



The Fourth Annual



From deep tubs to shallow cabinets, these are the most imaginative products of the year

Wonders great and small fill our annual rundown of the best in kitchen and bath products. We pored over hundreds of entries, and we judged the items on the following pages to be the best. One of our winning tubs is 34 inches deep—and that's on the inside. Conversely, one of our storage products is a cabinet that's 3 inches deep. Other winners included smaller components combining to make bigger things, like two refrigerators that team up to form one unit, and wall coverings and lighting fixtures made of glass tiles.

WRITTEN BY BILL PARTSCH



WINNER

Dacor, Millenia Microwave In-A-Drawer

BELOW: First it was refrigerators, then dishwashers—now microwaves come in drawer form. Users can lift hot soup and other painful-when-spilled items directly up, rather than out and up from a microwave with a door, for smoother trips to the counter. \$1,049. 800-793-0093; www.dacor.com.



WINNER

TMIO, Connect Io Intelligent Oven

ABOVE: Ovens that also refrigerate food may be a difficult concept to grasp, but get past that and concentrate instead on the notion that, thanks to its built-in Ethernet jack, you can control this double wall oven from the Internet or a phone (yes, land-line or cell). In addition to refrigeration, the 30-inch appliance has proofing, dehydration and Sabbath modes, plus true convection. \$7,495. 800-881-8646; www.tmio.com.

cooking



HONORABLE MENTION
Wolf, Sealed-Burner Rangetop

LEFT: Sealed burners make cleaning a cooktop easier. But this convenience comes with a compromise—the restricted air flow takes away some Btu. So cooks are forced to choose: power or easy cleanup? This cooktop aims to offer both, with sealed burners that can crank out up to 15,000 Btu, plenty for most home chefs. It comes in three sizes, with optional modules that include a grill, griddle and French top. \$2,000 to \$3,400. 800-332-9513; www.wolfappliance.com.

faucets/fittings



WINNER

Toto, Ryohan EcoPower Sensor Faucet

ABOVE: Sensor faucets save water, but the electricity the sensors need has to come from a battery or household wiring. This faucet says goodbye to all that, using the water itself as a power source—no fossil fuels required. Flowing water turns a turbine, which stores energy in capacitors inside the faucet. The faucet does have a battery as a backup, but regular use keeps that battery charged for a long, long time. It looks pretty snappy, too, which is a bonus, considering its ecological advantages. \$1,700. 800-350-8686; www.totousa.com.

HONORABLE MENTION

Kohler, DTV Custom Showering Experience

BELOW: By the looks of it, you'd think this wall-mounted gizmo was a music player, but it's actually the control for a full-immersion shower system. The digital interface allows bathers to program their favorite showering experience so they can go from zero to "Ahh!" at the touch of a button. Showerheads come in six prearranged configurations, with custom setups also an option. \$1,990 to \$2,040. 800-456-4537; www.kohler.com.



WINNER

Abet, Silver Collection

ABOVE: Silvery anodized aluminum, lacquered for durability, gives a shine to these 48x120-inch sheets of high-pressure laminate, suitable for vertical applications. Six patterns, including florals, paisleys and abstracts, have an uncannily handcrafted look. \$17 per square foot. 800-228-2238; www.abetlaminati.com.

surfacing

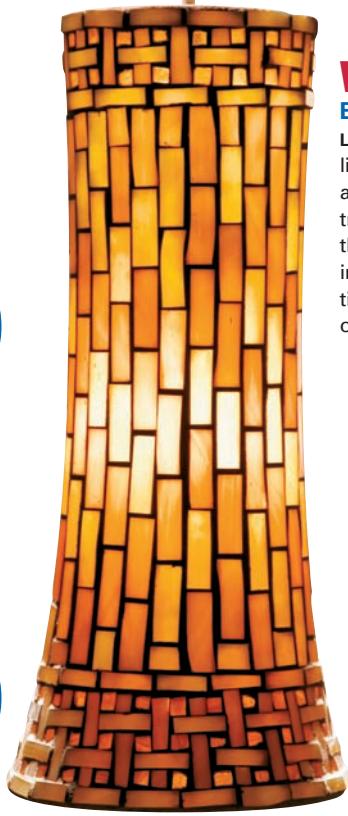
HONORABLE MENTION
Formica, Artifact Series: Spa

