

Trend Spotting

By Jamie Gold, CKD, CAPS

West Edge Design Fair Spotlights Hot Trends

You may not have heard about the WestEdge Design Fair. It's only two years old, after all. You need to, though. Despite being a newcomer to the industry, WestEdge flexed some pretty serious design muscle this past October in Santa Monica, CA.

This little show seemed to feature more major new products than many of its bigger rivals, including the similarly structured consumer/trade hybrid Dwell on Design.

Credit WestEdge producers Megan Reilly and Troy Hanson, whose resumes include the *Architectural Digest* Home Design Show,

International Contemporary Furniture Fair, NeoCon and NeoCon West. Their contacts showed up in force and brought their latest releases with them.

HOT NEW APPLIANCES

Most of the new products seen at WestEdge came from the appliance category, and many had to do with cooking. Bosch showed off its first side-opening oven, available in left or right hinge. This will be a welcome addition to aging-in-place and Universal Design kitchens.

La Cornue featured its W series, starring the most



Photo: Miele



Photo: CABA Barkskin

1 Miele introduces a new suite of ranges. 2 Tree bark becomes artistic surfacing here.

against a wall, but at 31.1" tall, it will be shorter than most of the cabinets in use today. There's also a 59"-wide hood to use over it, a W-series oven tower and two American Oak furniture pieces in the suite. This is not your grandmother's La Cornue!

Miele showcased its first-ever ranges at the show. They feature ergonomic touch-screen panels and handles, both tilting to make access

unique-looking cooktop on the market. A collaboration between La Cornue president Xavier Dupuy and renowned global architect Jean-Michel Wilmot, the W table fea-

tures four elements, two of them bridged, legs, front knobs (like a range top) and industrial-modern styling in a 59"x36" table. It can stand in the center of a room or



Photo: Jenn-Air

3 A black interior restyles the refrigerator. 4 The latest Galley accessory is a major corporate investment. 5 A side-opening oven is ideal for Universal Design kitchens.

easier. This month's release will include induction, gas and electric cooktop choices, as well as gas or electric oven options. They'll be available in 30", 36" and 48" sizes.

SMEG market-tested a series of built-in ovens with retro styling. The Victoria line offers combi-

steam-convection and combi-micro-wave-convection in black, white, cream and stainless to coordinate with its refrigerators. The company also showcased a retro line of small countertop appliances. AGA displayed its new City

24 Range Cooker at the show.

Unlike the traditional British cookers, this AGA isn't always in "on" mode, and its compact size is designed for the urban homeowner.

Jenn-Air showed off



Photo: Jenn-Air

will shock-freeze produce for longer life, thaw frozen food, quickly chill wine, slow roast dinner, leaven dough and prepare a hot meal to come home to with its Ready Meals functionality.

Here are some of the appliance trend takeaways from WestEdge:

- Manufacturers are feeling confident enough in the market to push the boundaries again;
- Technology influences – like LEDs, digital interfaces and induction – are as strong as ever;
- Multi-tasking will remain a dominant trend as homeowners continue to seek strong value equations in their purchases.

FIXTURE FEATURES

WestEdge is not a plumbing show, but there were definitely a few notable fixture and

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faucet brands on display, showing off some interesting new releases.

Rohl added to its high-end Jewel Collection with new handles for customizing the lav look.

Italian faucet maker Fantini also offered customization in its newest Milano H shower system. It works indoors or outdoors with a new stainless steel finish. The H (for Horizontal) allows clients to choose from a rain shower, cascade head or hand-held showerhead and mount the controls horizontally or vertically. The Milanoslim system includes body sprays, hand-held and narrow rain showerhead in a compact modern set, and is also stainless for indoor or outdoor use. Despite their multi-function features, both H and Slim can be Cal Green-friendly, though the H requires a three-way diverter to achieve compliance, according to the company.

French brand Pyrolave was there with its integral lavastone lavatories



Photo: AGA Marvel

and custom color program. "Forty percent of the North American market is custom color-matched," noted U.S. representative Jean Pauwels.

French manufacturer Blackbody offered customization, as well, in its Organic LED-powered mirror lines. OLEDs are recyclable after their long life, adding even more sustainability to an already sustainable category.

The company lets designers customize mirrors to their size and shape specifications with an easy no-CAD submission process. All you need to supply are measurements and a drawing and the company will make a mirror to your spec.

Here are some of the fixture trend takeaways from WestEdge:

- Customization is a strong and growing trend, especially in the high-end market;
- Sustainability is being driven not just by consumer demand, but by local environmental codes demanding water and energy savings;
- European brands are competing heavily and strategically for North American market share.

