



## CABINETS & COUNTERTOPS

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Photos courtesy of (left and right) Pedini of Atlanta LLC [Transitional kitchen, Cabinets: Laquered Wood, Textured Finish, Countertop: Concrete] and Renewal Design-Build



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Improve your home's curb appeal and turn a first impression into a lasting one



Photos courtesy of (top to bottom) Keiffer Phillips-Patricia Brown Builders and Sherwin-Williams

**ON THE COVER:** This Buckhead kitchen features flush inset Shaker-style bottom cabinets, eight upper cabinets with glass doors, and a contrasting island with a thick marble-slab countertop. Photo by Michael McKelvey, courtesy of Woodworks Design



# Storage AND SURFACES

Expert advice on choosing the right  
cabinets and countertops for your home

By Kathy Kantorski

Photo courtesy of Craft Art Countertops and Crown Point Cabinetry

TRANSITIONAL KITCHEN

CABINETS: HANDCRAFTED FROM MAPLE,  
FINISHED IN "POINTING," BY FARROW & BALL  
COUNTERTOP: SOLID TEAK WOOD



CRAFTSMAN-STYLE  
KITCHEN  
CABINETS: OAK  
COUNTERTOP:  
TYPHOON GREEN  
GRANITE

Because the kitchen is the heart of the home, it often carries the biggest “wow” potential, and cabinets and countertops are the make-it-or-break-it elements of its aesthetic. But beyond looks, the kitchen has to function well. That means keeping contents organized and easy to retrieve for frequent use, as well as allowing for everyday wear and tear without too much maintenance. Keeping all this in mind, we drew upon the knowledge of Atlanta-area experts on both the latest and the most popular time-tested trends in cabinetry and countertops. Here’s what they had to say.

### Decisions, decisions

When building a new kitchen from scratch, do you start with choosing the cabinets or the countertops? Either, says Sarah Anderson from wood-countertop manufacturer Craft Art, [www.craft-art.com](http://www.craft-art.com). “Pick your countertops either last or first; they aren’t a middle-of-the-road design choice,” she says. “They are the most prominent visual element—next to cabinets, of course.”

Still not sure where to start? “My advice to homeowners always starts with a question: Do you want stained or painted cabinets?” says Angelique Baez of Construction Resources/CR Home Design Center, [www.crhomeusa.com](http://www.crhomeusa.com). “If you want a stained cabinet, then it is best to choose the exact door style before choosing a countertop. If the preference is a painted cabinet, then choose the countertop first and cater the paint choice to coordinate specifically with the chosen material and color.” ►



TRANSITIONAL KITCHEN  
CABINETS: GLASS UPPERS,  
FLUSH INSET SHAKER STYLE  
BOTTOM

COUNTERTOP: MARBLE  
SLAB WITH CONTRASTING  
ISLAND

Once you've chosen either your cabinets or countertops, ensure the complementing element is just that—complementary. Anderson advises getting countertops that are in contrasting tones to their cabinets: “Dark top, light base. Light top, dark base,” she says. “And when you don't try to get an exact match with your cabinets (and typically miss the exact match), you will get a complementary look that says, ‘I wake up looking this good.’”

### Cabinet considerations

Cabinets are perhaps a more permanent choice than countertops. It is more common to install new countertops on old cabinets than vice versa, so quality is a big factor in your cabinet choice. “Plywood construction is a good choice for durability,” says John Winfree of Diversified Cabinet Distributors, [www.dcdcabins.com](http://www.dcdcabins.com). He adds, “Solid-wood face frames and finishes that are warrantied by the manufacturer are good indicators of the kind of quality construction that will stand up to regular use.”

A modified Shaker style is the most popular wood-cabinet design among Atlanta-area homeowners, says Michael McKelvey of Woodworks Design, [www.woodworks-design.com](http://www.woodworks-design.com). “We are seeing a lot of kitchens specified in a modified Shaker style with oversized rails and

stiles (three inches or more),” he says. “Simple modifications such as the addition of a bead, inset fronts or simple hardware can push the look in either a contemporary or classic direction. ➤

RAILS AND STILES ARE THE “FRAME” ON THE FRONT OF A DOOR PANEL. RAILS ARE THE HORIZONTAL (TOP AND BOTTOM) PIECES OF THE FRAME, AND THE STILES ARE THE VERTICAL (SIDE) PIECES.





TRADITIONAL  
KITCHEN  
CABINETS: WOOD  
WITH RAISED  
PANEL DOORS  
COUNTERTOP:  
EGYPTIAN SAND  
GRANITE

It is a very versatile frame and panel choice for doors and drawer fronts.”

Another way to ensure your cabinets have long-lasting style is to choose neutral colors. And to ensure they’ll have a long-lasting lifespan, choose a durable finish. “Catalyzed-stain finishes for cabinets are more durable than other stains,” Winfree says. “Look for KCMA certification to demonstrate that the finishes have been tested for resistance to various common substances.”

