

MAY 1992 \$2.50

FOOD & WINE

GOOD TO EAT

**A SPECIAL ISSUE
OF LOW-FAT,
HIGH-ENERGY RECIPES,
FITNESS FACTS,
AND THE FRENCH AND
CHINESE FOOD
WAYS TO HEALTH**



AT HOME WITH FOOD & WINE

WATERWORKS



*Everything
for the
Kitchen
Sink
By Jan
Weimer*

Hansgrohe's Pharo
kitchen mixer; \$405.



Clockwise from upper right: Villeroy & Boch's Venus sink (#9366/00); \$980. Eljer's octagonal Monaco sink (#212-1280); from \$223 for white to \$347 for premium colors. Kroin's kitchen-bar faucet (#KV1C); \$495. Franke Elements round stainless basin (#ER110); \$340. Kohler's Entrée sink (#K-5992); from \$275 for white to \$495 for premium colors. Gemini's Fiore washing machine stops; \$110. Gemini's Fiore deck-mounted faucet set; \$410. Gemini's Australis wall-mounted faucet set; \$431. Hansa America's Ronda single-lever faucet with pullout sprayer; \$580. Gemini's Arwa-Class Prestige faucet with telescopic sprayer (#39680/071); \$585. Grohe America's EuroPlus faucet with pullout sprayer; \$389. Gemini's Fiore wall-mounted faucet set; \$320.

Once a straightforward combination of a basin, a spigot and faucets, today's kitchen sink has been transformed to become part of what marketing newspeak calls a food preparation system. By choosing modular components that can be linked into one unit, you can style a system to suit your needs and taste. Everything even remotely connected with cooking is thrown into such a work center, including—almost incidentally—the kitchen sink.

These systems can be fitted with drainers, colanders, baskets, cutting boards and removable sections for holding trash, recyclable items and compost scraps. You can also choose ice-cold chillers, 190-degree hot-water taps, hand-cream dispensers, fil-

tering devices and pop-up drains.

Once you've made your selections, packing in all the elements is somewhat like arranging four elephants inside a Volkswagen. So to ensure that a sink ledge is big enough to accommodate the faucets and other accessories you want, it is best to select all your components at the same time. Then you can work out the layout of any attachment holes that need to be cut.

SINKS

The central element on this somewhat cluttered stage remains the sink. Here are some of the basic factors to consider when purchasing one.

Configuration. Formerly limited to the realm of rectangles and squares with rounded corners, today's sinks explore the range of geometry and whimsy, giving you a chance to indulge your taste and aesthetics. Size is a more practical matter, however; the rule of thumb is to purchase a sink with the largest interior dimensions a countertop can support (consult with a professional on

this). If your space is limited, sinks divided into two smaller basins probably won't be efficient (think of soaking those roasting pans). Instead, choose one large sink with a garbage disposal unit on the side.

Double- or triple-bowl combinations incorporating half-size

sinks and/or disposal bins initially appear to be an organizer's dream. But, ultimately, many small spaces might limit your options rather than increase them. Question, too, whether a model with an attached drainboard will really meet



your needs. Almost sculptural in appearance, such units are attractive but take up precious counterspace and can be a nuisance to keep clean. A sink's utilitarian value lies not only in



its size and shape but also in the way it is mounted. Cleaning is easiest when a sink is undermounted (below the level of the countertop), flush mounted or integrated with your countertop (made integrally, without seams, as a continuous part of the countertop).

Material. The most practical, durable sink is made from 18/10 (the ideal ratio of chromium to nickel) stainless steel. A smooth surface is preferable to a brushed grain, which can dull, and a satin finish to a mirrorlike finish, which can scratch. Stainless detractors deride its industrial look and propensity for spotting. Enamelled cast iron is an attractive alternative; be forewarned, though, that enamel can chip and that dark colors need constant cleaning in hard-water areas.

Relatively new synthetic materials—acrylics and composites—also come in a range of colors and, unlike enamel, do not chip. The synthetic sinks making the biggest splash are those created from such solid-surface materials as Corian. When the sinks are fabricated as an integral part of a countertop and backsplash, the look is streamlined and

cleaning is easy, since there are no seams in which dirt can accumulate. Scratches and stains can be repaired, but if severe damage occurs, the entire module will have to be replaced. Another new material is a lightweight concrete that is cast in seamless units.

