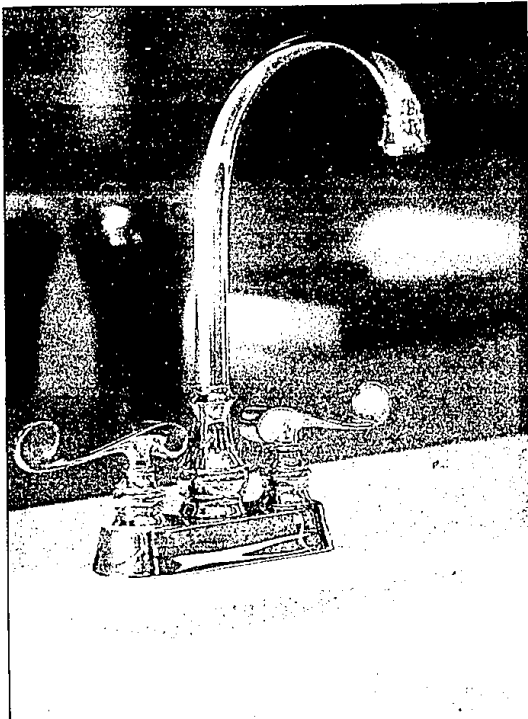
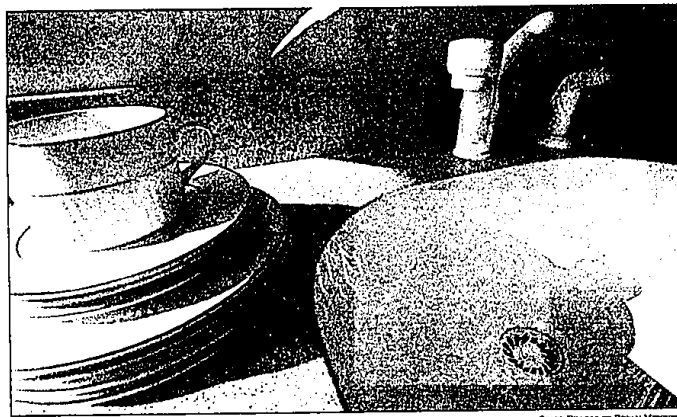


Looking good

Today's kitchen sinks combine utility and design



Looking sharp: This Corian® solid surface features an accent strip in the integrated sink. The Revival faucet is made by Kohler.



New look: This solid surface veneer countertop also features an integrated sink.

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When you first look at an integrated sink, you wonder how it is created. You might imagine workers pouring a chemical mixture into a giant mold, integrating the sink with the countertop, combining utility and beauty. It's seamless — there's no steel rim separating sink from countertop.

Customers often stop and marvel at the smooth edge and transition from countertop to sink, but what they really notice is the cleaning convenience it adds, said Mitchell Hendricks, a sales representative at New Concept Kitchen and Design in Livonia.

"You can just wipe right into it," Hendricks said of the sink. "They love it because they don't have to pick anything up and put it over the hump."

"People love the ease of cleaning," said Pat Aebersold, interior designer for kitchens and baths at KSI Kitchen and Bath Showroom in Birmingham.

Kitchen sinks have become a design feature like cabinets. Homeowners can spend anywhere from \$40 for a stainless steel sink or more than \$1,000 for a seamless sink and countertop as part of a kitchen remodeling.

Solid surface sinks are popular with homeowners who are remodeling their kitchens, Hendricks said. "Usually our customers are remodeling, so most people here just don't just replace a sink," Hendricks said. And you have a choice — you can purchase one that matches the countertop or contrasts it.

What else is hot? Stainless steel is popular, says Frank Mathison, owner of Mathison Supply in Livonia. Mathison likes Blanco. "They are more money because the stainless steel is high quality," Mathison said. Stainless steel is attractive and easy to

clean. Bacteria doesn't grow easily in stainless steel because there are no cracks or pores to start any germ growth. Mathison said the deeper sinks cost more money because a thicker grade of steel must be used during the stamping process to maintain the sink's thickness.

