

# Anti-Trend Defines the Latest Looks in Kitchens and Baths

## WHAT'S NEW *and* WHAT'S NEXT from KBIS 2017

by **Karen LeBlanc**

In fashion, a common faux pas is to look like a “try-hard”— someone forcing a style or persona with great effort and ill effect. The same holds true for home interiors, which explains why the latest trend in kitchen and bath style is to look like you aren't following trends at all. At Design & Construction Week 2017, comprised of the twin trade shows Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) and NAHB International Builders' Show, held in Orlando this past January, this anti-trend aesthetic had a common stylistic thread – no-show style. Think hidden toilet tanks; power outlets disguised in drawers and vanity cabinets; stealth storage and handle-less cabinetry. This disappearing act in the home is propelling new collections of products and appliances that seem to hide in plain sight.

At the show, I attended a news conference held by the National Kitchen & Bath Association's (NKBA) K+B Insiders who revealed their top trends in design, colors and products for the kitchen and bathroom. The resounding takeaway from their trend predictions is that contemporary-styled kitchens and baths continue their forward march into new construction and remodeling projects.

“Key trends for 2017 show a stronger push toward contemporary or modern styling in the kitchen. Industrial influences including raw or natural elements are also gaining traction, particularly with more readily available aged or distressed looks. Eat-in kitchens that have a more open feel to them and that allow for adaptations to homeowners' busy lifestyles will take as high of a priority as the exterior aesthetic does in deciding how to most efficiently use this space,” notes Stephanie Pierce, director of design and trends at Master-Brand Cabinets.

For design aficionados, this popularity of contemporary and transitional styles is not a news flash. What is worth noting is how kitchens and baths are embracing color and materiality to create iterations of contemporary and transitional styles that follow their own muses rather than keeping up with the proverbial Joneses. Here are five design elements defining kitchen and bath style in 2017.



### MATTE FINISHES FOR SOFTER SPACES:

Most major kitchen and bath surface companies debuted versions of matte finishes as an antidote to the glossy glare of ultra-modern kitchens lacquered wall to wall. Perhaps matte's moment is a pushback from the consumer wanting surfaces more subdued for softer, calmer spaces. Wilsonart debuted its new Ultra Matte Finish as a low-sheen option for stone looks in six new Wilsonart Laminate designs. Silestone by Cosentino launched its new Eternal Collection of quartz in seven colors available in a polished or suede finish, a soft, matte texture.



**AUTOMOTIVE-INSPIRED FINISHES:**

Taking design cues from the automotive industry, German luxury kitchen manufacturer Poggenpohl debuted new chrome-plated, high-gloss lacquers in 14 metallic shades, including the on-trend champagne gold and petrol green. These mirror-like finishes mimic paints from the automotive industry and take high-gloss lacquer to the next level. For a dose of bling in the bathroom, some designers are using metallic grout in platinum, gold, bronze or copper to complement metallic tiles.



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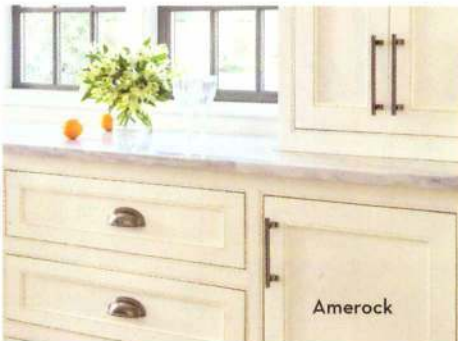


Frigidaire

### BLACK STAINLESS STEEL:

Step aside stainless steel, a darker version is the new “it” finish in kitchen appliances. Black stainless steel is showing up in the latest kitchens, from the fridge to the dishwasher. Frigidaire Gallery launched a new suite of smudge-proof black stainless steel appliances at KBIS. The eight products include refrigerators, dishwashers, wall ovens, gas ranges and over-the-range microwaves. Other standout products include Zephyr’s black stainless steel ventilation range hoods made with titanium coating, and Sharp’s black stainless steel microwave drawer in a low-profile bold design. To match this metallic darkening of kitchen appliances,

Amerock created a new gunmetal finish available in several of its new hardware collections including the farmhouse cup pulls in the Ashby line.



Amerock



Zephyr

### DESIGN IT YOUR WAY:

Circling back to this anti-trend idea of expressing personal style, any product line that provides customization is a big hit in the marketplace. Customizable products that caught my attention include Atlas Homewares new Tableau Collection of hardware that encourages the mixing and matching of two shapes, round or square, and four finishes within four different sizes for custom horizontal or vertical configurations. The collection also dovetails perfectly with the mixed metals design technique — pairing nickel with brass and gold, black and chrome, or polished chrome with champagne gold. Design experts recommend working with two or three finishes to pull off the look. Aim for one dominant finish and use smaller amounts of secondary metals to accent it.



