

## DOLLARS AND SINKS

Whichever style you choose, a quality one will cost plenty

By DEBRA SMITH  
Herald Writer

The kitchen sink never gets the credit it deserves.

Here, you scrape, stack and scrub a lifetime of dishes. You rinse salad greens, peel potatoes, fill pasta pots and drip-dry pans.

A baby, cradled by a loving hand, takes her first sudsy baths here.

Yet we're always threatening to toss out the sink with everything. When it's time to choose a new one, this essential workhorse of the kitchen deserves some attention.

Manufacturers have given the sink plenty.

Today you can select from designs with unconventional shapes and multiple basins; minimalist stainless steel styles or apron-fronted vintage reproductions; materials as varied as cast iron and granite; and handy extras such as basin racks and cutting boards.

With sinks, expect to get what you pay for, said Chandra Sadro. She runs an Everett-based design and planning service, Sadro Design Studio, focused on kitchens and bathrooms.

"People have sticker shock on sinks," she

said.

A quality, midpriced sink costs \$500 to \$1,000, she said. The high-end sinks that border on art can cost \$2,000 or more.

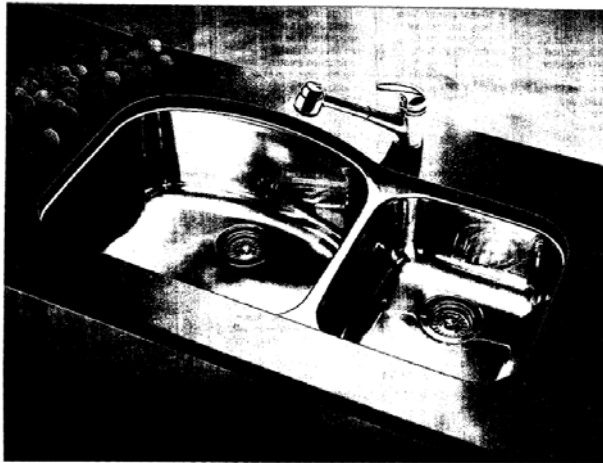
Sure, there are sinks that cost less, but the customer trades durability and function, she said. A cheap stainless steel sink, for instance, consists of thin metal that scratches easily and sounds "tinny." And don't forget the way it looks paired with those granite countertops and maple cabinets.

When it's time to shop, do more than peruse the pretty pamphlets, Sadro said. The type of countertop you choose can influence the sink. Popular under-mount sinks, for instance, only work with hard surfaces such as granite. And don't assume the sink you choose will fit. Apron-fronted sinks almost always require custom cabinets. Whatever the sink, always measure, she said. Manufacturers list specifications online or bring a tape measure to the store.

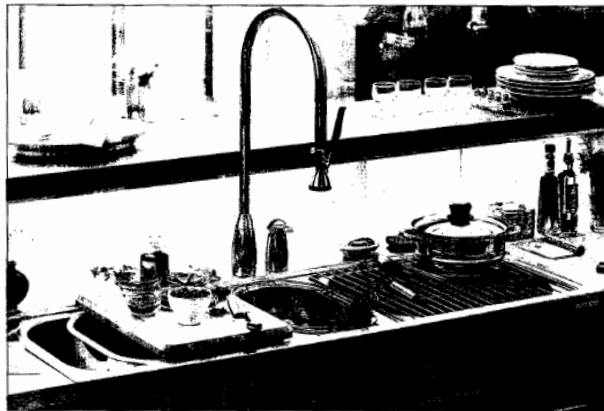
"That's what designers do," she said. "They don't just pick things, they make sure the math works and it functions well. People can do this on their own if they stop and do a little research."

