

# Kitchen & Bath Business product innovator AWARDS 2018

by **CHELSIE BUTLER**

Announcing the winners of the *KBB* 2018 Product Innovator Awards! This year's rock-star panel of judges chose the winning products based on meeting market needs, engineering advancements, aesthetic merit and innovation. Awards go to both the Kitchen and Bathroom Products of the Year; Second- and Third-Place Kitchen and Bathroom winners; and six Honorable Mentions.

This year, we saw everyday products with a twist; customization on everything from coffee makers to bathroom furniture to shower controls; the kitchen as part of the living home; new takes on technology; the celebration of food through preservation and catering to the home chef – indoors and outdoors; and products that solve some of the industry's most common challenges.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S WINNERS!

## MEET THE JUDGES



**CHERYL KEES CLENDENON** is owner and lead designer of the Gulf Coast-based design firm In Detail Interiors and retail shop 1514 Home. A passionate and irreverent designer with a keen eye for design that pushes the envelope, she has

been an influential presence in the design and kitchen and bath industry for 19 years. Attention to detail and bold use of color have earned her recognition in numerous publications and has garnered the In Detail team national accolades and awards. She is also a member of the *Kitchen & Bath Business* Editorial Advisory Board.



**JOHN CONROY** is principal and founding partner of Lawrenceville, N.J.-based Princeton Design Collaborative. He has more than 25 years of experience in the architecture field and assisted in the development of New Jersey's largest American

Institute of Architects' continuing education design program during his tenure at Hillier Architecture. John also played a significant role in recruiting talented students from leading universities and helped build Hillier Architecture as one of the leading design firms in the nation. He chairs the Route One Redevelopment Committee to foster proper design along the corridor.



**LOU SALGE** is the vice president of Four Seasons Design & Remodeling in Angola, Ind. He carries a Michigan Residential Builders License and has been integral in the expansion of his company's service area into the state. Lou has been involved

with the Builders Association of Northeast Indiana since 2012, serving on the Board of Directors since 2013, as secretary (2014) and as vice president (2015-2016). He has a strong interest in emerging design and construction methods, as well as the development of new products and materials. He is also a member of the *Kitchen & Bath Business* Editorial Advisory Board.



**ERIN L. SERVENTI** is the owner/designer of E.L. Designs in Watsonville, Calif. As a Certified Interior Designer with a degree in construction management, she blends the two sides of the business that need to work together for successful remodels.

She thinks about space from two perspectives: the pretty and the practical. Erin is passionate about intentional uses of space, consuming our natural resources wisely and making design changes that can evolve with us in our homes. She is a Universal Design Certified Professional, a Certified Green Building Professional, and she is certified as a LEED-Accredited Professional in Interior Design and Construction.



# KITCHEN PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

THE NEW 48-IN. DUAL-FUEL PRO RANGE offers built-in sous vide, induction and gas – all on the same cooktop. It was designed for what Signature Kitchen Suite calls Technicureans – forward-thinking, socially conscious home chefs who live active lifestyles and want a variety of professional-style, tech-savvy cooking options.

“All of our luxury cooking ranges are intuitive and purposefully designed with leading-edge technologies that fulfill any home chef’s needs,” said Zach Elkin, general manager, Signature Kitchen Suite. “For those who are just starting out with cooking and have an appetite to learn, the range’s modalities simplify techniques and provide more flexibility to prepare food in the best possible way. Advanced home chefs will appreciate the appliance’s precision, power and versatility that work to meet their culinary expectations.”

## 48-in. Dual-Fuel Pro Range

by Signature Kitchen Suite



### PRODUCT FEATURES INCLUDE:

- **Ultra-High** and **Ultra-Low** burners function as reversible and dual-action for searing, stir frying and sauce preparation.
- **Two-Zone Induction** offers temperature and precision control and can be combined for use with a griddle, teppanyaki plate or large cookware.
- The **True-Combi-Steam 18-in. Oven** combines steam and convection cooking, while its 30-in. counterpart features **ProHeat** convection technology with a rear-wall fan that dispenses heat to every rack.
- The range is **Wi-Fi enabled** and uses **SmartThinQ Technology**, which is controllable through the Signature Kitchen Suite app.
- A 10-minute **Speed-Clean Cycle** requires only water for use.

This year’s judges chose the \$14,999 range as this year’s Kitchen Product of the Year for its price point, aesthetics, innovation, technology – and for the fact that it is a one-stop shop appliance with six methods of cooking. The stainless-steel appliance features a black porcelain cooktop with brass-sealed gas burners and a bright blue interior, and it offers zero-clearance installation.

“There has been a lot of excitement around this product, especially since the built-in sous vide functionality is first to market,” said Elkin. “Cooks and critics alike are impressed with its premiere design, and so far, the product has received coveted accolades. We’ll continue building momentum through strong trade show presences at events like the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show that will enable the trade community to engage with our products and ask questions.”