Water-inspired blue is the inspiration for this new solid surfacing. Accenting the tranquil hue are translucent elements and shimmering flecks, which make it possible to achieve a subtle, ripple-like effect when the surface is installed. \$45 per square foot. 800-367-6422; www.formica.com.



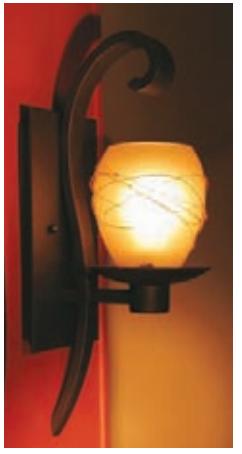


lighting



WINNER

Erin Adams Design, Lumé Collection
 LEFT: Bringing the look of exotic woven baskets to lighting, this fixture is made of glass tiles affixed to a glass form. This works out well, as glass is more translucent and—here's the clincher—less flammable than bamboo or wicker. Available pendant shapes include convex, concave and conical. Patterns for the tiles include brick and parquet. From \$325, depending on model. 505-352-1016; www.erinadamsdesign.com.



HONORABLE MENTION

Bear Creek Glass, Brookshire Sconce
 LEFT: This stately sconce consists of a custom-made globe on a metal wall mount. Shown here in amber with orbits of spun glass, the fixture comes with a 100-watt incandescent bulb. \$188 for the metal mount; globes from \$140 (\$145 as shown). 205-324-9399; www.bearcreekglass.com.

sinks



WINNER

Elkay, Avado Integrated Work Surface Sink
 LEFT: The raised, textured middle of this sink looks all cool and industrial, but it has a practical benefit, too. It can serve as a heatproof resting spot for hot pots and pans without monopolizing either bowl of the sink. The wide barrier also better establishes each bowl as a separate zone in cases where two people want to work at the sink simultaneously. \$1,700. 800-572-3192; www.elkayusa.com.



HONORABLE MENTION

Toto, Neorest Lav with Integrated Sensor Faucet
 BELOW: This handsome, wide bathroom sink is designed to be semi-inset into a vanity countertop and has a bowl that's 4¾ inches deep. The size of the sink and the way it's mounted seem a natural, welcome progression from the vessel-lav trend of recent years. Included with the sink is a sensor faucet that lights up to indicate water temperature: red for hot, blue for cold. \$4,500. 800-350-8686; www.totousa.com.



HONORABLE MENTION

Swanstone, Ascend Bowl Sink
 ABOVE: Here's one from the "Why didn't we think of this before" file: a sink that combines the capacity of a single bowl with the convenience of a double, all in a standard size. This design accomplishes it via a simple platform for placing food during prep or for separating dishes during cleanup. It does all this with no barrier to impede washing cookie sheets or lasagna pans. \$415. 800-325-7008; www.swanstone.com.



WINNER

Atlas Homewares, Zanzibar Collection
 LEFT: Although some kitchen and bath surfaces mimic the appearance of leather, these cabinet pulls, appliance pulls and bath accessories fuse the real thing to metal for a rugged yet refined look. Choose from chrome or brushed nickel, brown or black leather. \$20 to \$99, depending on size. 800-799-6755; www.atlashomewares.com.

ventilation

WINNER

Bulthaup, Slatted Extractor Hood
 RIGHT: The fuss-free, triangular form of this hood is easy on the eyes and, more importantly, easy on the noggin. The upwards tilt offers more headroom than a traditional horizontal hood. Aluminum slats close flat when the hood is idle but open wide when it gets down to business. The unit includes lighting and activated charcoal filters, which help reduce odors. \$5,600 to \$7,300, depending on size. 800-808-2923; www.bulthaup.com.



