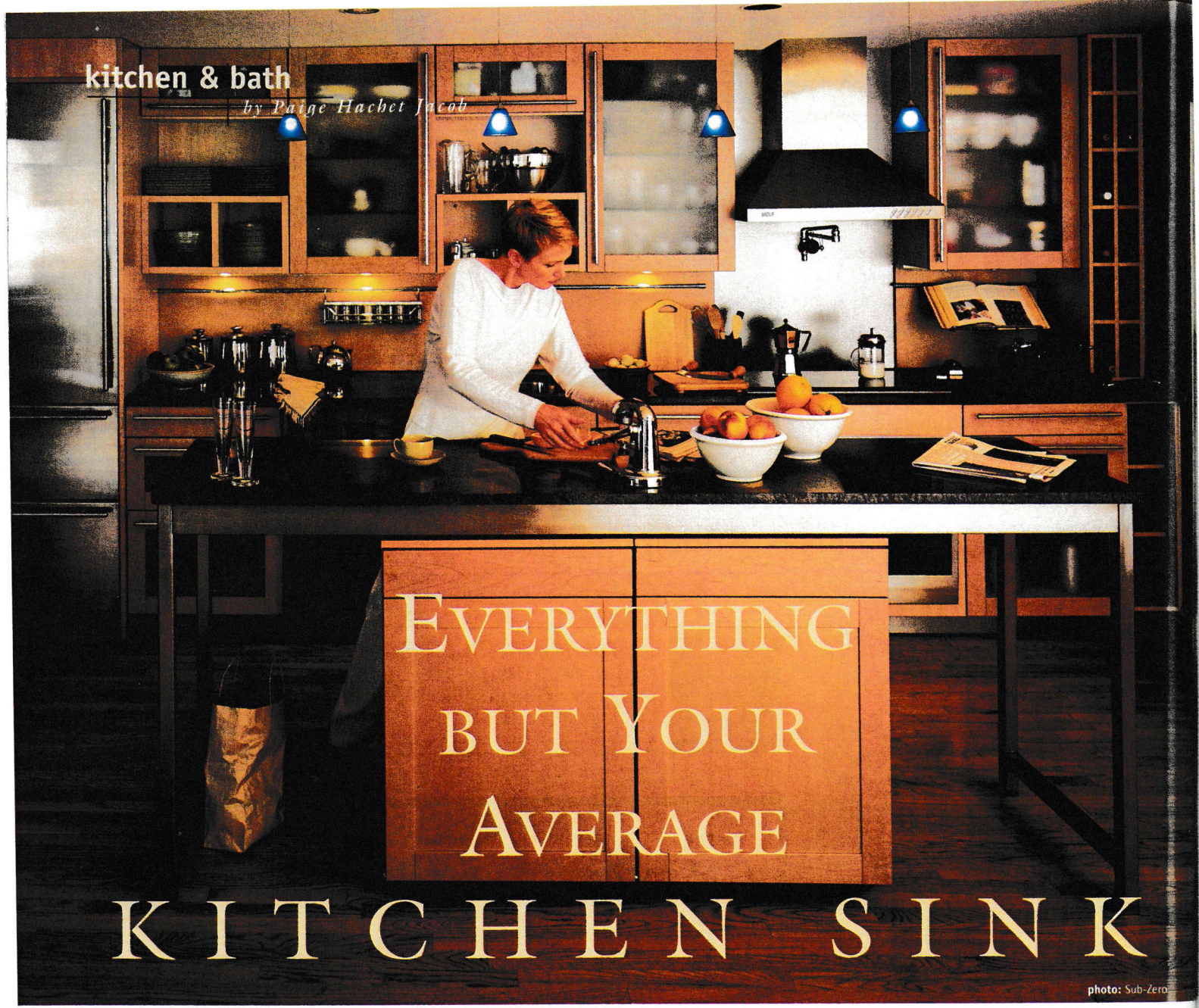


kitchen & bath

by Paige Hachet Jacob



EVERYTHING BUT YOUR AVERAGE KITCHEN SINK

photo: Sub-Zero

It's hard to imagine how anyone cooked before the microwave oven was introduced as a high-tech kitchen product. Now, just about every home has one, and most of today's busy families could not live without microwave cuisine. We look for convenience in all aspects of our lives to simplify our busy schedules—especially in the kitchen. To meet our demands, appliance manufacturers and designers are coming up with ingenious creations that combine efficiency, form and function, and truly make the kitchen the high-tech heart of the home.

User-friendly and Unique

Many consumers who hear the term “high-tech” often interpret that as delicate machinery too complicated to use. But that's not the case, according to Jennifer Moore, showroom

manager at Raleigh's Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery. “High-tech relates to efficiency, but when many people see digital controls, they are easily intimidated,” she said. “Once they see how these appliances save time and they learn the controls, they find it's almost easier to use than something like your standard oven.”

The range of designs in kitchen hardware and appliances are so varied that consumers can find a style that makes a personal statement in their homes. For instance, the latest contemporary designs from Kohler, a worldwide leader in kitchen and bath products, make the ordinary a little more astonishing.

