Kitchen counters are durable yet decorative

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 shop-

ping.
While no single material meets ev-While no single material meets ev-eryone's needs or decorating prefer-ences, the best counters are sanitary, retail good looks over a long period and are easy to maintain, said kitch-on designer James Krengel of St. Paul, Minn. When pennies count, plastic lami-nate is usually a good choice. It is economical and available in a wide variety of colors, textures and pat-terns.

However, Krengel sald, it is diffi-

Phase V Now Open cult 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 Corlan, Surrell 2000X, Avonite and Foun-tainhead — which have nearly invi-

inhead — which have nearly invi-ble seaming. TODAY'S MOST fashionable and TODAY'S MOST fashlonable 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 Waiz of New York. And, like plastic laminates, the seams are quite visible. He said marble is a softer, friend-lier material, even though marble counters will stain and eventually loss their shine. To Walz, the signs of wear have their own beauty. If that's

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not acceptable, said Krengel, some of the stain can be eliminated by us-ing a penetrating sealer. Granite has been imitated in lami-rates and solid surfacing materials, so those on a lower budget can have

50 those on a new body.

Solid surfacing materials are Krengel's favorites because they are durable, casy to work with and available in a wide range of textures

and colors.

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

Fountainhead is a blend of acrylle and polyseter. Some have the advantage of taking a bright sheen; others offer a good surface for dough preparation and still others come with matching sixts.

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 ½-inch thickness, you can cut into it for two or three decades with-out getting anywhere near to pitting it," said Walz.

HE ADVISED stripping off stains

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 Krengel, because it is not considered as sanitary as other counter materials and should be carefully secured to kill any bacteria — a problem main-

An advantage is that interesting

An advantage is that interesting edge trefatinents 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 teeh look and as a nonporous material, it is sanitary. is sanitary.

While stainless steel does show water marks and fingerprints, the

signs of use are part of an attractive patinal tacquires as it ages.

Furthermore, stainless overpowed is use of the least expensive areas through commercial restaurant suppliers, said Walz.

Among materials he does not advise for counters is ceramic tile, which he said is better for back splashes, 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 Planning A workbench is the heart of a work-

By Roader's Digest For AP Newsfeatures

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

A workbench is the heart of a work-shop. A sturty 2 by 4 frame topped by a double layer of 4-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.

neign for a workbeenen 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 back of the door tool rack is great for storing small tools and supplies.

• You can store tool

great for storing small tools and supplies.

• You can store tools on wall hook 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 screwivers and other small tools, drill a series of ½ to 2 inch holes through a 1 by 3. Mount the rack on the wall with 1. brackets.

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A good way to organize washers and nuts is to hang them according to size on large safety plus 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 dually one of the jar lids to the undersides of the shelves. Place a lock washer under the head of the screw so that he lid word turn when you unscrew the jar. Or attach the lid with two screws.

screws.

If you need a rack to store abrasive sanding dises, cut off % to % of an aluminum pie plate and fasten it to the wall, bottom side out.

Feb. 28

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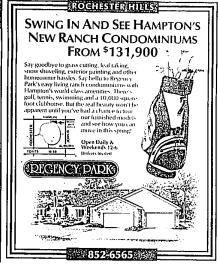
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