

# Kitchen & Bath

Kitchens and showers go large while builders are mixed on tiles and tubs

By Mike Beirne, Senior Editor

More than 80 percent of builders and architects surveyed in *Professional Builder's* 2018 Kitchen and Bath survey either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the kitchen is the most important room for marketing and selling new homes. It also is the space where three-quarters of respondents sold most of their upgrades.

The kitchen “is becoming a gathering area instead of just a functional area,” an Alabama custom home builder wrote. “More seating allows the kitchen to play its role as the social forum of the home. Our society places a huge emphasis on socializing while we eat. That is becoming evident in the designs of our kitchens.”

Besides cooking and dining, the kitchen is the space for entertaining. It’s the talking area, kind of like the coffee shop, said an Ohio custom builder. Most survey participants said they either already have or plan to make their kitchens bigger, although increased kitchen size is a misconception, a Missouri builder/remodeler wrote, because opening walls to combine the kitchen with adjacent spaces gives the room the appearance of being larger.

Many respondents also indicated that the shower area in bathrooms has been or will be enlarged. Builders and architects are addressing accessibility and low-maintenance issues with grab bars, as well as walk-in, doorless, zero-threshold shower stalls. Custom and upscale home builders are looking at adding more spa-like features and custom tile, while an Ohio multifamily builder and some production home builders aim to eliminate tiling with modular shower stalls.

More insights about kitchen and bath features are in the charts that follow.

**METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT INFORMATION:** This survey was distributed between Dec. 15, 2017, and Jan. 16, 2018, to a random sample of *Professional Builder's* print and digital readers and to members of Builder Partnerships. No incentive was offered. By closing date, a total of 138 eligible readers had returned surveys. Respondent breakdown by discipline: 38.4% custom home builder; 21.7% diversified builder/remodeler; 12.3% architect/designer engaged in home building; 10.9% production builder for move-up/move-down buyer; 2.9% production builder for first-time buyer; 2.9% luxury production builder; 2.9% multifamily builder; 1.5% manufactured, modular, log home, or systems builder; and 6.5% other. Approximately 45.5% sold one to five homes in 2017, and 8.9% sold more than 100 units.

## KITCHEN

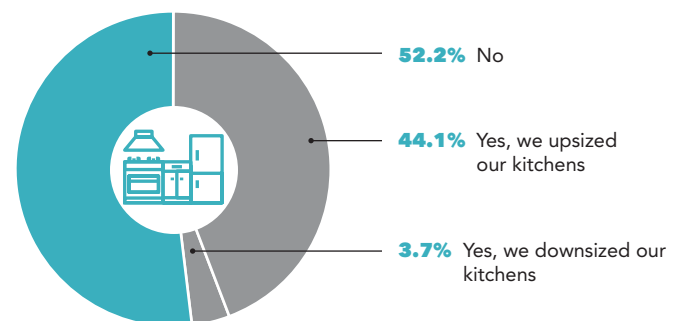
APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY HOUSES BUILT/DESIGNED BY YOUR COMPANY DURING THE PAST 24 MONTHS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING KITCHEN FEATURES?

	ALL	MOST	SOME	NONE
Energy-efficient/Energy Star appliances	63.2%	25.7%	9.6%	1.5%
Granite/quartz countertops	54.1%	26.7%	14.1%	5.2%
Island	52.2%	27.5%	15.2%	5.1%
Low-flow fixtures/faucets	45.9%	16.3%	24.4%	13.3%
Walk-in pantry	31.3%	28.4%	27.6%	12.7%
Professional-grade range hood	20.2%	20.9%	38.1%	20.1%
Fireplace/hearth	23.9%	20.2%	32.1%	23.9%
42-inch/extended-height cabinets	19.4%	28.4%	36.6%	15.7%
Breakfast bar	16.8%	26.7%	32.1%	24.4%
Breakfast nook	14.3%	27.1%	39.9%	18.8%

BASE: 138; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

Dual sinks and on-demand water heaters just missed the top 10, while pro-grade ranges, which debuted on last year’s list, were knocked off by fireplaces/hearths, ostensibly a result of open-floor plans connecting the kitchen to other living spaces.

IN GENERAL, ACROSS ALL THE HOUSE PLANS YOUR COMPANY OFFERS, HAS THE SIZE OF YOUR KITCHENS CHANGED IN THE PAST 24 MONTHS?

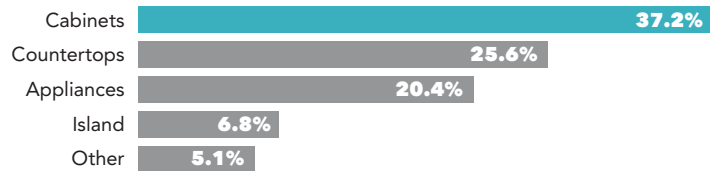


BASE: 136; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

Cost was the main reason for smaller kitchens. Respondents that enlarged their kitchens did so for clients that wanted bigger islands and appliances.

[EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH]

WHAT IS YOUR SINGLE BIGGEST FEATURE WHEN IT COMES TO SELLING KITCHEN UPGRADES?



BASE: 137; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

Ventless hoods, double ovens, and storage were mentioned in the "other" answers, but the single biggest piece of advice on selling upgrades, a Wisconsin design/builder and remodeler wrote, is to meet the homeowners' emotional wants.

WHAT OTHER CHANGES, IF ANY, HAVE YOU MADE TO YOUR KITCHEN DESIGNS DURING THE PAST 24 MONTHS?

"Kitchens require space for the daily tasks. Managing the design on the adjacent areas to not compromise the intended use of all of those spaces provides more usable space. Walls close in or prevent the more expanded feeling. So lose the walls and use laminated beams for structural integrity."

— Missouri diversified builder/remodeler

"Sinks looking out windows and islands uncluttered by plumbing and dishes is the preference now. Pantries that are easily accessible from the kitchen, sometimes without any doors, give it an extension-of-the-kitchen feel."

— Alabama custom home builder

"Taller ceilings with cabinets extending to the ceiling. Wall cabinet extending down to countertop for appliance storage. Adding more technology potential to the kitchen." — Missouri diversified builder/remodeler

"Options that are different than traditional box cabinetry. For example: open shelving, walk-in pantries instead of cabinets, more expansive windows instead of windows just at the sink."

— Pennsylvania diversified builder/remodeler

"More glass cabinets, cabinets to the ceiling (10 feet), more homes with upgraded features. Soft-close drawers, pull-out pot and pan drawers, etc."

— Kansas custom home builder

WHAT IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST CHANGE YOU PLAN TO MAKE TO YOUR KITCHEN DESIGN FEATURES IN THE NEXT 24 MONTHS?

"Push more of the design/layout onto my cabinetry/countertop retailers and doing less of that design work in-house. Too many options out there I'm simply unaware of that they know in and out." — Illinois diversified builder/remodeler

"As kitchen islands with seating get larger, the need for a breakfast nook is diminishing. We are looking at designs that meet this customer request."

— Pennsylvania diversified builder remodeler

"Larger kitchens to allow for separate refrigerator and freezer, full-height wine coolers, and oven towers" — Florida architect/designer

"Incorporate the kitchen, breakfast room, sunroom, and family room into one large room." — Maryland architect/designer

"Clients are asking for a diversity not only of cabinet styles and colors from wall to island but in countertop colors and materials." — Georgia diversified builder/remodeler

BATH

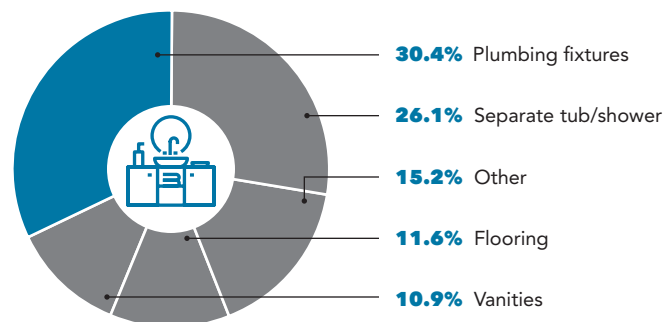
APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY HOUSES BUILT/DESIGNED BY YOUR COMPANY DURING THE PAST 24 MONTHS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING BATH FEATURES?

	ALL	MOST	SOME	NONE
Dual vanities/lavatories in master bath	49.2%	28.7%	15.4%	6.6%
Water-saving fixtures	45.6%	19.1%	25%	10.3%
Separate tub/shower in master bath	40.9%	26.3%	24.8%	8.0%
Granite/quartz vanity top	36.6%	24.6%	31.3%	7.5%
Decorative tiles	32.6%	26.7%	31.9%	8.9%
Additional storage areas	18.1%	17.3%	51.9%	12.8%
Multiple-head shower system	19.3%	46.7%	19.3%	14.8%
Solid-surface vanity top	14.3%	24.1%	37.6%	24.1%
On-demand water heater	13.6%	15.2%	38.6%	32.6%
Dual-flush toilets	11.9%	20.9%	39.6%	27.6%

BASE: 137; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

Survey respondents were mixed on the fate of the tub. Many wrote that they are doing away with the feature in the master bath to make room for a larger shower. But just as many said clients were asking for stand-alone soaker tubs instead of built-in tubs. Walk-in and zero-threshold shower areas also were mentioned frequently as changes recently incorporated into bathroom design.

WHAT IS YOUR SINGLE BIGGEST FEATURE WHEN IT COMES TO SELLING BATHROOM UPGRADES?