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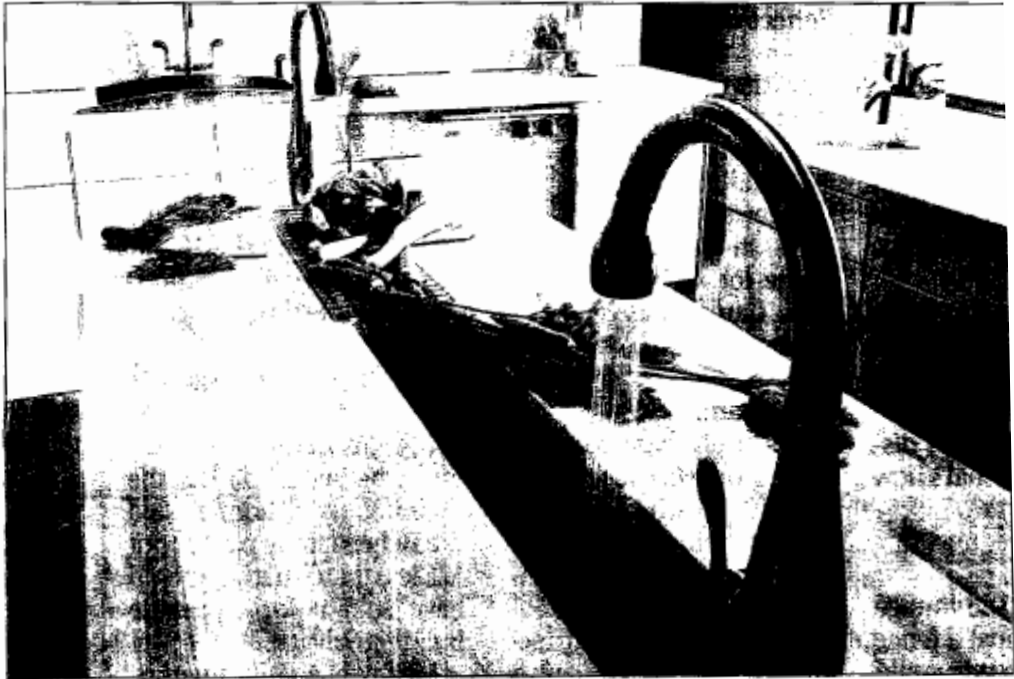
**BEYOND TWIN BASINS:** Banish the idea that kitchen sinks have to have two basins. Some makers offer a full-size basin with a scaled-down second for the disposal. Blanco offers "1 1/2" basins (above). Kohler has a "smart divide" option: essentially a single basin with a short divider so the sink can be used as two or one.



**MULTIPLES:** Several manufacturers offer triple-basin sinks, such as the Kohler Pro Task Center, above. Usually one sink is smaller and might hold the disposal, so the kitchen waste doesn't soil the place where the dishes are washed.



**UNDER-MOUNT.** Everyone, it seems, wants the clean lines and convenience that comes with under-mount sinks like the Kohler style above. With no lip, you can brush the crumbs on the counter right into the sink. The catch is under-counter sinks only work with a hard-surface countertop such as granite.



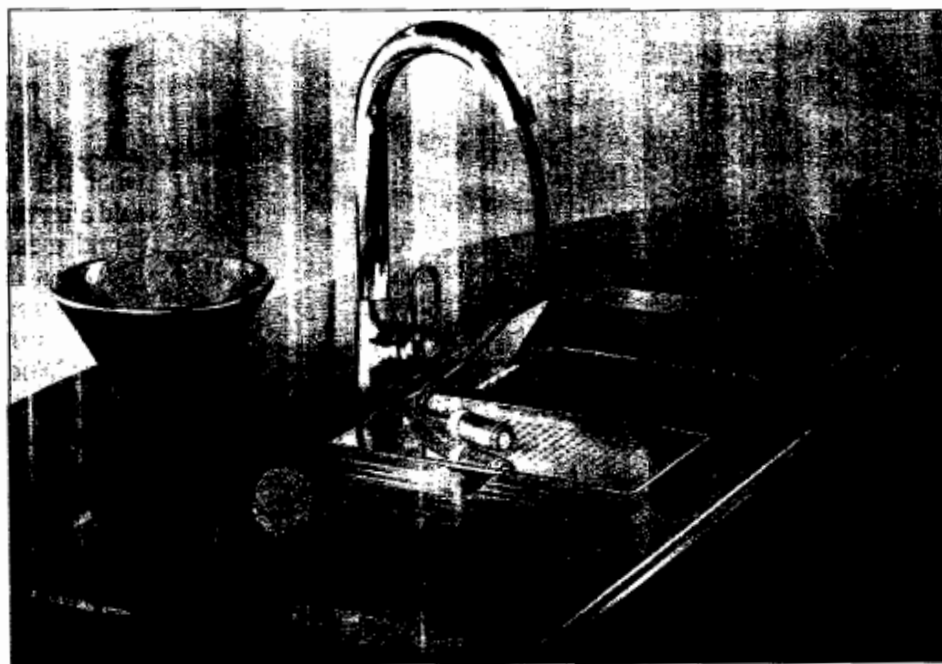
**ENTERTAIN, PREP:** The ultimate convenience is an extra sink in the island or bar. They come in unusual shapes: round, oblong — Elkay features a long, squiggly one in its Mystic series. Several manufacturers show trough styles with disposals.



**MATERIALS:** A high-quality stainless steel sink pairs with stainless appliances, but so can a cast-iron sink with an enamel finish. Some makers offer granite sinks that are coated to resist stains and scratches. Totally Bamboo, above, even offers a bamboo sink.



**APRON FRONT:** This new take on a farmhouse classic (above by Kohler) continues to be wildly popular. Some people like using the single, deep basin, and for others it's about cultivating a vintage look. Those with uber-contemporary kitchens can pull off an apron-front sink by choosing stainless steel.



**ACCESSORIES:** Manufacturers often now offer extras that can provide extra functionality, such as drain racks, cutting boards and colanders like the Franke granite sink above. The stainless steel cutting board fits over one side of the sink, adding counter space.