



▲ An undermounted stainless steel sink makes clean up easy and creates a wet bar area in this kitchen by Karen Black-Sigler, CKD, Karen Black's Kitchens and Rooms By Design, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

BASIC ESSENTIALS

SINKS & FAUCETS

By Karen Black-Sigler, CKD,
Karen Black's Kitchens and Rooms By Design, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Sinks are an essential part to any kitchen... the single most frequently used item. Sinks come in several shapes and sizes as well as materials and colors. The three most commonly requested materials in sinks are stainless steel, cast iron with enamel

◀ The Gastro Pot Filler from KWC is a stainless steel wall mounted high capacity commercial faucet with a dual swivel spout.

coating and solid surface. There are also sinks manufactured from copper, ceramic, stone and glass as well. There are drop-in sinks, undermounted sinks and vessel sinks.

Enameled on cast iron sinks and solid surface sinks are somewhat limited in bowl size and configuration compared to the competitor stainless steel. Enameled sinks offer a vast color



▲ Delta Faucet Company introduces the Brizo Trevi™ a contemporary European design of superior craftsmanship.

selection while the offerings with solid surface sinks is more minimal. The most common obstacles for enameled sink users have been the gray scuff marks left from pots and pans and the sinks increased porosity over time. Both obstacles can be eliminated by remembering that enameled sinks are not designed to be scoured with abrasive cleansers. Abrasives act as a

▼ A rough-cut granite farm sink is enhanced with antiqued copper faucets. Design by Peter Ross Salerno, CMKBD, Peter Salerno, Inc., Wyckoff, NJ. Photography: Peter Rymwid.



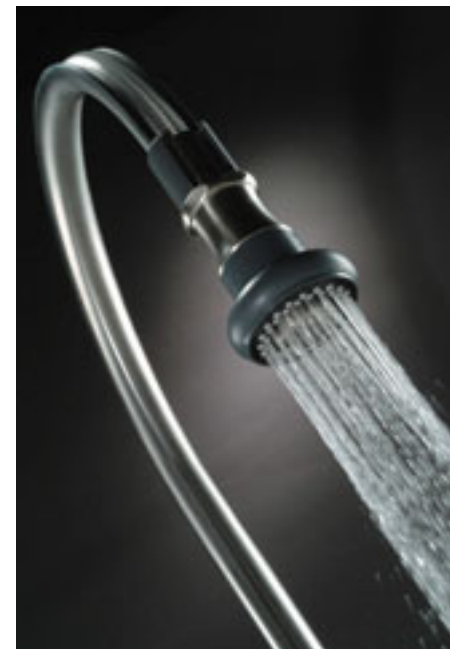
▲ The Mystic™ by Elkay is perfect for entertaining.

sanding agent that eventually wear off layers of the enameling and as a result the sink begins to stain. The key of course, is to keep all of the layers intact. Use ammonia based products to clean everyday spots and save the abrasive cleaners for really tough spots that ammonia can't conquer. Dilute your abrasive cleaner down with water before using it. You may have to

reapply the diluted cleaner 2 to 3 times to achieve the desired results. A little extra time can mean added years to the beauty and life of your enameled sink.

Remember to choose nationally recognized sink manufacturers and avoid off brands that are usually less expensive due to their limited amounts of enameling process. The well-known name brands ensure proper amounts of the coating processes. Both solid surface and stainless steel sinks can be cleaned with abrasive cleaners since

▼ Taps & More Pull-Off Spray featuring a stainless hose.





▲ *Shaws Original Series Fireclay Farmhouse sink with Country Kitchen faucet/accessory package is available from Rohl.*

both sinks are constructed of a solid material. Solid surface sinks will surface stain and stainless steel will not stain since it is not a porous material.

Enameled sinks typically are constructed of cast iron. These sinks are more thick and dense than a stainless steel sink making an enamel sink quieter. Consider undercoating and 16 to 18 gauge stainless steel sinks to help limit the noise. (The gauge refers to the thickness of the stainless steel 16 being the thicker and 20 being the thinner.)