# BATHROOM PRODUCT OF THE YEAR



THE GROHTHERM SMARTCONTROL SHOWER TRIM was designed to deliver proficient water temperature and flow rate control through push-and-turn buttons and offers the option of having up to three shower outlets controlled through a low-profile wall plate. Behind the wall, the Rapido SmartBox Universal Rough-In Valve simplifies the installation by positioning the water supply inlets at the bottom of the valve to correspond with supply lines that come up from the floor.

“SmartControl is a technology that gives the user a feeling of digital precision without the need for digital technology,” said Michael Seum, GROHE’s vice president of design. “Digital platforms, while very interesting, do not offer the direct tactile experience and feedback this offers, and they are much more expensive and complicated to install.”

SmartControl, which starts at \$653, features ergonomic button handles with user-friendly icons. It is available in concealed and exposed versions to fit a variety of bathroom styles, and it is offered in square or round designs with chrome, brushed-nickel or moon white finishes.

“We designed SmartControl with the user experience in mind: Simply select the desired water outlet with clear icons and independently adjust the water flow for each outlet or individual spray,” said Seum. “It’s a personal experience for the consumer every time, and there is no digital system that can replicate this experience at the moment.”

This year’s judges chose this as the Bathroom Product of the Year for the following reasons:

- Brand reliability
- Price point
- Ease of use
- Functionality
- Innovative installation

“The best attributes of this product are the rough-in valve that accommodates plumbing lines from the floor and the integrated sealing system that prevents leaking in the wall,” said Erin Serventi, one of this year’s judges.

It also comes with TurboStat technology, a thermostat that provides the user with the preferred water temperature within a fraction of a second and keeps it consistent throughout the shower experience. A SafeStop button prevents the water temperature from heating to more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and an integrated sealing system keeps water from seeping in behind the wall.

As far as future ideas for SmartControl, Seum says we will have to wait and see, but the company does have plans for this innovative user experience.

## GrohTherm SmartControl and Rapido SmartBox

by GROHE



## SECOND-PLACE WINNERS 24-in. Column Refrigerator by Perlick

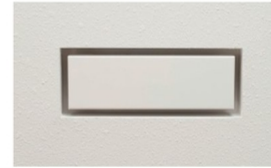
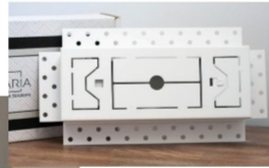
PERLICK RECENTLY STARTED OFFERING full-size appliances to the residential market, as seen with its 24-in. Column Refrigerator, which offers consumers a new way to store, serve and preserve their food. The \$6,850 two-tone, stainless-steel and glass refrigerator is available with an optional commercial-grade steel door and can also accept a custom front panel for a more customized look.

"This refrigerator contributes to a homeowner's well-being by providing peace of mind that their fresh – often expensive – food items are being preserved at optimal levels," said Stephanie Muraro Gust, product marketing manager, Perlick Residential. "Proper preservation ensures produce retains more nutrients and stays fresher, longer. In addition to the refrigerator's technology, its aesthetics also support a healthier lifestyle, as the unit was designed to display fresh ingredients at their finest, enticing homeowners to indulge in the nutritious food items."

The unit – a collaborative effort between Perlick and Madison, Wis.-based Design Concepts – features the QuatroCool Preservation System, which combines the power of temperature, air quality and humidity to maintain the nutrients and prolong freshness of the ingredients. The system also includes four independently controlled temperature zones, dual-chamber air filtration and electronic humidity control to preserve with precision.

"I really like the fact that it functions as at a high level of performance," said Cheryl Kees Clendenon, one of this year's judges. "The fit and finish are good, and I would use the slide-in marinating pan all the time."

The refrigerator uses LED theater lighting to showcase what's inside, and a PerliQ touchscreen control provides smart preset temperatures for each of the four zones. Because industry and consumer response to the product has been so positive, Perlick plans to expand its portfolio to include more sizes and configurations.



## Drywall Pro by Aria Vent

THE DRYWALL PRO IS AN INVISIBLE AIR REGISTER for supply and return vents in the drywall. It is designed with a metal corner bead that is mudded into the walls or ceilings, so the vent is contoured into the surface. It can be retrofitted into any home and customized with paint or wallpaper.

"Vents were always a necessity to facilitate proper air flow, but they were never imagined to be part of the interior design," said Aria Vent CEO Roberta Mantenuto. "No other company has created a comparable product simply because combining vents into your home décor is an entirely new way of thinking."

This model, designed by Aria Vent president,

Paolo Mantenuto, comes in four sizes, ranges in price from \$75 to \$195 and is manufactured in Canada. The shape of its opening optimizes the air throw, which creates a strong, directional push throughout the room, and air flow can be controlled any time after the installation.

"I like that it is a nice, clean install, and it blends more with the architecture and design we're creating," said John Conroy, one of this year's judges. "It's much prettier than looking at a clunky old grill."

Over the next six months, Aria Vent plans to develop into additional markets and hopes to expand into big-box stores within the next year.

