

If you are going to commit funds towards a custom countertop or sink made from concrete, the thoughtful buyer has to think long-term investment. But how to discern whether your surface/sink will become a true design asset to your kitchen or bath...and increase your homes value over the years?

I prefer to start with the tangibles. A high-end kitchen or bath should make you feel comfortable. The kitchen is the heart of the home. Incorporate features that are an extension of your personality and the way you live/cook/entertain. A kitchen surface should also be durable, with craftsmanship and material combinations which create a timeless design. Great design is a combination of pleasing proportions, utility, clever features, and color. Concrete surfaces/sinks are becoming more popular vs. 1.2" slab materials, and for good reasons. A look into any current decorating magazine will reveal several trends:

- Thick surfaces
- Tactile surfaces
- Earthy colors
- Mix and match surfaces
- Unique sink designs...that are ADA-compatible

Thick surfaces have become standard in many of our restaurant and home surfaces. The ability of concrete to be formed into *any thickness you specify* (3" is very popular) to create a distinct horizontal division between the cabinets below and the décor above. Concrete is ideal for this as it can be poured in one piece without the lamination (glue) lines encountered with thin slab surfaces. This adds a linear element of strength, visually and in structure to the surface. Designers often use our thick surfaces as separators between "busy" cabinets and "calm" upper walls or vice-versa. See Ocanos picture below which illustrates this concept.

Concrete surfaces are highly polished, yet still retain a tactile surface texture, much like a well-worn seashell. This sensual touch is very inviting...a truly luxurious feeling unmatched by any other countertop material. Just as "flat" wall paints are more forgiving of smudges than "gloss", so are matte concrete surfaces. This fits well with our clients vision of a beautiful surface that is simpler to maintain. When our clients see and touch the various surface finishes, they usually select matte.

Concrete is available in unlimited colors. We have 100's of standard colors, but can match any swatch. Earth tones are consistently top sellers because they add warmth to your kitchen/bath design.

Chocolate brown, slate grey, and beach sand white are popular, and are complementary to many color schemes. They have stood the test of time, and I predict will be popular well into the future. White is an especially in-demand color for outdoor kitchens due to its lack of heat retention.

Bright, busy colors should be used very carefully to avoid visual fatigue.

Mixing and matching surface designs in kitchens is popular for several reasons. We start by asking how a kitchen will be used and then isolate the "high-value" surfaces e.g. islands where people gather vs. "low-value" surfaces e.g. where appliances, and other "stuff" will reside. Why pay extra for a surface that is of less importance when you can reserve that money for a higher-value surface? You will add visual interesting surface designs and lower your budget. Examples include pairing a monotone, calm 1.5" thick surface with a 3" thick, sparkling terrazzo or glass island top. Providing a niche for a custom cutting board *in the surface* creates a stylish yet practical design element which simplifies food prep, and is the very essence of great design.

Unique sink designs add an element of WOW to any home or commercial project.

Our signature installation technique creates a **trompe l'oeil whereby the vanity appears to be floating.** By floating the sinks, the vanity is separated from all walls and its artistic form is more purely defined as a beautiful, yet purposeful sculpture. The J-trap and water supply lines are hidden in the body of the sinks, and routed directly into the wall

We have placed our custom sinks in many an upscale restaurant/club, and consistently hear from patrons how the vanity was the most memorable part of the evening! e.g. the wine and steaks were nice...but...you **HAVE TO SEE THE LADIES ROOM SINK!!!** Architects and Designers know that if you create a special aura with interesting vanities, the entire experience becomes special, and most importantly...brings in repeats and referrals.

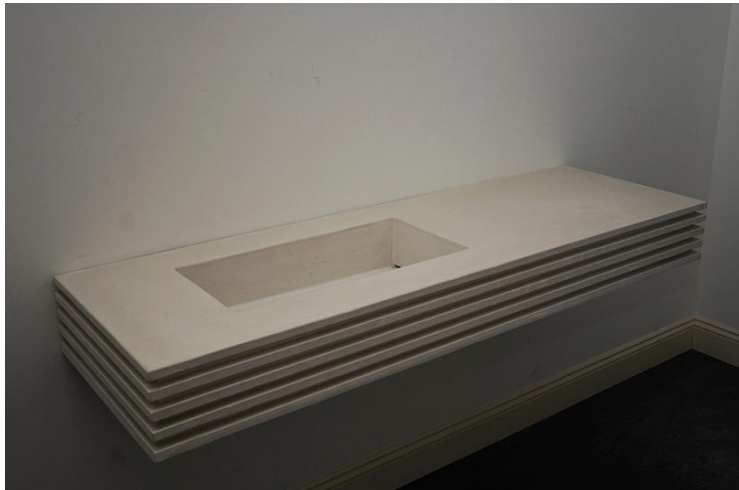
Thank you for taking the time to explore a few concepts that could be incorporated into your project. I invite you to share with us your design inspirations. Lets make something special together.

Jeff Downing
(813) 784 5211 cell/text

Ocanos



Parallel



Wedge

