

# ■ Kitchen & Bath

by Dave Holbrook

## SOLID SURFACING

### Chip In.

Hefty translucent acrylic chips add depth and luster to *Volcanics Collection* acrylic panels. The material is available



in eight colors and comes in 1/2-inch-thick, 30-inch-wide sheets. It costs \$60 to \$80 per square foot installed.

LG Hi-Macs, 877/853-1805, [www.lghi-macs.com](http://www.lghi-macs.com).

**No Fooling.** *Natural Selections* solid-surface vanity tops are hand-poured to evoke the rich, variegated character of wood grain or marble. So why not use the real thing? Because that's so last-millennium, dog. Besides, does your natural wood or marble offer the worry-free qualities of an acrylic composite? Not for a suggested retail price of \$500 to \$1,700 for a 25- to 97-inch-long top.

Transolid, 704/660-7660, [www.transolid.com](http://www.transolid.com).



### Bead the Bathroom.

We know you're good, but time is money, too, so put away your router and those fancy carbide bits. *Swanstone* decorative panels come in four patterns and textures and 33 colors for use in wainscot, tub surrounds, kitchen backsplashes, and other custom applications. They measure 36 by 96 inches and cost from \$590 to \$765 per panel.

Swan, 800/325-7008, [www.swanstone.com](http://www.swanstone.com).



**Earth Looks.** The large and complex aggregates used in the *Classics* line give this solid surfacing a unique look reminiscent of natural earth and stone. The acrylic and polyester resin sheets come in 30- and 36-by-145-inch sizes. Suggested installed prices range from \$90 to \$130 per linear foot.

Formica, 800/367-6422, [www.formica.com](http://www.formica.com).



### Nature Calling.

Earth tones are popular in today's kitchen and bath color schemes, which may explain why the number of available patterns and colors in the *Avonite Foundations* line of 1/2-inch-thick acrylic composite surfacing has more than doubled, to 51. The manufacturer touts the collection as competitively priced, at \$35 to \$65 per square foot installed, depending on your design and fabrication variables.

Aristech Acrylics, 800/428-6648, [www.avonitesurfaces.com](http://www.avonitesurfaces.com).



### BATHROOM VENTILATION

**Two-Stage Package.** In new construction, a bath exhaust fan may have to endure some hard knocks before its operating debut in the finished project. That's why the *WhisperFit U-Can Contractor Pack* is broken down into separate housing and motor/grille packages. The guts go in after the heathens are gone. Not only that, but the same housing fits all four motor options (50, 70, 90, and 110 cfm), which can be ordered separately, providing a little slack for indecisive clients. Price ranges by model from \$159 to \$189.

Panasonic, 866/292-7292, [www.panasonic.com/building](http://www.panasonic.com/building).



**What Fan?** Masquerading as a recessed light, this clever fan is virtually indistinguishable from nearby can fixtures. The *Model 744 Recessed Fan Light* uses a 75-watt reflector bulb, delivers 70 cfm, and operates at a quiet 2 sones. The housing is made for 2x8 ceiling joists and new-construction installation. The fixture is approved for use over bathtub and shower locations when GFCI-protected. I found it on the Web for \$85.

Broan-Nutone, 800/548-0790, [www.broan.com](http://www.broan.com).

**Put the Itty Back in Humidity.** Sick to death of hearing about mold and mildew? Do something about it: Connect the bath fan-light to an *Air King Delay Timer*. The user-adjustable device allows the light to be cut while the fan continues to run for a predetermined interval of up to 60 minutes. (The Home Ventilation Institute recommends ventilating the bathroom for at least 20 minutes following use.) By installing the \$40 switch (your markup not included), you can take user negligence out of humidity control.

Air King, 877/304-3785, [www.airkinglimited.com](http://www.airkinglimited.com).



**A Mighty Wind.** Between the steam pouring off the multihead spa shower and certain unavoidable biological assaults on freshness, bathroom air quality takes a real beating. A *Two-Port Bathroom Exhaust Kit* is just the ticket. This is no puny, rattling, squirrel-cage fan; it's a remote-mounted powerhouse that — depending on the model — pulls 167 or 243 cfm through a split-duct system. Ceiling grilles are available with or without a 50-watt halogen light option. Prices start at \$229 and go up to \$349, depending on cfm capacity and light options.

Fantech, 800/747-1762, [www.fantech.net](http://www.fantech.net).