Ruvati

For color customization in the kitchen, Ruvati debuted the Ibiza faucet that comes with three silicone sleeves that are interchangeable. Additional colors are available for purchase and include Ocean Blue, Navy Blue and Coral Pink. BlueStar appliances come in more than 750 colors and custom hues including an oven in Pantone’s 2017 Color of the Year, *Greenery*, paired with white-painted knobs. In 2017, designer color choices in kitchen products are in big demand by consumers wanting more creative freedom.



Atlas Homewares

BlueStar appliance in Pantone’s 2017 Color of the Year, *Greenery*



**TRI-TONED KITCHEN:**

White and gray continue to reign supreme in kitchen and bath color palettes; however, they are joined by a third color in some of the latest looks.

“Gray is the most popular kitchen color right now. I do like a balancing gray with soft, warmer neutrals in blue, sienna, pink and browns. Multiple colors on cabinets is a great way to achieve a polished and designer look in the kitchen. For example, painting a base cabinet in charcoal or deep navy and painting upper cabinets white or creamy tones is a favorite combination.” says Sue Wadden, director of color marketing, Sherwin-Williams.

Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. showcased its new Aspire Cabinetry collection in a modern tri-toned kitchen that paired frameless cabinets in high-gloss marine



GREG DIEGLER

Tri-toned kitchen by NKBA Member Cheryl Kees Clendenon, In Detail Interiors, Pensacola, FL

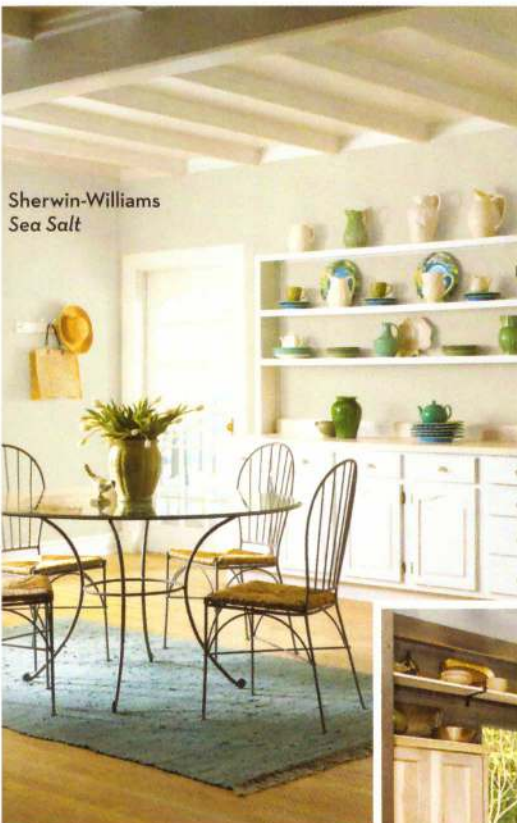
The 2017 NKBA Kitchen & Bath Design Trends Report noted some casualties in the style shift including the declining use of crown molding, vessel and pedestal sinks, whirlpool tubs and granite countertops. In their places: quartz surfaces, undermount and trough sinks, and free-standing tubs – products and materials that promote clean lines and unfussy style.

By nature, design trends start as novel ideas and once they reach critical mass, become clichés. Contemporary and transitional styles avoid being trendy if they speak to personal wants, needs and preferences. This authentic expression of style worries less about resale value and more about the quality of life in living spaces. It seems that the kitchen and bath designers are catching on and consumers are boldly breaking with conventional ideas of what constitutes “in style,” opting instead for “personal style.”

Karen LeBlanc is host of The Design Tourist series. She travels the globe attending some of the world’s premiere design events in search of the latest trends, tastemakers and unique finds. Learn more at [thedesigntourist.com](http://thedesigntourist.com).



blue, snow oak with pine graining and matte graphite gray. The Aspire collection has no visible hardware and features coplanar doors that move to the side. It’s available in 30 different colors of decorative laminate in a choice of high gloss or matte finish as well as wood grains. Other third tones joining the kitchen color mix include metal cabinets and blue- and black-toned cabinets, according to the NKBA Trend Report. Kitchens are also mixing countertop materials. Wilsonart’s *Material Mixology* design technique pairs laminate with quartz and solid surfaces.



Sherwin-Williams Sea Salt



Wellborn