

Environmentally friendly options top kitchen renovations

When it comes to renovating kitchens, over half of homeowners (54%) said environmentally friendly options are top of mind and 92% of them incorporate sustainable features, Houzz found in its just-released 2023 U.S. Houzz Kitchen Trends Study. Being the heart of the home, kitchens also continue to command significant investment. The survey of more than 3,600 respondents found that after continuous growth over the past four years, median spend on minor remodels increased by 40% year over year to \$14,000 up from \$10,000 mid-2021 and up 75% compared to mid-2020 (\$8,000). Median spend on major renovations (in which at least all cabinets and appliances are replaced) of large kitchens (250 square feet or larger) remained flat year over year at \$50,000 in mid-2022.

“Homeowners are gravitating towards sustainable choices during kitchen renovations, and it is interesting to see the intersection of economics and environmental concerns. The most frequent reason behind choosing sustainable options is long-run cost effectiveness, with environmental-friendliness as a secondary consideration,” said Marine Sargsyan, Houzz staff economist. In addition, “we are seeing a significant increase in the median spend for minor remodels, when homeowners partially upgrade their cabinets or appliances, and may tackle plumbing or electrical issues.”

When it comes to sustainability, homeowners go with LED bulbs (65%), energy-efficient appliances (61%), water-efficient fixtures (34%) and energy-efficient windows (27%), the survey found. Almost half (47%) of homeowners opt for a timeless design as a sustainable choice during renovations, while the most frequently cited reason for incorporating sustainable options is “long-run cost-effectiveness” (74%), making choices that are environmentally friendly is also top of mind for more than half of renovating homeowners (54%).

From a design standpoint, open kitchens bounced back after taking a small dip in 2022, with 40% of renovating homeowners making their kitchens more open to interior spaces (up from 38% last year) and 20% are making kitchens more open to the outdoors. Eighty-four percent of homeowners hire a pro for kitchen renovations, and general

contractors remain in highest demand for kitchen remodeling (50%). For the

fourth consecutive year, many of them are hiring cabinetmakers (32% in 2023, a steady increase from 26% in 2020). Choosing to work with interior designers also saw an increase (15% in 2023 versus 11% in 2021).

Recessed lights surpassed under-cabinet lights this year, gaining six percentage points in renovated kitchens to 72%, the survey found. Under-cabinet lights also increased, rising three percentage points to a close second at 70%. Pendant lights saw a slight decline of three percentage points compared to last year, the survey found. While pendant lights remain the most popular over-island choice (64%), recessed lights saw an increase of five percentage points from last year (35% from 30% in 2022).

While shaker-style cabinet doors remain the most popular choice for kitchens, the category dropped this year by three percentage points to 61%. Flat-panel doors, however, grew three points this year, with 20% of renovators opting for them. White cabinets remain most popular in renovated kitchens (40%), followed by wood-toned cabinets, which saw a three percentage point gain to 24%.

Upgraded kitchen islands serve as storage solutions, with both drawers and cabinets with doors increasing to 79% (from 74% and 78%, respectively). Islands with open shelves went from 11% to 14% for the year. Most upgraded islands (38%) are more than seven feet long. Electronics are another growth area in the kitchen, and the survey found docking stations were up nine percentage points to 49%, wireless speakers were up 11 percentage points to 37% and stereo systems were up 10 percentage points to 20%. Half (51%) of homeowners install faucets with high-tech features, such as water efficiency (24%) and touch-only/touch-free activation (23%); and 39% install appliances with high-tech features, including Wi-Fi connectivity and smartphone/tablet controls (25% and 24%, respectively). ■ Source : HFN Digital



At-home entertaining on the rise, says IHA

At-home entertaining is back, according to a new report from the International Houseware Association, and that spells good news for housewares companies that make anything from bakeware to barware to outdoor living items. The IHA's 2023 At-Home Entertaining Survey found 82% of consumers

expect to entertain in their homes at the same or increased frequency in the next year; 35% expect to entertain in their home more often or much more often. Most in-home gatherings in 2023 will take place in October through December, according to the survey, followed by the period between January and March. Other findings:

- The average at-home gathering will have 10 or fewer guests, said 72% of survey respondents.