Enameled, stainless steel and solid surface sinks are available in a drop-in style or undermount installation. Drop-ins can be used in any type of countertop. They are designed with

▼ *Rohl brings classic Edwardian styling to the kitchen with Perrin & Rowe faucetry.*



a lip completely around the sink that rests on top of the countertop. These sinks must be used when the countertop you are using is not a solid material such as plastic laminate or tile. With an enameled or solid surface sink this lip is rather thick. Stainless steel drop-in sinks have a much thinner lip allowing a different, less obtrusive installation.

Undermount sinks are literally mounted to the underneath side of the countertop. They must be used with countertops that are constructed of a solid material such as granite or solid surface. If a solid material is not used with an undermount sink you run a high risk for the underlayment getting wet and being ruined which

▼ *Franke's Magnum food preparation sink includes large deep bowls and a variety of deck and in-bowl accessories.*



could result in completely replacing countertops. If selecting an undermount sink, make sure the fabricator of the countertops is experienced in using undermount sinks. The counter cut-out should be cut exactly the same shape as the sink and if the opening is made too small compared to your bowl, a lip of countertop is created inside of the sink creating a difficult area to clean due to splatters catching and building up on the lip. Undermount sinks are usually more expensive, but they allow you to wipe debris from your counters directly into the sink without interruption.

Enamel sinks and solid surface sinks seem to become dated in a shorter amount of time than stainless steel. This is perhaps due to their color selection and their evolution in design. Stainless steel sinks seem to be timeless because of the material but be prepared for more water spots on a daily basis.

Another material choice for sinks is fireclay. "Fireclay is an inorganic material which when fired to 2500° F becomes resistant to chemical attack, making it easy to maintain; it is also protected from thermal changes, making it stable when shocked with cold or hot water; and finally is highly scratch resistant and color stable," says Louis Rohl, President, Western Division of Rohl Corp.

"Environmentally, fireclay is also recyclable," Rohl continues. "The

▼ *KWC's Swiss quality stainless steel sinks feature sound deadening pads and underside protection to help mute noise and eliminate condensation. Shown: top mount Geneva.*





▲ The urban-chic Venuto™ Kitchen Collection from Delta Brizo.



▲ Kohler's new Smart Divide features a lower profile basin divide for easier use with longer handled pots and pans.

design advantages of fireclay provide the flexibility of sinks as deep as

10-inches coupled with adjoining preparation sinks that are both wide and deep enough to contain a 10-inch dinner plate. Colors in fireclay also provide design flexibility, as White and Biscuit blend well with popular countertop materials while Black coordinates with stainless appliances or dark granite countertops," states Rohl.

Within the pages of today's kitchen design magazines you will see examples of the modern farmhouse sink—the apron front sink that we might remember from our grandmothers kitchen. This sink style evokes cozy, comfortable images of a past era. Today's farm sinks are available in durable fireclay as well as stainless steel and copper. The apron front design looks good in any style kitchen, from Tuscany to contemporary.

Vessel bowls are a newer option. They can be made of ceramic, metals, glass or even stone. Typically a single bowl, these are independent bowls that usually rest completely or partially on top of the countertop. The underside of the vessel is exposed which is part of this bowl's beauty. The vessel bowl is typically seen in bathrooms or as a secondary (bar) sink in or near the kitchen. They provide a visual interest that sinks really have not provided in

the past. It might be of interest to notice heights in which these are installed. If they are installed directly on top of a 36-inch high kitchen or vanity counter then the top of the vessel may be 6- to 8-inches higher than the countertop—not a very practical height for most people. The countertops can be lowered for these vessel bowls to accommodate a convenient height for personal use. When using a vessel bowl in the kitchen as a secondary sink you might need to give up a disposal here because many vessel bowls do not presently accommodate a standard sink strainer.

