

Kitchen counters are durable yet decorative

By Barbara Mayor

AP Newsfeatures

Good performance in kitchen counters is crucial to safety, efficiency and comfort. Since you'll be living with the counter for a long time, give weight to durability as well as fashion and cost when shopping.

While no single material meets everyone's needs or decorating preferences, the best counters are sanitary, retain good looks over a long period and are easy to maintain, said kitchen designer James Kregel of St. Paul, Minn.

When pennies count, plastic laminate is usually a good choice. It is economical and available in a wide variety of colors, textures and patterns.

However, Kregel said, it is difficult

to repair, the joints are visible and moisture could eventually do damage in those joints.

The high-end customer is choosing what the trade calls solid surfacing tops — synthetics such as Corian, Surrell 2000X, Avonite and Fountainhead — which have nearly invisible seaming.

TODAY'S MOST fashionable and most expensive kitchen counters are of natural stone, especially granite. Although it is extremely durable and maintains its shine, granite imparts an unemotional, formal look, according to designer Kevin Walz of New York. And, like plastic laminates, the seams are quite visible.

He said marble is a softer, friendlier material, even though marble counters will stain and eventually lose their shine. To Walz, the signs of wear have their own beauty. If that's

not acceptable, said Kregel, some of the stain can be eliminated by using a penetrating sealer.

Granite has been limited in laminates and solid surfacing materials, so those on a lower budget can have the granite look.

Solid surfacing materials are Kregel's favorites because they are durable, easy to work with and available in a wide range of textures and colors.

They are made in a variety of synthetics. Corian, for example, is an acrylic. Avonite is a polyester and Fountainhead is a blend of acrylic and polyester.

Some have the advantage of taking a bright sheen; others offer a good surface for dough preparation and still others come with matching sinks.

Other materials to consider for countertops include butcher block and stainless steel.

"Butcher block gets softer and warmer as it ages. When ordered in

the 1 1/2-inch thickness, you can cut into it for two or three decades without getting anywhere near to pitting it," said Walz.

HE ADVISED stripping off stains with steel wool and refinishing with a nontoxic oil every year or so.

Butcher block is being used less in home kitchens, according to Kregel, because it is not considered as sanitary as other counter materials and should be carefully scoured to kill any bacteria — a problem main-

ly when cutting raw meat or chicken.

An advantage is that interesting edge treatments can be devised. While maple butcher block is the most common, other woods can be used with attractive results.

Walz is known for his imaginative use of materials in kitchens, including stainless steel as a countertop. It is durable, ideal for the high tech look and as a nonporous material, it is sanitary.

While stainless steel does show water marks and fingerprints, the

signs of use are part of an attractive patina it acquires as it ages.

Furthermore, stainless over plywood is one of the least expensive counters. It is available in most areas through commercial restaurant suppliers, said Walz.

Among materials he does not advise for counters is ceramic tile, which he said is better for backsplashes, walls and floors, where the many patterns and colors can be used to create interest, and brittleness and unevenness are not drawbacks.

Put together an efficient workshop

By Reader's Digest
For AP Newsfeatures

If you dream of an efficient, functional place to work on projects and store tools, here are some hints to help you get started on your ideal home workshop.

Planning
A workbench is the heart of a workshop. A sturdy 2 by 4 frame topped by a double layer of 1/2-inch plywood will serve as an excellent, easy-to-make workbench.

If a full-sized bench takes up more space than you have, you can build a fold-down unit. Use a solid core door for the benchtop, fasten it to a wall, using a piano hinge. Support the front edge with 2 by 4 legs attached with hinges and folding leg brackets that lock open.

For most people, the correct height for a workbench is 34 to 36 inches.

Because concrete is hard on the feet and damages tools that are dropped accidentally, cushion the workshop floor with plywood or an old carpet.

Storing Tools
Here are some tips for expanding storage space:

• A rack of the door tool rack is great for storing small tools and supplies.

• You can store tools on wall hooks or on a peg board. Paint the outline of each tool on the surface to remind you and others where to replace it.

To make a handy rack for screwdrivers and other small tools, drill a series of 1/4 to 1/2 inch holes through a 1 by 3. Mount the rack on the wall with L brackets.

A good way to organize washers and nuts is to hang them according to size on large safety pins or on wire coat hangers whose necks have been untwisted.

Jars with screw tops are ideal for storing small items such as nails, screws, nuts and bolts. You can double your shelf capacity by screwing some of the jar lids to the undersides of the shelves. Place a lock washer under the head of the screw so that the lid won't turn when you unscrew the jar. Or attach the lid with two screws.

If you need a rack to store abrasive sanding discs, cut off 1/2 to 3/4 of an aluminum pie plate and fasten it to the wall, bottom side out.

Safety Precautions

When working with any power tool use only a heavy-duty, grounded (three-prong) extension cord that is 14-gauge or larger.

To keep power tool cords out of the way as you work, hook the slack on a long spring screwed into the ceiling above your workbench.

Store discarded toxic chemicals such as solvents in a separate, sealed trash container and dispose of them properly.

Need help on a home repair or improvement project? Write Reader's Digest, P.O. Box 700, Pleasantville, NY 10570-7000.

Arbor Village
CONDOMINIUM

In the CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF CANTON

Phase V
Now Open

Arbor Village Condominium was built to provide peaceful living for many different lifestyles. Each residence is provided with a covered carport for your convenience.

