

Feature Story

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K/BIS 2012 — Innovative new and hot kitchen and bath happenings

BY PETER SCHOR
Showroom specialist

The Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, held from April 24 – 26 at McCormick Place in Chicago, was an "excellent" show, with more than 500 exhibitors. There was a heavy turnout of manufacturers from China and Taiwan, some of whom meet American and European ISO quality standards.

The best K/BIS keynote speech in the last 25 years

This was one of the best keynote speeches that I have ever attended. The subject was the connection between the Internet, technology and our industry. Michael E. Werner, president and CEO of Globe Union Group Inc., provided an overview of how we should envision the future in business and how technology advances will alter the industry. Werner addressed the ways that technology impacts our current landscape, how it has evolved and how we can best prepare for upcoming shifts. Through ongoing advancements in technology, everything has become possible, accessible and more affordable.

Navigating and embracing the redefined course of business as industry professionals will ensure the success of the industry. With proven facts and evidence, Werner showed the capacity-filled audience that the Internet is a friend to all and that it is not the case of "the showroom versus the Internet." If you think that having a website is enough, you will be surprised to learn what has happened and what will take place in the next couple of years. (Mary Jo Martin, editorial director of *The Wholesaler*, did an exclusive article on Michael Werner's presentation on page 48 in this issue. Don't miss it!)

The Best of K/BIS 2012 awards

The winners of the Best of KBIS were announced on Wednesday, April 25. The eight winning products were selected for their functionality, quality/durability, flexibility, aesthetics/style and innovation. The winners were:

Best Universal Design Product:

The Elevance Rising Wall bath by Kohler (<http://www.kohler.com/>)

A stylish alternative to traditional walk-in baths, the Elevance Rising Wall provides a traditional bathing experience, while offering increased accessibility. The extra-wide opening, integrated grab bar and chair-height seat make entering and leaving easier than a traditional walk-in bath. Elevance provides comfortable soaking depth with an integral relaxing waterfall fill and an ergonomic back and neck rest. It is designed to fit into a standard 60" bath footprint for remodels and new builds.

Best Green Product: MotionSense™ faucets by Moen (<http://www.moen.com/>)

MotionSense provides an intuitive, hands-free kitchen faucet experience that responds to users' simple hand movements to activate water flow. There are three ways to turn on faucets with MotionSense: the wave sensor at the top of the faucet, the ready sensor near the base of the faucet that identifies when an object is placed beneath the spout and the handle on the side of the faucet, which offers traditional manual operation.

Best of Bath – Gold Award:

Redi Trench by Tile Redi USA LLC (<http://www.tileredi.com/>)

The most exciting marriage of design and function in the bath industry, Redi Trench meets the needs of building pros with an innovative, exclusive design added to the established utility you expect from their Tile Ready shower pans. Features give endless design flexibility: any size Redi Base (52" – 72"); Plank pitch™; Molded-in trench; any trench location; any drain location(s) in trench and Your Choice tileable or grate top.

Best of Bath – Silver Award:

Alessa shower base by Fleurco Products Inc. (<http://www.fleurco.com/>)



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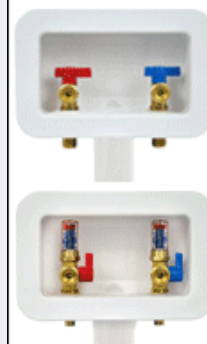
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This bench will appeal to people looking for a seat, a stool or a footrest while showering. Parents will find that washing their kids is easier with the bench. Storage space beneath the seat is perfect for keeping shampoos and soaps at hand. This IAPMO-approved base comes with a selection of decorative linear drain finishes.

Best of Kitchen – Gold Award:

Stainless steel kitchen sink by ROHL LLC (<http://www.rohlhome.com/>)

Handcrafted in Italy, ROHL's line of commercial grade stainless steel and stainless copper plated sinks are designed for the high-end residential market. Unlike traditional stainless sinks, ROHL's sinks are constructed of 16-gauge commercial stainless steel for extreme durability. Crafted with a unique "tangent edge," a rounded, a bottom edge radius and zero-edge side wall, each carries an insulating undercoat, a "quiet coat," reducing splash-back sound.

Best of Kitchen – Silver Award:

Liebherr HC 1540 by Almo Specialty Products (<http://www.almospecialty.com/>)

Liebherr's fully integrated HC 1540 refrigeration unit offers the convenience of 30" sizing with Liebherr's signature sleek, European styling and state-of-the-art performance features. The HC 1540 can be concealed behind cabinetry or stainless steel, giving designers flexibility and the homeowner ideal food storage conditions. This 30" model also offers the possibility of a custom design feel with flush 24" deep cabinet installation, a feature not available in competing units.

Best of Show:

Segmented cooktop: gas/griddle/induction by Bertazzoni (<http://www.bertazzoni.com/>)

Bertazzoni sets the new standard in surface cooking flexibility with its new Design Series segmented cooktops. Housed in a sleek and sophisticated low-profile, stainless steel frame, this new 36" cooktop is available in six combinations of gas, electric griddle and induction to perfectly match any style of cooking.