Faucet placement on vessel bowls is critical. A wall-mounted faucet is a wonderful option. This will allow you to select the exact height that is convenient for both you and the vessel. A high arc spout is also a good choice to pair with a vessel sink. Just make sure that the faucet height clears the vessel bowl easily. It's a good idea to have qualified assistance when selecting your vessel sink and faucet.

Faucets are available in an array of styles and finishes. Oil rubbed bronze is currently competing with the brushed nickel finishes that are so popular. Chrome is still available but most typically used in more contemporary installations. Antique brass is making



▲ In-Sink-Erator's (ISE) SinkTop Switch™ mounts near the sink, eliminating the need for a wall switch.



◀ Whitehaus Collection presents the Culinary Kitchen Faucet. Available in stainless steel with Blue handles.



▼ A dazzling fusion of maple cabinetry, glass and stainless steel create this curved prep area Design by Neil Cooper, CKD, Cooper-Pacific Kitchens, West Hollywood, CA. Franke prep sink. Grohe faucet. Photography: Glen Graves.

a very small comeback and shiny brass just doesn't seem to get any attention at all.

Retractable spray faucets are usually single lever faucets designed for the kitchen and are very popular. Even the traditional or "Old World" style faucet that is a current favorite today can be found with side sprays to make clean up tasks easier.

Single lever faucets with a separate spray give you more selection. The retractable spray faucet is a faucet that incorporates both the faucet head and the spray into one. The faucet head is removable from the faucet body. It pulls forward with a flex hose and offers you a spray head. It requires only one hole to be drilled into the countertop or sink deck, and only one hole to clean around.

Separate hot and cold faucets seem to hold most of their popularity in the bathroom although a secondary sink is also a wonderful location. These faucets can come with or without sprays. Typically they require at least 3 to 4 holes in the countertop or sink deck.

(Note: If you are selecting a new sink and faucet for your kitchen or bathroom, make sure that you know the inside dimension of the sink cabinet. This is the available amount of space you have to accommodate your new sink.)

Commercial-style faucets (i.e. pot fillers) are being seen in residential kitchens today. These workhorses, generally found in restaurant environments, fold back out of the way when not in use. They're used over the sink and also over the cooktop to make the task of filling pasta and stockpots easier.

C-spout faucets arc up from 9 to 12-inches and are available with pull-out sprays. These faucets make kitchen tasks, such as filling tall pots, easier and create a dramatic statement in the kitchen.

Water filtration is another popular concept for today's consumer. There are point-of-use water systems that provide clean, fresh, safe drinking water for our families. You can choose from a variety of faucet styles that feature filtration systems or a separate under

sink filtration system that will connect to a faucet.

Instant hot and chilled water are increasingly popular in both kitchens and wet bars. These faucets raise the convenience level. They're useful when making hot beverages or noodle soups. Chilled water straight from the faucet is ideal as is or when making lemonade and other refreshing drinks on a warm day.

Air switches to operate the waste disposal can be located anywhere near the sink, eliminating the need for a wall switch.

Some manufacturers offer sink side accessories for a fully coordinated look. These might include matching soap and lotion dispensers—no more sticky or slippery bottles to clutter up your sink area; colanders, drain boards and strainers baskets—until now, items we might fail to consider when selecting our sinks and faucets.

Whether its Old World charm, sleek contemporary or a traditional setting, today's availability of sinks and faucets allows you to choose from a selection that includes modern technology matched with more design characteristics than has ever been seen before. ■



Karen Black-Sigler is a Certified Kitchen Designer who holds a degree in Interior Design from the University of Oklahoma. Her work has been published in *Colonial Homes*, *House Beautiful*, and *Womans Day*, as well as the coveted front cover of *Kitchens By Professional Designers*. Karen has also been honored to serve as a judge for the prestigious NKBA Design Competition. She is owner of Karen Blacks Kitchens and Rooms By Design, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.