FAUCETS

As sinks have gotten bigger and more attractive, spouts have grown longer, taller and more sculptural.

The best-quality faucets are made of heavy solid brass, which can be plated with other metals. Chrome is the most practical choice for plating. If you prefer brass, look for a smooth finish with electrostatically applied lacquer. If you want a colored finish, the most durable one is a coat of epoxy powder that has been applied to the brass and baked. The other option, an enamel coating, can chip. Both the epoxy and the enamel have a tendency to fade and can be difficult to keep clean.

Many kitchen chores leave you with slippery hands, so faucets that can be wrist or elbow operated are a good idea. Lever-type handles are

the best for this, whether mounted on the sides or combined in a single unit that controls both the flow of water and the mix of hot and cold. If you like this style, the best bet—particularly for large multiple sinks—is a top-mounted lever with a spray hose built into the head. Some models even have conservation and safety features that restrict water flow and control temperature. Opinions

vary considerably about which faucets are easiest to maneuver, so be sure you try them out before you make your purchase.



Clockwise from upper left: Kroin's faucet set (#KV4); \$745. Sepco's Cambridge faucet set (#902.1); \$407. Vance's Modul'ere round sink (#EME18); \$195. Gemini's Arwa-Twin 2 faucet with telescopic sprayer (#89600/008); \$495. Franke Elements square stainless sink (#EO110); \$240. Gemini's French Colonial sink and faucet (#GB136); \$690. Jado's Colonial faucet set (#883/018); \$661. Kohler's Bon Vivant sink (#K-5911); from \$539 for white to \$973 for premium colors. Franke Elements sinks (#EP110-13 at left, \$270; #EP110-6 at right, \$195). Franke's Sunline double sink (#SL660); \$1,090. American Standard's Connoisseur Corner double sink; from \$444 for white to \$674 for premium colors. Franke Progresso 2½-bowl sink (#PN690); \$655.





Everpure drinking water system (#S-200); \$260 including faucet.

FILTERS

Because of concern about contaminated water, Americans spent more than \$500 million on filtering systems in 1990. Too often, though, these expenditures treated consumers' worries, not their water. In some instances, people were installing filters they didn't need; in other cases, they were buying the wrong filters.

If you are concerned about the quality of your water, the first step is to have it analyzed by a laboratory approved by the state or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Water Quality Association (P.O. Box 606, Lisle, IL 60532; 708-505-0161, Ext. 219), a trade group, can supply you with a list of its member companies that conduct tests by mail. Among these are National Testing Laboratories (800-458-3330), WaterTest (800-426-8378) and Suburban Water Testing Laboratories (800-433-6595). Based on the analysis, you can select the kind of filter that's right for you.

The primary types of filters rely

on distillation, activated carbon, reverse osmosis or ultraviolet disinfection. These can correct problems ranging from an unsavory taste or poor cosmetic appearance to hazardous microbiological or other types of pollution. Each filtration method is most effective for a specific condition. Activated carbon, for example, would be the most suitable choice for radon, whereas reverse osmosis or distillation would be good for lead. Once a problem is diagnosed, choosing the appropriate filter is a simple matter. Before you purchase one, contact NSF International, which will provide a list of drinking water treatment units that have met its standards (P.O. Box 130140, Ann Arbor, MI 48113; 313-769-8010). For additional information, call the EPA's safe drinking water hot line (800-426-4791). ■

Jan Weimer, a journalist and food consultant, is working on a kitchen book to be published by William Morrow.

A BUYER'S GUIDE

Listed below are the manufacturers whose products are featured in this article. You can contact these sources to obtain more information or to find the retail outlet nearest you.
American Standard; 800-821-7700, Ext. 4023.

Eljer; 800-4-ELJER-2.
Franke; 800-626-5771.
Gemini; 602-750-8433.
Grohe America; 708-350-2600.
Hansa America; 800-343-4431 or in Illinois 312-733-0025.

Hansgrohe; 408-479-0515.
Jado; 805-482-2666.
Kohler; 800-4-KOHLER, Ext. 800.
Kroin; 617-492-4000.
Sepco; 718-257-2800.
Vance; 708-867-6000.
Villeroy & Boch; 201-575-0550.