People's Choice Award:

U-socket wall outlet with built-in USB ports by U-Socket (<http://www.weircomfees.com/>)

U-Socket is an AC receptacle with built-in USB ports that can power any device capable of being charged via USB, including iPods, iPhones and iPads. Designed to replace a traditional wall outlet, U-Socket eliminates the clutter of AC adapters that stick out and take up space. Enjoy the convenience of a charger built right into the wall. U-Socket is also eco-friendly, thanks to its 5-star energy efficient design that auto-senses wattage and only outputs full power if something is connected to it.

Bathroom trends and new products — Electronics

For the past five years, I have written about "electronics" becoming more important in bathrooms each year. These include electronic faucets, floor warming, chromeatherapy showers and baths, LCD-mirrored TVs, magnification mirrors and back-lit lighting systems, washlet seats and bidets, heated toilet seats, steam baths with sound systems, saunas, towel warmers, nightlights with wall switches and more. Digital and LED lighting was everywhere at K/BIS 2012, including digital electronic showerheads that operate from the bather's wall mount remote control. Merging sound and vibrations, the new KOHLER Underscore VibrAcoustic baths are engineered to ease tension and stress. Vibroacoustic is a technology-based sound therapy defined as hearing and feeling sound vibrations through the body. Additionally, the quality of the sound system on the bath is so good that it can be used as a stand-alone audio solution for the entire bathroom. The bather can stream music and podcasts through the bath from a mobile device wirelessly or via hardwire connection. The VibrAcoustic technology is controlled by an intuitive full-color touch screen user interface. Do you have all these types of products in your showroom?

Shower and bathing products

- Pulse Shower Spas (<http://www.pulseshower spas.com/>) offers one of the hottest new bath product categories in years. These pre-plumbed shower columns (panels) are code approved, some even use the existing shower valve, making them ideal for retrofit. You remove the shower arm, quick connect to the 1/2" I.P.S connection and fasten to the wall, all in about 15 minutes.

- Tyrell and Laing International Bathtubs (<http://www.tandlinternational.com/>) offer an exclusive range of cast stone Luxury Lifestyle bathtubs, lavatories and shower bases. These bathtubs have been designed for ultimate relaxation and comfort, along with elegance and beauty. T&L bathtubs are made in the USA, have a 10-year warranty and are offered in an infinite number of colors and numerous textures. Grab this one for your showroom before it is gone.

- ThermaSure (<http://www.temperatesystems.com/>) not only keeps your bath water warm but also gives the bather a warning sign, both audibly and visually, when the water is too hot. It purifies the water, killing off any viruses or bacteria and making it really safe.

Best Bath Products

- Miracle Seat (www.miracleseat.com), the industry's first germ and odor controlled toilet seat – round and elongated. Great looking, it comes in white and colors too. It is not "gadgetry". It has 100%

substance. The vented seat contains a manifold which is connected to an unobtrusive flexible duct leading to a PVC pipe that receives its vacuuming power from its own whisper-quiet 90 CFM exhaust fan. The odor and germs are then vented out of the building through existing bathroom fan ducting or through a separate outside vent. The Miracle Seat can be wired to the bathroom light switch and run whenever the light is on, or can be wired to a separate switch.

- Electric Mirror (<http://www.electricmirror.com/>). Electric Mirror has been selling their exclusive, innovative, and extraordinary Back Lit Lighting Systems, LCD Mirrored TV's, and magnification mirrors with LED lighting in the 5-star hotel bath industry (nationally and globally) for 15 years. Electric Mirror is the brand of choice in the hotel industry and currently owns one-third of the world market share. Their NEW "Visionary Series" Medicine Cabinets and lights are HOT!

- Penguin Toilets LLC (<http://www.penguintoilets.com/>), last year's "Best of K/BIS" award winner, has designed a patented secondary drain system built within the bowl that adds protection against overflow. This toilet has built-in overflow protection that has been IAPMO approved. Do you know of another non-overflow toilet in the industry?

- Great Grabz (<http://www.greatgrabz.com/>) has award-winning designs of signature "Wave" decorative ADA-compliant safety grab bars with exceptional mounting kits.

- Ark Showers (<http://www.arkshowers.com/>) specializes in European inspired bathtub shower screens, a sleek and practical alternative to shower curtains and sliding tub doors. Their single panel, pivoting designs provides the clean, open look of frameless shower doors with the versatility of a bath shower combination. Available in a wide selection of sizes, styles and finishes, with the option of ClearShield® glass coating for ease of cleaning. You must see this wonderful shower door application!

I am sure that I missed many new products in this article. Please let me know what I missed or if there are any new and hot products that you think should be included in future articles. I can be reached via e-mail at pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. I hope it was of great benefit, especially for those who did not come to K/BIS.

Peter Schor, president of Dynamic Results Inc., is a bath/plumbing industry speaker, educator, author, columnist and consultant in the many segments of our industry. For the past 20 years, he conducted seminars and speaks at numerous conventions. Schor has great expertise in the field of showrooms and hotel bathrooms and has won many industry awards. He also consults manufacturers in taking their products to market in the areas of sales, marketing and public relations. Schor can be reached at 1302 Longhorn Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648, phone 916/408-5346, fax 916/408-5899, email <mailto:pschor@dynamic%20resultsinc.com> or visit online at <http://www.dynamicresultsonline.com/>.

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