HONORABLE MENTION

Sirius, SU48r
 ABOVE: This wall-mounted hood essentially runs itself. A heat sensor detects temperature changes over the cooktop. When the temperature goes up 2°F within two minutes, a filter glides into place and the fan kicks on. The fan speed then adjusts with every temperature change of two degrees. When the cooktop returns to its original temperature, the fan automatically shuts off. \$3,500. 866-528-4987; www.siriushoods.com.

HONORABLE MENTION

Valsan, Porto Hair Dryer Holder
 RIGHT: What looks like a giant corkscrew is really a nifty device to keep a hair dryer off the counter. The wall-mounted accessory is made of solid brass, and is available in chrome, polished nickel and satin nickel finishes. From \$99, depending on finish. 888-825-7266; www.valsanbathroomsusa.com.



hardware



small electrics



WINNER
Ariston, Experience Built-In Espresso Maker
ABOVE: People who really love their joe will take a shine to this built-in espresso maker. It includes a water filter, which not only makes coffee taste better, it also reduces mineral deposits in the machine. The appliance also features a ceramic grinder and a knob that controls the strength of the coffee and the amount of crema (foam) on top. \$2,500 to \$2,700. 888-426-0825; www.aristonappliances.us.

HONORABLE MENTION
Nespresso, Le Cube
BELOW: Bold design and simple operation mark this countertop espresso device. Only the coffee spout and drip tray protrude from the machine's cube-shaped body. One-touch buttons on top of the unit let the user choose between a standard espresso or a 5-ounce cup of coffee. \$300 and \$350. 800-562-1465; www.nespresso.com.



WINNER
Rev-A-Shelf, 434 Series Pull-Out Filler Cabinets
BELOW: Narrow slots of cabinet space typically have been good places to stash cookie sheets and trays, but little else. To make better use of such spots, Rev-A-Shelf offers the 434 series: essentially a stainless steel pegboard that runs the length and depth of a 3- or 6-inch cabinet. The panel allows a homeowner to hang pans, utensils or any relatively thin or flat item. Base and wall versions are available. From \$255, depending on size. 800-626-1126; www.rev-a-shelf.com.



storage

HONORABLE MENTION
Diamond Cabinets, Mini-Message Center
ABOVE: Disguised as the end of wall cabinet, this slim chamber is a great catchall for keys, note pads, pens and pencils. The inside of the door is a dry-erase board for scribbling down messages and grocery lists, plus it's magnetic, so you can show off cute photos. It's available in three heights. \$290 to \$375. 812-482-2527; www.diamondcabinets.com.

kitchen cabinets



WINNER
Snaidero, Venus Kitchen
LEFT: Sure, this suite of cabinets is bold and red and curvy, but it yields even more benefits on closer inspection. The door finish is a micro-fiber that approximates the look and texture of leather but is much easier to clean. Those less crazy about red can opt for black. The lighting fixture over the island is included, its many LED spotlights are arranged close together for even light distribution with less heat. From \$75,000. 310-516-8499; www.snaidero-usa.com.

HONORABLE MENTION
La Cucina Alessi, Agreste Suite
RIGHT: The work island's arc and studded accents are the immediate attention getters, but the four vertical storage units add personality and practicality. The island has a small prep sink at one end and a smooth cooktop in the center. A wood counter finished to look like ebony matches up with leaf-shape inlays on the tall cabinets. The glass-and-steel hood is part of the package. From \$32,000. 212-431-1310; www.alessi.com.



