

Move your kitchens and baths into 17th century France

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CTW Features

The green movement has made natural materials like stone, concrete mix and even new types of granite trendier than ever, experts say.

"People want distinctive, one-of-a-kind, functional works of art with shapes and textures that appear organic," said Barbara Capella Loehr, editor of www.KitchenBathDesign.com.

"Natural stone, cast stone, concrete — these materials fit the bill." Cast stone sinks present the opportunity to blend stone with another material, Loehr said.

"Cast stone sinks have an overall unique look," said Joshua Johnson, president of J. Aaron, based outside of Atlanta. "Everything about them is kind of old world. It brings about a different feel to them. They look like

a kitchen out of 17th century France."

Compared to other types of sinks like marble (which is limited to whatever colors of marble the piece is cut out of) and fire clay (which usually only comes in colors like white and biscuit), cast stone or concrete sinks can be mixed with different colors.

"The sky is the limit on the color," says Johnson, whose farmhouse and vanity sinks run about \$2,500. "We even made one that was pink."

For durability, consider the new e-granite kitchen sink from Oak Brook, Ill.-based [Elkay](#). While the company's lifeblood has been stainless steel, requests for more sinks in a solid surface or stone prompted the creation of the e-granite brand, which has the natural look and feel of stone but is more resilient.

"It's made of 85 percent granite silica and can withstand heat of up to 536 degrees, which means you can put a hot pot right in the bottom of that sink and it won't hurt it," says [Ann Rottinghaus](#), marketing communications manager for the plumbing division at [Elkay](#).

"In the kitchen, stainless steel is still the most popular choice for sinks," Loehr said. "But granite is now beginning to make inroads because of its durability, and because people can match their granite countertops."

Then there is natural stone, which Loehr said carries a "wow" factor, especially in the bath and powder room.

"A drop-in or vessel sink made of natural or cast stone really makes a design statement and allows people to express their personal style and add a personal touch," Loehr said.

