



New culinary innovations and what they say about their users □ By Echo Surina

The Urbanite's Kitchen

My condo loft in downtown Phoenix is built for a man seven feet tall who spends minimal time in the kitchen. I am none of the above.

Here, the new Atenea kitchen line is specifically designed for an open area and uses white lacquer and a teak wood finish for a powerful look. Laminate is an alternative to lacquer, its more expensive sibling, because it won't crack or peel. With a cabinet prototype in hand, Cornelia Stumpf, NYLOFT advertising and public relations representative, points to seamless corners, a feature, she says, makes this European laminate superior to American contenders.

On tiptoes, I can barely reach the bottom shelf of the kitchen cupboard, and counter space is at a premium.

Even simple meal preparation results in measuring cups and vegetables sprawled across the one small strip of counter and onto a built-in kitchen table, leaving minimal room for dinnerware. Picking up food debris from the floor, I can't help but wonder—what does premium kitchen design look like in full gust?

The influx of people moving from suburban areas to residences in high-density, urban areas means a changing demographic. As lifestyles evolve, so do our needs in the kitchen. Representatives of some of the top kitchen-related companies discuss how this room has become dashingly sophisticated in its ability to meet evolving consumer needs. They share what these needs are and their new or soon-to-be-released products that rank levels above competition.

Dornbracht, an internationally acclaimed manufacturer of faucets and fittings, recently launched three new faucets. Maro, Elio and Lot are unique from the rest of the company's culinary collection, Nouvelle Cuisine, since they're not a re-interpretation of existing product for the bath. All three were specifically created for the kitchen and to be sculpturally contemporary, progressive in design and functional.

"When we look back at the history of food preparation and the rise of the kitchen, we see the evolution of fire in the cave into the multi-functional kitchen/family room/entertainment center," says Jon Spector, president of Dornbracht USA. "Dornbracht looks to change rituals and how architecture reacts to the way we use space. Unlike the bathroom, which is a place of withdrawal, the kitchen is a place of shared experiences and rituals performed together. This represents the deeper truth: our use of and ability to prepare food is simultaneously a basic and complex activity and involves social interaction."

Just as a company strives to change the way customers use a product, the reverse is true: consumers' product use and habits determine what a company sells.

Our appreciation of convenience motivates imagination and art, inducing the birth of creativity. GE will launch its Profile™ Side-by-Side Refrigerator April 2007, which will kick off several industry

firsts that extend the capabilities of kitchens and their masters. Its RapidFill water dispenser will be the fastest available on the market, emitting 0.89 gallons per minute. Also, a QuickFreeze bin can be programmed to freeze items twice as fast as its standard settings.

"As consumers get busier, they continue to seek convenience features to make their hectic lives easier," says GE spokesperson Allison Eckelkamp.

Available first quarter this year, Sub-Zero's Undercounter Beverage Center brings new refrigeration options to kitchen islands. Used to keep veggies fresh, chill bottled water or store wine (16 bottle capacity), this model serves multiple purposes. Its full-view glass door makes viewing the LCD display inside easy. A utility bin stores smaller items, and the optional door lock kit keeps contents safe from children.

"Our clients want 'the look,'" says Cornelia Stumpf, NYLOFT advertising and public relations representative, who estimates 80 percent of their customers desire open rooms that integrate entertaining areas with sitting spaces or bar tops.

All about savvy use of space, NYLOFT recently celebrated the grand opening of its downtown Phoenix showroom, debuting seven new kitchen lines. Known for its contemporary European look, the company introduces vignettes, combining popular mainstays with features that haven't hatched until now.

Newbies, like a highly advanced version of the Lazy Susan, directly respond to consumers looking for better ways to use space: a corner cabinet with stacked drawers on gliders swinging outward makes contents easily accessible, eliminating the need to fumble inside dark, hard-to-reach nooks.

"It's like Legos," Stumpf says of all kitchens that are completely customizable: materials, size of cabinetry and arrangement of drawers and cupboards; countertop composition and color; and floorplan. A commonality among all lines is functionality and the absence of clutter—hidden appliances, impossible-to-slam cabinets and, as Stumpf says, "Everything is pretty much Windex-able."



Left: Faithful to Dornbracht's modern aesthetic, the Elio faucet is sleek and noble, the neck and spout form an elegant and subtly rounded curve where they meet. It's minimalism reduced to its most basic terms.

Top right: Dornbracht's wall-mounted Lot faucet is formed by a single piece of metal. The spout conveniently rotates to aid in rinsing needs. This style is offered as a two-hole mixer or wall-mounted mixer with cover plate.

Bottom right: The planar Maro faucet by Dornbracht has a squared head capping the spout, hiding the fitting's integrated aerator. It easily reaches the entire sink because of its pivot spout, making clean-up easy. Available in polished chrome and platinum matte.



Keramos, a new kitchen line available through NYLOFT, uses a wenge wood veneer on doors and cabinetry to dress up the space. The horizontal cross grain is subtle yet bold.

Right: GE Profile™ Side-by-Side Refrigerator will offer industry firsts when it launches in April 2007: RapidFill, QuickFreeze and a sleek semi-elliptical exterior door chamfer.



Below: This recently completed kitchen in Scottsdale has Zeta-style Snaidero cabinetry with a Ferrari metallic, silver lacquer finish. Black granite counters and a cobalt blue backsplash area contribute to the room's visual impact.

Right page: Designed by Paolo Pininfarina (whose father founded the company known for its design of Ferrari cars), Snaidero's new Venus kitchen was created to evoke emotion and passion. Unforgettable for its symmetry and coral red and steel color combination, the design became available in North American markets at the end of last year.



The urbanite is a social being who has traditionally smaller digs,

a weakness for anything low-maintenance and sleek design.

A representative from Snaidero USA identifies lifestyle trends: Consumers are giving increased value to quality of life, experiences and products and their choices are increasingly decided on an emotional level. The representative says, "There is a new concept of luxury emerging today, which can be summarized with the following statement: 'I like buying things that gratify me.' In other words, luxury is seen as personal satisfaction."

"Created to evoke emotions and passions," the Snaidero Venus kitchen is designed by Paolo Pininfarina, whose father founded the company known for its evocative design of Ferrari cars. The color combination of steel and coral red makes an unforgettable visual impact. Curves in the countertop and shelf mirror one another, forming striking symmetry.

Venus targets an audience that's young, creative and design-conscious—consumers who want high-tech kitchens that express their personalities.

A new leather-effect micro fiber called microtouch covers aluminum, honeycomb panel doors and is easy to clean and more durable than its authentic inspiration. Ergonomic work surfaces lift upward for additional work space. Launched in North America at the end of last year, Venus is a kitchen unlike any of its predecessors.

The urbanite's kitchen is eager to break boundaries. It aggressively lunges forward, stretching toward the offing, beyond which lies an infinity of possibilities and future. ☒

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