Priced from \$77,900

Features include:

- Full basement
- Ceramic tile baths
- Alights
- Dishwasher, refrigerator, range
- Central air
- Fully carpeted
- Engineered hardwood
- 1st floor laundry hook-up (optional)

RANCH* and TOWNHOUSE STYLES

MODEL HOMES
Daily & Sunday 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
MODEL PHONE 397-8080

MODEL NOW OPEN

Silley Pointe
condominiums

PRIME CANTON LOCATION
With Large Natural Park

- 1 Floor, 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath Models
- 3 Floor Plans
- Private Entrances
- GE Appliances
- Cathedral Ceilings
- Carport

From \$68,500
OPEN 12-5 Daily
981-6550 (Closed Thursday)
SALES BY CENTURY 21, HARTFORD SOUTH, INC.

DESIGN, QUALITY and LOCATION!
offered to you by **KIMRON CONSTRUCTION**
in **COUNTRY RIDGE, Farmington Hills**

New KIMRON Homes available Now!!!

LUXURIOUS FEATURES are STANDARD in KIMRON HOMES

- Whirlpool Tub
- Walk-in Closet
- Wet Bar
- Wood-burning Fireplace
- Microwave
- Recessed Lighting
- Island Range
- Self-Cleaning Oven
- Ceramic Foyer
- Flooring Allowance
- And Many More!

SEE THREE BEAUTIFULLY DECORATED MODELS
Starting at \$223,500

FREE Mortgage Counseling

South off 14 MILE RD. Turn onto PINECONE, just east of Hagerty.

IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY!
Daily 1-6, Sat & Sun 1-5 (closed Thurs)
788-0350

2 Real Estate Agents
Ask for Betty or Harold

881-5700
KIMRON CONSTR.

ROCHESTER HILLS

SWING IN AND SEE HAMPTON'S NEW RANCH CONDOMINIUMS FROM \$131,900

Say goodbye to grass cutting, leaf raking, snow shoveling, exterior painting and other homeowner hassles. Say hello to Regency Park's easy living ranch condominiums with Hampton's world-class amenities. There's golf, tennis, swimming and a 10,000 square-foot clubhouse. But the real beauty won't be apparent until you've had a chance to tour our furnished models and see how you can move in this spring!

Open Daily & Weekends 12-6
Brokers invited

REGENCY PARK

852-6565

Check Us Out!

Hauser & Baum
New Homebuyer
\$20,000 cash
Offer expires 3-31-90

HAUSER & BAUM
a great opportunity that you definitely want to check out. We have a \$20,000 check with your name on it when you purchase a home in Waling Woods by March 31st, 1990.

WALING WOODS
Homes from \$130,900
Waling Woods is conveniently located in Highland Twp. on Harvey Lake Road 1 1/2 miles north of M-58. Models are open daily 1-6 p.m. and 1-5 p.m. on Sat. & Sun. Closed Thurs. Call (313) 687-5167.

Hauser & Baum
CUSTOM BUILDERS, INC.
We build custom homes on your lot or ours in Oakland, Livingston, Wayne or Macomb Counties. Come visit today & see our new plans & models.
(313) 632-7880

Enjoy The Lifestyles Dreams Are Made OfSM

The unbelievable natural beauty of Oak Pointe's 700 acres features the finest residential and recreational community in Michigan. Superior quality luxury condominiums and plush single family homes available.

Oak Pointe offers:

- Two exceptional golf courses • Honor's Course designed by Arthur Hills • Marina and beach
- Jogging-walking paths • Cross country skiing
- Furnished models • Luxury condominiums
- Single family homes • The Roadhouse restaurant

Models and Information Center Open:
Monday-Friday 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday-Sunday noon - 6:00 p.m.
Closed Thursdays

313-227-2608
Oak Pointe Sales Office

Sales by D&A Griffith Realty in Brighton
Brighton office 313-227-1016

Sales by Coughlin Homes, Inc.
Brighton office 313-227-6607

Historic Milford

NOW OPEN

from \$99,900

IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY

Financing as Low as 6%*

Picture yourself
away from the noise and traffic. Live in the peaceful village of Milford-high on a hill. Only 20-25 minutes from Farmington-Southfield area.

*6% adjustable rate mortgage to qualified buyers through GM Corp.

ALL NEW
Floor plans with 2 car garages, central air, 1st floor laundry, ultra baths, view decks, cathedral ceilings, arched windows...

ALL Standard.

Call 685-0800
or Stop By
645 Summit Ridge Drive

Ralph Roberts
Re/Max Properties, Inc.

Model Open 1-6 pm except Thursdays

Summit Ridge
Luxurious Ranches & Townhomes

NO BROTHERS WELCOME

Q·U·I·E·T·L·Y S·P·E·C·T·A·C·U·L·A·R

AMAZINGLY PRICED

Finally, there's one community with everything that makes West Bloomfield great — **SABLE POINTE**.

Come out to Sable Pointe and take a look at the best of West Bloomfield.

Models open 12-5 pm. Closed Thursdays. Located off Green Road, west of Orchard Lake Road and north of Walnut Lake Road.

SABLE POINTE: ANOTHER NORTON/COHEN ASSOCIATES DEVELOPMENT

LUXURY HOMES FROM THE LOW 200,000's

SABLE POINTE

6 8 2 0 8 0