- Buffet /self-serve is the preferred format for food, said 46% of respondents, followed by a sit-down meal (22%).
- Self-serve/mix is the preferred drink format of at-home gatherings (72%), followed by prepared and served drinks (20%).

The two things about home entertaining that vex respondents, according to the survey, are cleaning up after guests leave (30%) and preparing everything to be served at the same time (22%).

“In addition to solving the specific pain points mentioned, successful at-home entertaining requires

items that help prep fantastic and often creative dishes - from cook and bakeware to kitchen electrics and gadgets - but also things that enhance the presentation of the home and the meal,” the IHA said in a release. ■

Source : *Gifts and Decoratives*

Canada Toy Industry Retail Sales Continue to Grow

Canadian retail sales of toys generated \$2.39 billion in 2022, an increase of 1% compared to 2021. Unit sales declined by 4% and the average selling price of \$19.06 was 5% higher than in 2021. The increase in 2022 comes after the market experienced record-breaking growth over the last three years, including 9% growth in 2021 and 19% growth in 2020. This growth contributed to a three-year compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9%, driven by average selling price (ASP) growth of 8% and unit sales growth of 1%.



After three years of record-breaking growth, and despite significant economic challenges, Canadian consumers once again demonstrated how much they value the toy industry. Looking at supercategory performance, five of the 11 supercategories tracked by NPD in Canada posted growth in 2022. Top growing super categories

were plush, which lead the way with an increase of 41%, action figures and accessories with an increase of 20%, vehicles with an increase of 8%, youth electronics with an increase of 2%, and building sets with an increase of 1%. ■

Source : *NPD*

Consumers Spend Big on Bath and Shower Improvements

U.S. sales revenue for products related to more substantial bathroom remodels have enjoyed double-digit gains in the last year. Purchases of products like bathtubs, whirlpools, vanities, and tub and shower surrounds retained positive sales performance in both units and dollars, while most other kitchen and bath categories struggled, according to The NPD Group. Price is secondary when it comes to home improvements that hit home for consumers.



living spaces or just a fresh coat of paint. Most recently, bathrooms have received a significant amount of attention, with sales revenue from vanities with tops growing 27%, bathtubs and whirlpools growing 22%, and tub and shower surrounds growing 20%. Those same categories demonstrated

“Not only has working from home become normalized, but over the past year escalating economic concerns have also encouraged consumers to save money by doing more at home,” said Joe Derochowski, home industry advisor at NPD. “Consumers are still looking for ways to improve their living spaces and the way they make them feel. They are now looking for their bathrooms to not only be functional, but also a source of tranquility.”

Many aspects of the home have gotten attention over the past few years, whether its the creation of new outdoor

positive demand levels, while also experiencing the highest year-over-year increases in average selling prices. Average prices for bathtubs and whirlpools rose 20%, compared to 2021, while tub and shower surround prices increased 18%. “Even during challenging economic times, the consumer’s willingness to spend on home improvement projects that they are passionate about can have more influence over sales growth than elevated prices,” Derochowski said. “Appealing to the consumer’s deepest wants and needs for their homes will be the key to success in the coming year.” ■ *Source: NPD*

The world’s two biggest ocean carriers end alliance

MSC Mediterranean Shipping Co. and Maersk, the number one and two biggest container shippers in the world respectively, will end their 2M alliance in 2025. The alliance on East-West transit was formed in 2015 at a time of hardship for the shipping industry, with hopes that it would help each company more efficiently manage their cargo volumes. As



per the agreement, the alliance was set for a minimum of 10 years, with a two-year notice period needed for termination.

“MSC and Maersk recognize that much has changed since the two companies signed the 10-year agreement in 2015,” said Maersk CEO Vincent Clerc and MSC CEO Soren Toft in a joint statement. “Discontinuing the 2M alliance paves the way for both companies to continue to pursue their individual strategies.”

The two carriers have had diverging strategies over the past few years. MSC has invested heavily into expanding its shipping fleet, while Maersk focused more on its logistics on land. Both companies have seen their revenues surge over the pandemic. The top 10 carriers made \$265 billion from January 2021 to September 2022. In the entire decade of the 2010s, they made \$40 billion combined. ■

Source: HFN Mag