OTHER NOTABLES

It didn't take very long to cover the compact exhibit hall. WestEdge took about one-tenth the space of Dwell on Design (35,000 square feet to 346,890 in the Los Angeles Convention Center's South Hall), but packed an impressive roster of creative exhibitors in its tiny footprint.

Baufomat Kuchen will impress cabinet dealers and independent designers looking for a new European cabinetry line. Eric Mnat, the brand's California-based representative, shared that while being customizable to one millimeter, the KBIS 2014 debut line is affordable and deliverable in 28 days.

The Galley offers U.S.-made kitchen sink workstations. There are modular sinks, cutting boards, drying racks, colanders and other accessories. With a major new corporate investor purchasing a major stake in the company this year, the Oklahoma-based company is looking to continue expanding its offerings and consumer



Photo: Fantini USA

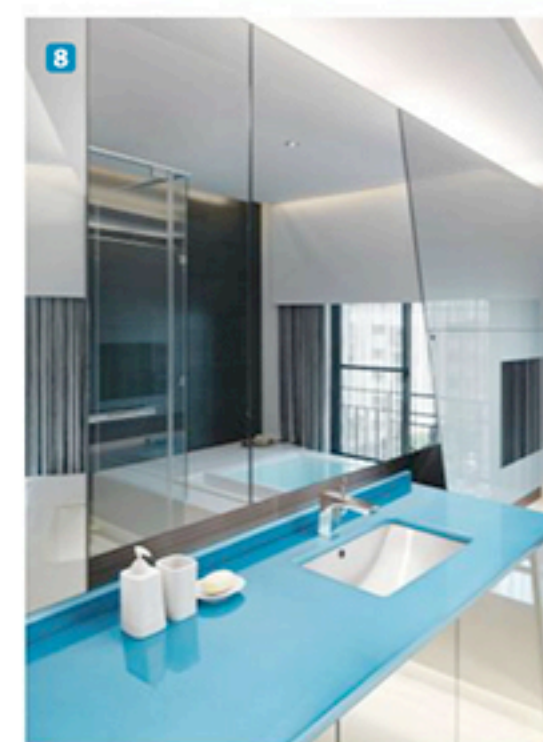


Photo: Pyrolave

awareness.

CABA Barkskin is a family-owned surfacing company in Santa Fe, NM. It makes wall coverings from tree bark (called Barkskin), harvested in Mexico. The colorful and creative designs won an originality award at WestEdge, and can be used between glass or resin panels for countertops, furniture or backsplashes. If used on their own, they should be installed away from moisture for the longest life span.

Here are some other trend takeaways from WestEdge:

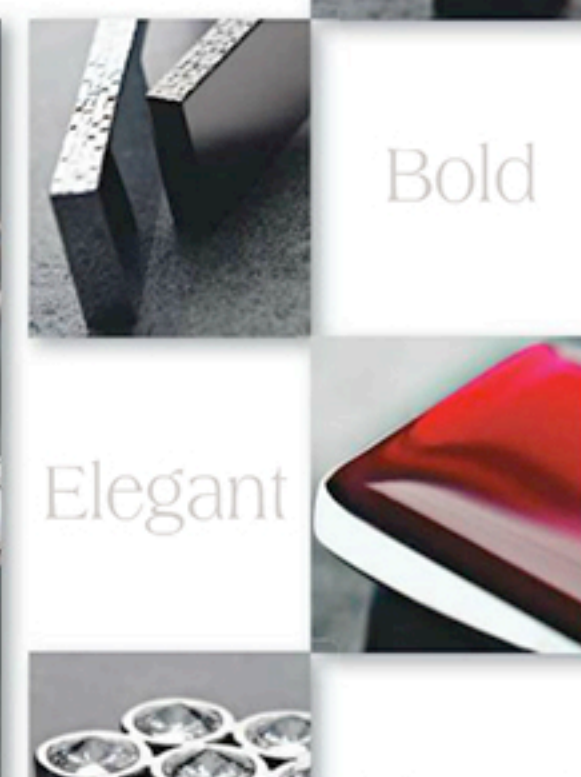
- Creativity is alive and well in the kitchen and bath industry;
- New market introductions and new investments hammer home the industry's post-Recession recovery;
- Competition in the cabinetry sector continues to offer new benefits to consumers.

LAST WORDS

WestEdge was a big, delightful surprise in a small, manageable space, and definitely a design show to add to your 2015 industry coverage. Plan on a single trade day in October 2015 and make a Santa Monica weekend out of your visit. The show's Web site is westedgedesignfair.com.

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