WINNER
Julien, Bathroom Suite by Troy Adams Design
ABOVE: Melding stainless steel with wood, this roomful of coordinated bathroom furniture includes a freestanding vanity console. The unit can have one or two sinks, surrounded by a countertop with two drawers beneath it. Available woods include wenge and ebony; countertop options include marble and quartz. A coordinating stepped-height steel cabinet stretches storage. Console, \$9,715 to \$16,450, depending on size; Tansu Step, \$14,295. 800-461-3377; www.julien.ca.

HONORABLE MENTION
Decolav, 5435 Wood Vanity
BELOW: The slide-out spice cabinet heads to the bathroom in this bow-front cabinet with granite top. The side "drawers" are actually tall pull-outs (similar to spice cabinets), with shelves for storing and organizing cosmetics and sundries. The top is predrilled and cut for a widespread faucet and sink, both sold separately. \$1,841. 561-274-2110; www.decolav.com.



bath cabinets



WINNER

Toto, Neorest Programmable Airbath
BELOW: Standing at the tub to monitor water level and temperature as it fills seems like work, and having to sweat the details is hardly conducive to pampering and relaxing. This tub reduces that job to a couple of button presses. Just punch the desired specifications into the deck-mounted, LCD touch-control panel, and the tub takes over. When the water hits the right level and temperature, it shuts off automatically. \$15,000. 800-350-8686; www.totousa.com.



HONORABLE MENTION
Duravit, Sundeck Tub

BELOW: This 73x34-inch acrylic tub makes use of every bit of its 18-inch depth by virtue of an overflow channel around the perimeter of the unit. That's all great, but what really distinguishes the tub is its headrests, which fold out to create a flat top, turning the tub assembly into a lounge seat. The tub can be installed indoors or outdoors. From \$8,500. 888-387-2848; www.duravit.com.



tubs

WINNER
Victoria & Albert, Sorrento O2 Tub

RIGHT: Anyone who treasures a good soak should consider this extra-deep tub. The tub itself is 39 inches high, and inside it's a little over 34 inches deep. Molded into it is a seating area 26 inches wide. It is made of a blend of acrylic and stone designed to approximate the strength of cast iron with less weight. The Airspa version including tub jets, \$5,750 to \$7,250; without jets, \$3,000 to \$4,500. 800-421-7189; www.englishstubs.com.



If you treasure a good soak, but you don't want to



WINNER
Miele, La Perla

ABOVE: A company known for dishwasher excellence cranks it up another notch with this model. It has 20 wash cycles, accessible via a control system that combines a touch pad with an LCD screen. The machine has a compartment in the door for adding water softener—ideal for delicate crystal and china. Available in white, black or stainless, the door can also take custom panels. From \$2,100. 888-346-4353; www.miele.com.

dishwashers



HONORABLE MENTION
Fagor, LFA 073

LEFT: The seamless, stainless steel interior of this dishwasher makes the tub corrosion resistant and virtually leak free, plus it cuts down on noise. In addition, this appliance can consume less water by monitoring contamination. If the water is clean enough, the machine reuses it; if not, it drains the water and refills. \$1,200. 201-804-3900; www.fagoramerica.com.

laundry



WINNER
Samsung, SilverCare Washer

LEFT: To sanitize clothes and make them hypo-allergenic, most washing machines use hot water and/or bleach. This appliance employs natural chemistry. A device in the washer blasts an electrical current at two silver plates, which release a ridiculous number (in the quadrillions) of silver ions into the water. The ions kill odor-causing bacteria in any temperature water—including cold, which can save on energy costs. From \$900. 800-726-7864; www.samsung.com.



HONORABLE MENTION
Whirlpool, Duet Sport HT Fabric Care System

ABOVE: Where other appliances may boast of extra capacity, this set moves the other way. This washer and dryer are two inches shorter and two inches shallower than standard versions. The dimensions make them easier to fit in closets and tight spaces. \$1,000 for the washer, \$860 and \$800 for the gas and electric dryers. 800-253-1301; www.whirlpool.com.

