

Kitchen & Bath

by Susan Roush

Aging-in-place and small-space living concepts influence manufacturer's designs. In some cases, what was old is new again, but beauty and function never go out of style.

A 2017 National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) survey reported that kitchens and bathrooms dominate the remodeling market as the most popular projects. Kitchens and bathrooms, especially master baths, are also areas that get special scrutiny from

homebuyers. *Building Industry Synergy* spoke with four experts in cabinetry, appliances, fixtures, fittings and glass enclosures to learn what is trending in our area.

Marsh Furniture Company, the east coast's premier cabinet manufacturer, is



Marsh Furniture Company has a long standing partnership with Atlantic Kitchens. Atlantic Kitchens has locations in Myrtle Beach, as well as the south and north ends of the Grand Strand. This kitchen is in a Bill Clark Homes model at Belle Mer in Surfside Beach, SC.

a 111-year-old family-owned business located in High Point, NC. This makes them uniquely qualified to discuss the latest trends in cabinetry. Hands down, shaker-style cabinet doors are currently the most popular in kitchen cabinet design. Since the late 1700s, Shaker furniture has been known for its focus on form and proportion within a minimalist design. The shaker-style cabinet has a recessed panel and simple straight lines. In addition to their shaker-style cabinets, Marsh offers 20 different traditional, contemporary and transitional door styles.

Speaking to the products favored by



Ken Marsh, Director of Sales for Marsh Furniture Company.

consumers, Ken Marsh, Director of Sales, added, "With whites and grays in the spotlight, painted cabinetry is the norm and is especially strong in coastal regions." For bathrooms Ken said, "We recently introduced a vanity tower cabinet that rests on the countertop." This cabinet is ideal for storing toiletries and cosmetics within handy reach, yet neatly out of sight.

David Littlefield, VP of Sales & Marketing, explained the Marsh finishing process. "We do everything in-house. We apply a factory finish to all of our products in a pre-selected offering of colors. The finish is baked on and it's really almost impervious to anything; we



David Littlefield, VP of Sales & Marketing for Marsh Furniture Company.

have the ability to lock it in for longevity." Marsh Furniture's finishing options include paints, stains and glazes for added embellishment.

Ken and David noted other kitchen trends. Ken said, "We released a whole line of cabinetry in 2016 with roll-out trays. That line is very popular with aging-in-place-design and assisted living facilities." Soft-close doors and drawers have steadily increased in demand for all ages. Ken and David also see kitchen designers get creative with cabinetry by stacking smaller glass-front cabinets on top of standard cabinets for added customization. Ken added, "Quartz is the trending material for countertops because of the stone's predictability and patterns." David said, "We've seen backsplashes and flooring going to more textured, tactile looking materials."



This kitchen is in the Bill Clark Homes model at Tuscan Sands in Barefoot Resort.

Marsh Furniture believes that it pays to seek out a professional kitchen and bathroom designer to help with the fundamental design to ensure a functional space with the appropriate codes and practices implemented. Marsh Furniture Company has a long-standing partnership with Atlantic Kitchens in the Grand Strand area, who distributes its products with best-in-class designs and installation. Marsh also operates a lumber company in Pamplico, SC that provides their dimensional lumber. As Ken proudly pointed out, "Our cabinetry is not just made in America, but it's made in the Carolinas."

Nancy Swift, owner of Swift Appliance located in Murrells Inlet and Mount Pleasant, SC easily talked about what is new and popular in kitchen appliances. She said, "Every manufacturer is now going after the black stainless. Nancy reported that hood manufactures also came out with black stainless. She added, "They've got cool new things for ventilation options –



Nancy Swift, owner of Swift Appliance in Murrells Inlet & Mt. Pleasant, SC.

everybody has these open living spaces now so one manufacturer made a type of ventilation that goes in the ceiling so you don't have a big hood blocking your view."

Stainless steel is changing in other ways. "Whirlpool is coming out with a copper color this fall," Nancy said. Refrigerator interiors are moving away from solid white. KitchenAid has a platinum interior and Jenn-Air has a black interior. A quick look at the display ads shows that darker interiors really make the contents pop. In the coastal area, white kitchen appliances are still a popular option. Kevin Swift, manager of the Murrells Inlet store, said panel-ready appliances to match cabinetry sells well too.



Kevin Swift, general manager of the Swift Appliance Murrells Inlet store, in the showroom.

On one hand, there are 8' tall refrigerators, and on the other, there is a push for smaller appliances. Nancy said, "There's a lot of interest in small-space living so a lot more of our vendors are getting into the 24" ranges and smaller refrigerators for the compact living concept." Small living is partly driven by urban millennials, as is the appeal of the retro look for rounded refrigerators, such as the one Smeg manufacturers. Sometimes though, consumers get nostalgic for refrigerators that remind them of Grandma's kitchen, or they want to keep to a period mood befitting older architecture.

For other kitchen appliances, Nancy said Bosch just came up with a new line of dishwashers with a third rack. "I still think the Bosch dishwasher is the best bang for your buck – quiet, efficient, flush

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The Swift Appliance showroom in Murrells Inlet features many of the most up to date appliances that are popular with today's homeowners and contractors for new construction and remodeling.

front." Nancy added a tip no matter what brand dishwasher you buy: Add a rinse agent. "No modern dishwasher will work properly if you don't use a rinse aid." Thank government regulations for this. Nancy also noted that people are getting tired of all the electronics and many are going back to the laundromat gold standard - Speed Queen.