For a more modern look with built-in durability, lacquer cabinetry is a great choice. “A good-quality lacquer is great at resisting stains, is very hard so it holds up extremely well and offers a smooth finish that’s easy to clean since there are no crevices for things to get lodged,” says Lee Bryan, co-owner of Pedini of Atlanta LLC, [www.pediniatlanta.com](http://www.pediniatlanta.com).

## Topping it off

Every expert has a preference when it comes to countertop material. The truth is, there is no universally perfect material; there is only a perfect-for-you countertop. Here, we’ve outlined three of today’s top materials: stone, quartz and wood.

### Stone

Stone countertops are likely the most well-known and revered countertop material in America today. “Natural stone (granite, marble, soapstone, etc.) has been used for centuries as a surfacing material,” says Mark Meriaux with VT Stone Surfaces, [www.vtstonesurfaces.com](http://www.vtstonesurfaces.com). “It has been and always will be timeless. Everything around may change, but stone will still be here.” ●



MODERN  
KITCHEN  
CABINETS:  
MAN-MADE  
PRODUCT THAT  
LOOKS LIKE  
WOOD  
COUNTERTOP:  
QUARTZ

Baez points specifically to imported Italian marble, noting its historic, centuries-old purpose as a countertop material. “Marble is the stone of choice for the growing number of white and light gray/taupe kitchens being built in the Atlanta market,” she says. “Carrara has a warm white and gray color palette with soft veining. It’s ideal for its classic appeal, and Calacatta is another very popular choice.”

Despite widespread popularity, stone countertops can require regular maintenance. “Granite countertops are stain-resistant if a good-quality sealer is applied,” says Debra Bobo of CSI Kitchen & Bath Studio, [www.csikitchenandbath.com](http://www.csikitchenandbath.com). “Marble is a softer material and must be sealed; greater care should be taken to wipe up spills—especially acids like citrus juices, tomato juice or wine—immediately.”

### Quartz

With an aesthetic similar to granite, quartz countertops have become a choice rising in popularity over the last decade. For most quartz-countertop offerings, the material is made of quartz, a natural mineral, which is engineered for improved durability and ease of maintenance.

“Quartz countertops are non-porous, therefore inherently stain-resistant and require no sealing or additional maintenance to keep them looking as great as the day they were installed,” Meriaux says.

### Wood

For many Atlantans, the natural look of wood is preferable among countertop choices, giving the kitchen a warmer look than stone or quartz. “Wood just gets better and better as it ages,” says Joshua Johnson, president of J. Aaron LLC, ►





COTTAGE STYLE  
KITCHEN  
CABINETS: HAWTHORNE  
MAPLE PAINTED, FULL  
OVERLAY SHAKER STYLE  
COUNTERTOP: RADIANT  
EVEREST WHITE QUARTZ

[www.jaaronwoodcountertops.com](http://www.jaaronwoodcountertops.com). "It's a natural product and will never go out of style."

Though it may have a timeless aesthetic, in order to make a wood countertop last, you must choose a good finishing product. Johnson recommends a marine varnish sealer, which is 100 percent water- and stain-proof and soaks deeply into the wood fiber, then hardens to create an extremely durable finish that only needs to be applied once. Anderson says that Craft Art wood countertops are treated with a Waterlox tung oil finish, which also penetrates and fills the wood pores, making the surface extremely resistant to food, drinks and heavy daily use. "Water and other materials just bead up on the surface," she says, adding, "This isn't your grandmother's butcher block!"

Wood countertops are sensitive to chemicals, however, so a simple soap-and-water wash is all that's needed for cleaning. If damage does occur, "you can sand out any problems you have," Baez says.

For maximum durability, choose a countertop made of domestic wood. "They are already acclimated to this environment," Baez says, noting that Craft Art's domestically farmed black walnut is its most popular material for 2013 and also happens to be one of the most durable choices. And to go the extra distance in terms of durability, choose a countertop with a distressed finish, so any new scratches don't stand out. ●



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Photography by Michael McKelvey  
courtesy of Woodworks Design

## Built-In Organization

One of the most exciting cabinet trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is integrated storage solutions. It seems every year an exciting, new built-in organizer is introduced to the market. Here are the mainstays that can help you make the most of your kitchen space:

- Rollout shelves in base cabinets
- Pullout spice rack
- Pullout trash/recycling bin
- Cutlery insert
- Motorized pull-down shelves and touch latches
- Corner units that make the most of dead corner spaces
- Pop-up appliance shelves
- Pullout pantry
- Filing cabinet built into a desk in the kitchen

—Information provided by Debra Bobo of CSI Kitchen & Bath Studio; John Winfree of Diversified Cabinet Distributors; Lee Bryan of Pedini of Atlanta LLC; and Michael McKelvey of Woodworks Design



CONTEMPORARY  
KITCHEN  
CABINETS:  
ROTARY-CUT MAPLE,  
GUNSTOCK COLOR  
COUNTERTOP:  
ZEBRAWOOD SEALED  
WITH SATIN MARINE  
VARNISH

## What's new

We asked local experts about new, exciting products coming soon to the cabinet and countertop market, and we found a pattern: porcelain. At Pedini of Atlanta, porcelain and stone-veneer finishes are being introduced. "The look is great when the kitchen is part of the living space, as it does not look as much like a service area as part of the room's decor," Bryan says.