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refrigerators



WINNER
Samsung, QuatroCooling Four-Door Convertible Refrigerator
LEFT: Forget the obvious puns about four-door convertibles, this is a truly fascinating device. First off, it has two drawers at the bottom where previous models have only had one. The capper is—and this is the convertible part—these drawers can go from refrigerator to freezer and back again, from 41°F for wine chilling down to -14°F for quick freezing. \$2,500. 800-726-7864; www.samsung.com.

WINNER
Liebherr, 245/24i5 Side-By-Side
RIGHT: Although technically this combines two models, it adds up to an intriguing idea: a refrigerator, freezer and wine captain all in one. On the right is a 24-inch refrigerator, and on the left is a 24-inch combo with a freezer on the bottom and a wine refrigerator on top. The fact that they're separate units is actually a benefit; it makes it easier to get the refrigerator/freezer into your home. \$7,490. 905-319-8835; www.liebherr-appliances.com.



HONORABLE MENTION
Thermador, Freedom Collection
LEFT: Disassembling refrigerators and moving the components around the kitchen isn't a new idea, although this collection does offer a healthy selection of appliance widths, not to mention two stand-alone freezers with through-the-door ice and water. The real innovation here is the flush-mounted doors and especially the concealed hinge. No visible hardware allows the appliances to truly disappear among the cabinets. \$2,900 to \$7,000, depending on model. 800-656-9226; www.thermador.com.



WINNER
Kohler, C3 Toilet Seat
BELOW: Most Americans find using a bidet to be an alien concept, but then when they do get a chance to use one, they think it's terrific. It's also undeniably hygienic, and the bidet experience is but one of the features of this toilet seat. The seat also warms up, closes quietly and emits a soft blue glow to let a person avoid the shock of bright light in the middle of the night. One model has controls on its side, the other uses a handheld remote. \$750 to \$1,300, depending on features. 800-456-4537; www.kohler.com.



HONORABLE MENTION
Vitra, Istanbul Toilet
BELOW: Defying the standard toilet profile, this model has an almost tulip shape, with a tapered support that's positively dainty when compared to typical toilets. The reason for this elegance is that the toilet is affixed to and drains into the wall, where a concealed tank resides. The toilet comes in white and five colors, with an optional clear lid. From \$2,000. 770-904-6830; www.vitra-usa.com.

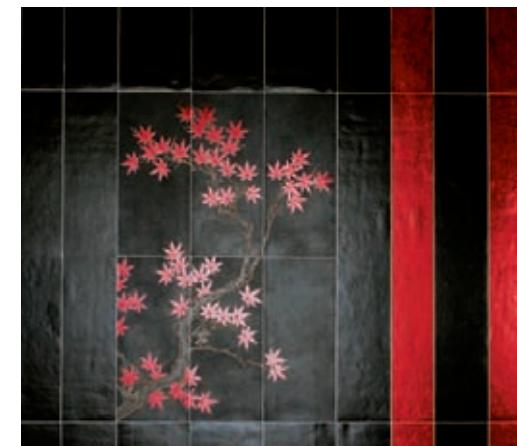


toilets

tile



WINNER
Erin Adams Design, Vine with Bird
ABOVE: This mosaic of hand-cut glass seems to combine tile with wallpaper. Close inspection reveals the acute details of the design and the variations in the glass. From a distance, however, the collected pieces present a nonrepeating pattern that is simultaneously elegant and down-to-earth. \$103 per square foot. 505-352-1016; www.erinadamsdesign.com.



HONORABLE MENTION
Impronta Italgraniti, Rhos Lacquers
ABOVE: The relentlessly innovative Italian tile industry is showing an Asian influence not seen since the days of Marco Polo. Resembling Japanese woodblock art, these stylish, understated tiles come in white, black, red or mock wenge. The line also includes decorative tiles like Yuan, which assemble to form large panels—in this case, red leaves on a black background. \$114 per square yard. 212-980-5000; www.improntaitalgraniti.com. ♦