Summing up, Nancy said, "Right now the economy is good, so we're seeing a trend to go for the extras" - be it beverage centers or icemakers. Whether

a consumer is buying an entire appliance package or a single fridge, family-owned and operated Swift Appliance will try to do the best by their customers and keep educating customers so they can make the best decision.

As the owner of Brady Glass Solutions, David Brady is heavily involved in bathroom remodeling - at a rate of one or more a day! He is in prime position to observe design direction beyond the installation of beautiful glass shower doors. David said, "The shower is the heart of the bathroom. You want that 'wow' factor in



David Brady, owner of Brady Glass Solutions in Myrtle Beach.

two main areas - the kitchen and bathroom, especially the master bathroom." He continued, "The most popular trend now is definitely the seamless, frameless shower door. The barn door slider is also really becoming popular." David explained that this type of door gives the appearance of a frameless sliding door - it is a sharp looking door with a trim header set down from the top edge of the glass.



The slider is a good alternative to the swing door for smaller rooms that have a 4' or 5' shower opening, because it does not protrude into the bathroom. David added, "This type of slider shower door was created to show off nice tile work." In tile design, David noticed it has moved away from the traditional 6" x 6" square tiles. He said, "Now they're taking 12" x 24" tiles and running them in a staggered vertical pattern." Herringbone is another popular layout, and the use of tile borders and frames create visual accents. Metallic and glass tiles give a special luster to a bathroom.



Trisha Hogan has been a showroom consultant for the Myrtle Beach branch of Longley Supply Company for over 9 years.

more granite and quartz composite sinks than stainless now. They come in a variety of colors; they are scratch resistant, stain resistant, and heat resistant. If you're looking for something that's going to complement your countertop with color, that's a great way to go." Trisha continued, "People who were interested in cast iron, would be drawn to fireclay." She explained that it is a very durable,

doors, Brady Glass Solutions specializes in custom mirrors. With mirrors David said, "We're getting requests for something we did in the early 2000s where we put lights and faucets through mirrors. We have done it a great deal this year. It's tricky to do, but it's pretty cool looking."

No kitchen or bath design is complete without considering plumbing fixtures, faucets and accessories. Longley Supply Company is supplying solutions + style for everything from faucet water filtration to a walk-in tub. Trisha Hogan has been a showroom consultant long enough to see styles come and go and come back again, and she shared her observations.



Longley Supply Company recently remodeled the showroom in the Myrtle Beach branch.

In overall bathroom design, David is seeing contemporary, clean lines using grays and neutrals for the base color. He added, "People are going with sleeker finishes such as brushed nickel and chrome and higher end fittings like champagne-bronze. A lot more quartz is being used for counters, along with undermount sinks."

Besides custom glass and shower

Trisha said, "We probably sell a lot

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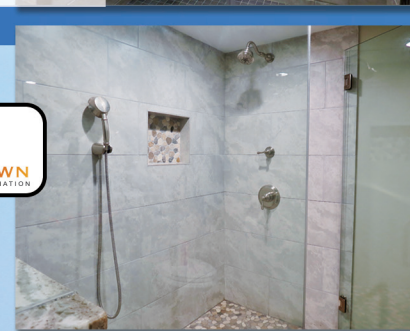
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beautiful product that comes mostly in white or linen. This material is most often associated with apron-front sinks.

For faucets Trisha reported, "Chrome for kitchen and bath is really big. I sell a lot of stainless as well, especially in kitchens with stainless appliances. I always encourage people to bring a sample of their countertop because it will tell you every time what sink and faucet to use with it." Touch and sensor faucets are big, as are spring faucets, which have a commercial-chic appearance.

In bathrooms, Trisha noted the return satin brass and polished brass. "Satin brass is really pretty and it adds warmth." Interestingly, it is the younger consumer that likes it, many of whom were unaware of the prevalence of polished brass 30 years ago. Trisha is selling many stand-alone tubs with the floor-mount faucets. Tubs come in all different designs, from claw foot to contemporary. She added, "A



The shower display in the Longley Supply Company showroom is complete with functioning shower heads so the customers can make informed decisions on what works best in their bathroom.

lot of people are not putting tubs in the master bath anymore. They are using that space for gorgeous custom showers."

Aging-in-place living calls for adaptable fixtures. Longley Supply Bath & Kitchen Company has a whole ADA section. Trisha said, "People get sticker shock from walk-in tub prices, but it's probably the equivalent of one month in a nursing home. If you can make your bathroom safe and easily accessible, you can stay in your home so much longer." Walk-in tubs come with jets, air, and even chromotherapy. Accessories have become more decorative and less institutional



The Longley Supply Company showroom in Myrtle Beach has this fully functioning faucet display.

looking.

Longley Supply Bath & Kitchen Company has a newly remodeled showroom, complete with displays of working kitchen faucets and showerheads. Trisha will gladly assist. She said, "The best part of my job is working with my clients and helping them create the image they have in their minds." ■

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