-by-4-inch-wide planks without a cap. Costs range from \$5 to \$10.25 per foot, depending on style.

Totally Bamboo, 818/765-9000, www.totallybamboo.com.



Stain-Free Marble. Tumbled marble is a popular material for backsplashes, but if its porous surface isn't sealed, its good looks won't last. Questech's *tumbled-marble tiles* have a factory-applied finish guaranteed to hold up for as long as the homeowner stays in the house. According to the company, the tiles repel water and stains, resist mold, and — unlike most stone tiles — never need resealing and can be maintained with ordinary household cleaners. They come in two colors — castle wheat is shown — and several sizes, and cost \$12.50 per square foot.

Questech, 802/773-1228, www.questech.com.

Kitchen & Bath | Showerheads

Squeaky Clean. We might not be in such a hurry to jump in the shower if we knew just what was in the water: Chlorine from the municipal water supply, iron oxide, hydrogen sulfide, and sediment could all be hitching a ride. The *Enviropure shower filter* strips out those contaminants and leaves water pH balanced. It comes in four models, including the hand-held shower shown (available in white or chrome); prices range from \$54 to \$67. Replacement filters cost \$20 to \$27.

Water Inc., 800/322-9283, www.waterinc.com.



Comfortable Low-Flow. Like other low-flow showerheads, Hansgrohe's *Croma 1-Jet EcoAir* uses a lot less water than the government limit of 2.5 gallons per minute. But its spray is softer and more soothing than that of its competitors, says the maker; the showerhead mixes three times as much air as water in the spray to produce a flow rate of 1.6 gallons per minute. It lists for \$26 in chrome and \$36 in brushed nickel.

Hansgrohe, 800/334-0455, www.hansgrohe-usa.com.



Doubling Up. Homeowners are clamoring for oversized showers, but sometimes space is just too tight. In such cases, the Danze *Double Head Showerhead* can be a modestly priced compromise. Each of the two pivoting spray heads has an adjustable spray pattern. The fixture mounts on a single shower arm, making installation no more complicated than that of a conventional showerhead. It costs \$120 in chrome (shown) and \$138 in brushed nickel or polished brass.

Danze, 877/530-3344, www.danze.com.

