

Steel surfaces add style to new kitchens

With today's busy lifestyle, many families are spending quality time together in the kitchen, more than any other room in the house. The kitchen is being redefined to include more living room features such as sitting areas, entertainment units and office spaces to accommodate its new role. No wonder kitchens are one of the top renovation priorities of Canadian homeowners, according to a survey conducted by the Canadian Home Builders Association.

Considering the new role the kitchen plays, it is no surprise that more and more emphasis is being placed on kitchen surfaces such as countertops and cabinets to complement the overall look of the kitchen. Steel can be easily incorporated into a diverse array of kitchen designs that can add warmth and style. Steel offers homeowners elegant kitchen options that are durable, functional and promote a healthier living environment.

Kitchen cabinets are the latest items to make the switch to steel, as homeowners follow the trend towards the high-tech, steel kitchen. Steel cabinetry can be designed to fit any size kitchen, which makes steel a very flexible choice for homeowners that are renovating an existing kitchen or building a new one. Aside from their stylish and aesthetic appeal, steel cabinets, unlike their pressed wooden counterparts, are virtually toxin-free and do not emit any off-gases that can cause headaches, fatigue and even asthma in sensitive individuals. Considering Canadians spend on average 90 per cent of their time indoors and 40 per cent of

households contain at least one hypersensitive individual, this can be a great help in minimizing poor indoor air quality.

Another popular kitchen surface is countertops. After a few years, most countertop surfaces may wear down, lose their protective coating, scratch and warp—all decreasing the surface's ability to be effectively cleaned and sanitized.

Steel countertops are more resistant to scratches than most surfaces, are not treated with any protective coating and will not warp. As a result, they show very little wear, resist bacterial adherence and can be effectively cleaned for many years. In fact, a 1999 study conducted by the Hospitality Institute of Technology and Management, showed that steel kitchen countertops are least likely to harbour dangerous bacteria, when compared to other popular household countertop materials such as granite, plastic laminate, tile, concrete or wood. The fact that steel can be sanitized effectively with a vinegar and water solution prevents consumers from having to repeatedly clean and sanitize countertops with chemically-based disinfectants and cleaning agents—products that can produce harmful indoor air pollutants.

The SteelAlliance is an organization of more than 140 North American steel producers and affiliated organizations that have joined together in an unprecedented industry-wide coalition to educate consumers about the benefits of steel. For more information about steel, visit www.TheNewSteel.com.

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