“Our customers consistently tell us they want to see something truly innovative in stainless steel sinks,” said Andy Barber, marketing manager of kitchen products for Kohler. “The product offering in the stainless steel market today is fairly

simplistic. We wanted to radically change those more traditional looks.” The result, Barber said, is three very distinctive sinks that “combine utility and astonishing beauty.”

First, Kohler’s Undertone™ Trough Sinks have a long, rectangular shape and come in four sizes. They make great prep sinks for cleaning vegetables, bar sinks for entertaining or even separate food disposals.

Second, the Swerve™ Stainless Steel Kitchen sink offers a unique, single-basin design. The appropriately named sink has a sleek, raised curve along the basin edges and provides a considerable area to wash dishes.

Third, the Poise™ Kitchen Sinks add new life to the traditional undercounter-mount sink. Geometric lines and a beveled edge add a distinct style to the sink, while a bamboo cutting board and bottom basin

rack allow for easy food preparation and cleanup.

Cooking Two Ways

When it’s time to cook, try Wolf Appliance Co.’s dual fuel range, which offers the best of both worlds: a gas cooktop and electric oven. “The dual fuel ranges provide better cooking, but the electric oven still offers self-cleaning,” Moore said. The range’s electric oven features Wolf Appliance Co.’s exclusive dual convection system for even temperature and airflow throughout the range. Its two convection fans and four heating elements include the following modes: bake, roast, broil, convection bake, convection roast, convection broil, convection and bake stone.

Another unique feature is the oven’s all-glass, electronic control panel. When not in use, the panel can be hidden under

a sleek, clean surface. For even more ease of use, each cooking mode and temperature can be set from a single control knob.

Viking Range Corp. also introduced a dual fuel range this year. The dual fuel 48-inch-wide, sealed burner range has an electric oven that provides eight convection and conventional settings. The convection settings feature an exclusive ProFlow™ convection air baffle to evenly distribute heat. The burners have a full range of British Thermal Units (BTUs) on every exclusive, patented burner, from extremely low to a powerful high of 15,000 BTUs. And, even more appealing, the oven is also self-cleaning with the simple turn of a knob.

“Another product that is increasing in popularity is the warmer drawer,” Moore said. “It’s a drawer that’s considered an appliance, but is actually a drawer shape.



photo: Wolf's Dual Range

You can put items such as breads or plates in them to keep them warm. Many times these drawers are put underneath the oven, or built into kitchen islands, which may be ideal for people who entertain often."

KitchenAid's warming drawer, as featured in the company's PRO LINE™ appliance series, was spaciouly designed to accommodate a range of serving pans or dishes, and also has an adjustable temperature setting for more control and to maintain serving temperatures.

Keeping It Cool

The one luxury homeowners never seem to have enough of in the kitchen is space—especially where the refrigerator is concerned. "More refrigeration space is always a popular request," Moore said, and manufacturers are coming up with a unique solution for this demand. "We're beginning to see people request two refrigerators side by side, often putting a separate freezer in the garage or pantry," she added. Sub-Zero Freezer Company, Inc., a division of Sub-Zero, is making what the company calls "all refrigerators" for the kitchen. The 700TR model has an upper refrigerator cabinet with two refrigerator drawers underneath, providing over 15 cubic feet of total storage space.

The design options on these refrigerators offer an aesthetic look to match the consumer's cabinetry.

Homeowners who like to entertain outdoors will love Viking's refreshment center, the ultimate outdoor refrigeration appliance. "These centers offer the consumer accessibility, convenience and functionality with their many features," said Dave Becker, Viking vice president of product development.

The 24-inch-wide unit features a fresh ice storage bin, four stainless steel condiment bins, a speed rail on the front of the unit that holds up to five standard bottles of liquor or wine, and a high shelf for additional surface area. The 41-inch-wide unit features a cold-water sink with a professional-style faucet, a large storage space behind the sink, an insulated bottle bath within the unit to store cold beverages and a fresh ice storage bin on top of the bottle bath.

Cleaning Up

Even dishwasher manufacturers are pushing the envelope when it comes to convenience and function. There are dishwashers to suit any size kitchen that can practically load themselves. KitchenAid's Briva™ In-Sink Dishwasher is sized to fit inside a 42- or 48-inch

cabinet, and is ideal for small kitchens or even as a companion to a full-size dishwasher. There is plenty of room for up to five place settings or large pots and pans. Plus, this quiet-running dishwasher eliminates the need to bend when loading or unloading dishes, because it is installed at countertop level.

Fisher & Paykel Appliances, a company that combines ergonomics with environmentally helpful products, has released a new kind of dishwasher. The DishDrawer® is actually two dishwashers in one. It looks like two drawer cabinets and is designed to wash delicate crystal and fine glassware in one drawer on the delicate cycle, while washing grimy baking dishes, pots and pans in the other drawer on the heavy-duty cycle. By minimizing water, energy and the detergent used, it also runs more efficiently. And its sliding drawers provide easier access, improved visibility and less bending motion to open, load and close.

Take some time to browse the Internet and visit showrooms to hone in on the products and appliances that can help you create the high-tech kitchen of your dreams. You will find designs and accessories that can transform the heart of your home into a technologically sound and environmentally efficient hotspot. **WL**