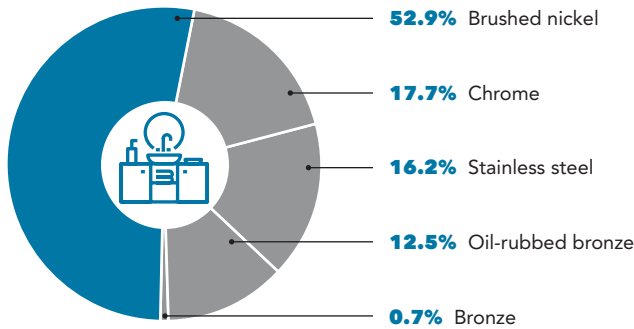


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Custom tile shower surrounds, radiant floor heat, and spa shower features were mentioned most often in the "other" category.

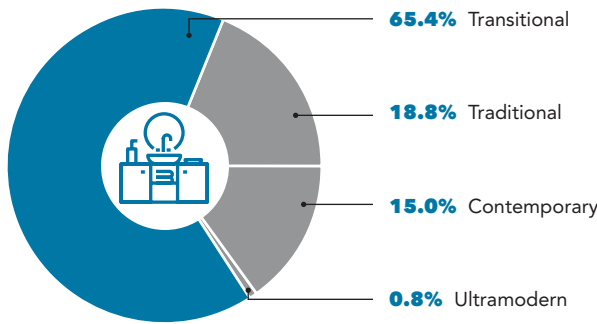
[EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH]

WHAT IS THE MOST POPULAR FAUCET/FIXTURE FINISH AMONG YOUR CLIENTS?



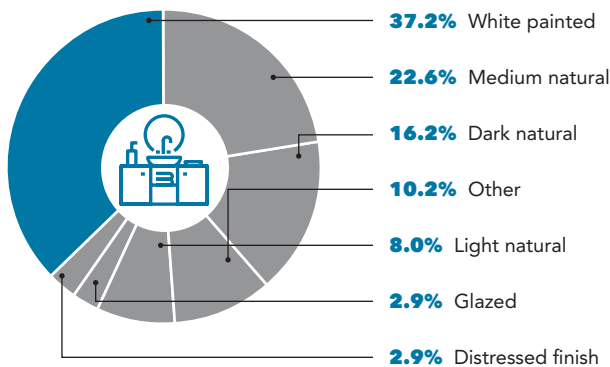
BASE: 136; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

WHEN IT COMES TO FAUCET SELECTION, WHICH STYLE IS MOST POPULAR AMONG YOUR CLIENTS?



BASE: 133; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

WHAT TYPE OF CABINET FINISH IS MOST OFTEN SPECIFIED BY YOUR BUYERS?



BASE: 137; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2018 KITCHEN & BATH SURVEY

Custom painted per the buyer's request was mentioned in the "other" category, and gray is still a popular color. Brushed gold, as evidenced by a new color lineup from Moen, is gaining presence among faucet/fixture finishes.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU MADE TO YOUR BATHROOM DESIGN IN THE PAST 24 MONTHS?

"More emphasis on lighting and setting a mood, beautiful tile to add spa-like atmosphere, more storage, and water-saving technology, including tankless water heating." — **California builder/remodeler**

"Large shower with multiple showerheads and seats." — **Ohio luxury production builder**

"More of our tile options do not have tile borders, and many of our tile options are the large format." — **Maryland luxury production builder**

"All master showers have curbless entry and a bench seat with hand-held shower, along with standard wall showerhead. Larger and roomy." — **New Mexico production home builder**

"Use of water/vapor barrier from Schluter, radiant heated flooring in bathrooms, including shower areas, tiled drain, and bigger niches in shower area for soap and shampoo." — **California custom home builder**

"Modular shower base with ceramic tile, trying to go to all modular shower." — **Ohio production home builder**

"Creating definition and/or separation of space for his and hers." — **Texas architect/designer**

"Showers are the main feature. Tubs are more of a furniture piece." — **Alabama custom home builder**

"Eliminated whirlpool tubs." — **Missouri builder/remodeler**

WHAT IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST CHANGE YOU PLAN TO MAKE TO YOUR BATHROOM DESIGN IN THE NEXT 24 MONTHS?

"Modular shower units that look nice instead of tile." — **Ohio production home builder**

"Shower upgrades to eliminate glass door from glass partition and minimize shower entry system maintenance." — **Missouri builder/remodeler**

"Try to get rid of the tub. Nobody uses it." — **Washington builder/remodeler**

"Clothes hamper storage in bath cabinetry." — **Missouri builder/remodeler**

"More smart devices." — **Maryland architect/designer**

"Emphasis on easy-access showers with linear drain." — **California builder/remodeler**

"Car wash shower." — **Massachusetts builder/remodeler**

"More daylighting with clerestory windows, skylights, and solar tubes." — **California architect/designer**

"Wall-hung toilets." — **Montana architect/designer**

"Accessible design and energy efficiency." — **Ontario, Canada builder/remodeler**

"Rather than have a set tile combination, I would like to go to a mix-and-match system. It's difficult to satisfy the customer's "tile" vision." — **Maryland luxury production home builder**