

## Much Ado About the Kitchen Sink

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A couple of weeks ago, we published an article about a universal design for kitchen sink workstations developed with Ken Kelly using a sink from BLANCO, and I realized we have yet to provide an overview of the latest and greatest options for kitchen sinks. Not so long ago, the choices for sinks were slim, and nearly everyone was satisfied with porcelain, enameled iron or stainless steel drop-ins/top-mounts. Although the above styles still remain both common and popular, several new types and models of kitchen sinks have entered the market and are making decisions tough for consumers and commercial building owners.

As our industry survey revealed last year, countertop fabricators hold a great deal of sway over their clients, so by understanding all of the options, you can stock kitchen sinks that both meet the needs of your clients and provides a solid profit margin for your business.

### Farmhouse Sinks

One popular style of kitchen sinks that has come back into the spotlight like a blast from the past is the farmhouse sink with apron front. These large, deep, tub-like sinks originated in England more than 400 years ago. They were designed to hold large amounts of water, which often had to be hauled from miles away.

Farmhouse sinks are often the focal point of a kitchen, so many clients like to make them special. Stainless steel and enameled cast iron are both materials that are common used for these sinks, but several new materials are now available, including fireclay, hammered metal, concrete composite and quartz/granite composite (as outlined above).

Fireclay – Fireclay is very similar to porcelain and it appears nearly identical to enameled cast iron. The material is made when clay is glazed and heated at about 1,600° F until the glaze fuses into the clay. This makes the material extremely hard and durable. Last year, BLANCO added new colors to its fireclay CERANA series, and the year before, Domain Industries introduced Crestwood Fireclay sinks. Rohl now offers two styles, one with a flat apron front and one with a rounded apron front.

Hammered Metal – Hammered copper and bronze are also popular materials for farmhouse sinks that are durable and eye-catching. These sinks are also beloved because each one is unique. Houzer Hammerwerks copper sinks are one example, and Native Trails also creates a fine line of copper farmhouse sinks.

Concrete Composite – Native Trails has also pioneered a new material that is garnering some attention called concrete composite and branded as NativeStone. This material combines natural jute fibers with concrete for strength and sustainability.