At VT Stone Surfaces, Meriaux tells us of a new, large-format porcelain and ceramic countertop. "Think tiles the size of natural-stone slabs," he describes. "One that we will offer is called Dekton from Cosentino, the makers of Silestone. These have all the durability of porcelain and ceramic tile with virtually unlimited patterns and designs that will be possible. It may still be a couple of years away, but I expect to see this product begin to take off initially in commercial buildings, with residential design to follow." ►

*Editorial Resources begin on page 67.*



# RESOURCES

## AGM Imports

6175 Northbelt Pkwy., Suite E  
Norcross, GA 30071  
(770) 903-3850  
www.agmimports.com  
see ad on pg. 20

## Atlanta Design & Build

(770) 565-8999  
www.atlantadesignbuild.com  
see ad on pg. 57

## Artistic Remodeling

10465 Ash Rill Drive  
Alpharetta, GA 30022  
(678) 689-3300  
see ad on pg. 35

## AYS Restoration and Renovation

5087 Cumming Hwy  
Canton, GA 30115  
(404) 319-0359  
www.aysrestoration.com  
see ad on pg. 66

## Cabinet & Stone City

5845 Oakbrook Pkwy., Suite E & F  
Norcross, GA 30093  
(770) 582-0098  
www.stonecityinc.com  
see ad on pg. 2

## Classic Bars

5020 Atlanta Road, SE  
Smyrna, GA 30080  
(404) 350-9806  
www.classicbars.net  
see ad on pg. 54

## Construction Resources

2 Atlanta Showrooms  
(404) 378-3132  
www.constructionresourcesusa.com  
see ad on pg. 34

## Consult-A-Home-Pro (CAHP)

(770) 642-2277  
www.consultahomepro.com  
see ad on pg. 65

## CSI Kitchen and Bath Studio

6527 Jimmy Carter Blvd., Suite C-2  
Norcross, GA 30071  
(770) 729-1999  
www.csikitchenandbath.com  
see ad on pg. 71

## Diversified Cabinet Distributors

5250 Brook Hollow Pkwy.  
Norcross, GA 30071  
(678) 325-3600  
www.dcdcabineets.com  
see ad on pg. 30

## Five Star Painting

(770) 983-6085  
www.fivestarpainting.com/suwanee-ga/  
see ad on pg. 68

## Floor & Décor

Four Locations in Metro Atlanta  
www.flooranddecoroutlets.com  
see ad on pg. 4

## Griffith Construction & Design

(770) 560-0400  
www.gcdinc.net  
see ad on back cover

## Hall Design Build

(678) 283-7530  
www.halldesignbuild.com  
see ad on pg. 66

## Harbour Towne Construction

(770) 455-1930  
www.harbourtowne.net  
see ad on pg. 68

## Home Creations

(404) 456-8132  
www.myhomecreations.com  
see ad on pg. 14

## Johnny Rhino Residential Remodelers

(877) 997-4460  
www.johnnyrhino.com  
see ad on pg. 26

## Keiffer Phillips Patricia Brown Builders, Inc

2451 Cumberland Parkway  
Suite 3409  
Atlanta, GA 30339  
(404) 949-8115  
www.keifferphillips.com  
see ad on pg. 11

## National Association of the Remodeling Industry

(770) 516-2091  
www.nariatlanta.org  
see ad on pg. 67

## Old Castle Surfaces

1400 W. Marietta Street, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
(800) 355-3108  
www.oldcastlesurfaces.com  
see ad on pg. 26

## Pull-Out Shelf Company

(770) 389-0469  
www.pulloutshelf.com  
see ad on pg. 28

## Regents Renovation Company

(678) 529-9292  
www.regentsrenovation.com  
see ad on pg. 54

## Renewal Design - Build

(404) 378-6962  
www.renewaldesignbuild.com  
see ad on pg. 32

## RL Hayes

(770) 667-1518  
www.rlhayesinc.com  
see ad on pg. 12

## Schuon Kitchens & Baths, Inc.

Atlanta (678) 705-4346  
Roswell (770) 643-9000  
www.skbi.com  
see ad on pg. 68

## VT Industries

(800) 872-7457  
www.vtindustries.com  
see ad on pg. 28



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