People also want stainless steel for the contemporary look in a kitchen that might have granite countertops. "The price of granite has dropped and there's more use of it," Mathison said.

Once ruled by Italians, the granite market now includes China and South American countries. "And in Georgia, they have an entire mountain of granite. All of a sudden, everybody wants granite. Corian® really lost its position in the market."

Richelle Lovullo, sales and design consultant at Kurtis Kitchens in Livonia, said stainless steel is popular with granite. "People also go with the cast iron or stainless steel," Lovullo said. "They need to check the steel's gauge," she said. "The lower the gauge, the better." Sinks with too thin of a gauge can be noisy and dent easily.

Customers can choose a brushed stainless steel for an elegant look or clear steel look that will reflect images back, Lovullo said.

Hendricks said Corian® and Wilsonart® offer the integrated sinks. Many also prefer stainless steel.

"Stainless steel will always be in there (in popularity), but it isn't as popular as it used to be," Hendricks said.

Cast iron sinks include a lot of nice styles, but they can chip. Solid color acrylic sinks are a less expensive alternative to the integrated countertops and work for those who only want a sink.

Self-rimming sinks are easy to install. Lighter sinks are secured with clips and screws. Enamel on steel sinks are attached with a separate steel rim, but grit can accumulate.

And you can "go deep" with sinks. "People like the 8- and 9-inch sinks, and even the 10-inch sinks. You can get the stockpots underneath them," Hendricks said.

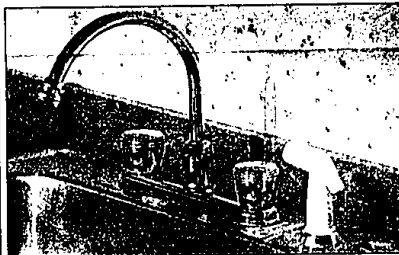
Faucets

With a new sink comes the need for a new faucet. Single-handed faucets with pull-out spouts and sprayers are popular for cleaning dishes, pans and even produce. Chrome faucet finishes are easy to wipe and clean. Waterfall and gooseneck faucets also are popular.

Aebersold said stainless steel is still very popular at her Birmingham store, along with the integrated and porcelain sinks. "Designers ask for the undermounted (stainless steel) sinks with the granite," Aebersold said. "Corian® is popular with the integrated sink."

More homeowners place the garbage disposal in the larger area. At one time, they placed it in the smaller sink, but that has changed.

"Usually the dishes stack up here," Mathison said, pointing to the larger of a double sink.



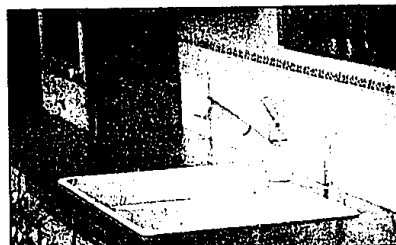
Elegant look: A stainless steel sink adds elegance to any kitchen. A gooseneck faucet by Delta adds convenience and room for filling stockpots.

son said, pointing to the larger of a double sink. "When you clean the table, all the scraps end up in the big sink, so why not put the disposer there?"

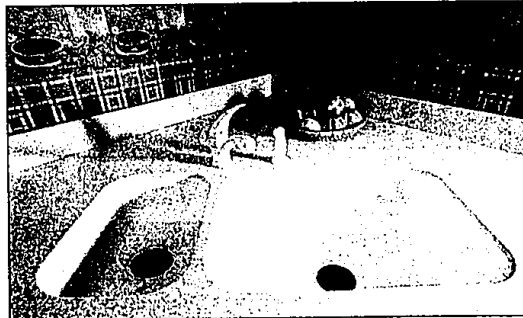
"And at one time, you would just pick up the scraps out of the drain and throw them in the garbage."

But one thing never changes with customers — they all care about cost.

"It doesn't matter whether they own a home that costs over \$1 million or a small bungalow, they always look for the price," Aebersold said.



Cast in Iron: Sinks with porcelain on cast iron cost less than integrated sinks, but they also chip. Many faucets feature pullout spouts for easier spraying.



Grand design: This Corian® solid surface integrated bowl features a Moen faucet.

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