## +VENOVO by Poggenpohl

+VENOVO IS A KITCHEN SYSTEM that emulates the living home concept and eliminates the boundary between the kitchen and the living areas. The islands, lowboards, highboards and tall units can be combined and rearranged to fit any home – just like furniture – and no two +VENOVO kitchens are the same.

“+VENOVO is a forward-thinking concept that is responding to global megatrends,” said Hans Henkes, president and CEO of Poggenpohl North America. “It’s a completely new idea for the way people live today. This concept will, over time, become a standard offering. Until then, it reinvents how kitchens are made today by thinking about how people live and move and how it can meet their needs in the future.”

+VENOVO floats on a frame system so it can be moved. One tether – a chrome-plated, stainless-steel mechanical cover under the sink – carries the plumbing, gas and electrical needed for the island. Since each system is customized, pricing is available on request for the made-to-order kitchen.

“The concept of movability is very intriguing,” said Lou Salge, one of this year’s judges. “It has a very high-quality aesthetic about it, and I think there is a possibility there for the future.”



## THIRD-PLACE WINNERS

### Delmar Supreme by QM Drain

THE DELMAR SUPREME OFFERS THE FLEXIBILITY to center a linear drain without moving existing plumbing, solving a common issue in the residential and commercial bath markets. The grates can be cut to a custom length, and multiple drains can be aligned to accommodate any shower design.

“This patent-pending product was designed with an independent base that houses an innovative, built-in, internal rail system,” said QM Drain president, Carlos Bernoti. “Supreme allows you to center your linear drain even when your pipe is off-center up to 8 inches in any direction – without the expense of moving existing plumbing or the labor of building an on-site drain.”

The stainless-steel Delmar Supreme ranges in price from \$500 to \$1,582 and is available in four lengths and four finishes, including satin, polished, satin gold or black. While the linear drain is just one component, QM Drain is launching a whole shower system at KBIS 2019. In terms of the linear drain, the company plans to keep developing new options, expand sales networks and enhance brand awareness.

“As a remodeler, I struggle with linear drains and plumbing and making the designs work,” said Lou Salge, one of this year’s judges. “There are several applications where I could see us using this drain fairly frequently.”



# HONORABLE MENTIONS - KITCHEN

## Built-In Coffee Machine with Home Connect

by Bosch Home Appliances

THE \$3,099 BOSCH BUILT-IN COFFEE MACHINE with the Home Connect app allows users to program their customized coffee and tea orders from anywhere with the Coffee Playlist function. The machine can store favorites for easy access, and it even provides information on coffee bean roasting techniques, bean varieties and harvesting and

several recipes with the Coffee World feature. It also offers voice control via Amazon Alexa.

"At Bosch, we believe a connected home should not only enhance consumers' quality of life but do so via easy-to-use, streamlined technology," said Anja Prescher, director of brand marketing at Bosch Home Appliances. "This product is a completely programmable, coffeehouse-style machine that enables users to conveniently create the perfect cup of coffee every time, ultimately allowing them to savor the moments that matter most."

"To me, the innovative part of this product is its pricing," said John Conroy, one of this year's judges. "It's a high-quality machine that is more affordable for your clients."



## Arcadia Series

by Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet

THE ARCADIA OUTDOOR KITCHEN COLLECTION IS HIGHLIGHTED by the four-board design that runs across each cabinet face, and a brushed, stainless-steel endcap flanks the ends of each board. It is available in two finishes – natural ipe wood with an oiled finish that is suitable for almost any climate or powder-coated stainless steel in charcoal gray.

"Arcadia is a distinct design aesthetic created for contemporary outdoor kitchens," said Russ Faulk, chief designer and head of product for Kalamazoo

Outdoor Gourmet. "With the broad range of colors available, it allows for greater freedom of expression."

Refrigerated and storage units are sold separately, ranging in price from \$3,395 to \$7,125, and are to be used as part of an overall modular system. Clients and designers can create any combination, and the company has plans to expand the collection even further in the future.

"I love that it's a modular system and works in conjunction with the outdoor appliances," said Erin Serventi, one of this year's judges. "The cabinets have all the functions you would want in your indoor kitchen, and it's a great look too!"

## Flush Pizza Oven

by Monogram Appliances

The electric Monogram Flush Pizza Oven offers the performance of a coal- and wood-burning oven. The stainless-steel appliance features an integrated ventilation system that allows it to fit into a standard cabinet, it requires no additional ducting, and it installs flush with the cabinetry. It also cooks Neapolitan pizzas in just two minutes with its precise temperature zones made up of 14 heating elements.

"The oven has been designed with a user-friendly touchscreen control that includes temperature and time presets for a beginner but also allows for a more adventurous baker to customize the stone and dome temperature in 1-degree increments," said Chris Naber and Laura Hammond of FirstBuild, the GE Appliances micro-factory where the appli-



ance was developed. "It has also been designed with an advanced airflow system that keeps the front surface of the oven cool to the touch, which makes it very approachable by everyone in the family."

The \$10,500 pizza oven features a stone that is easy to clean with a brass-bristle brush (included), and it is powered by a standard 240-volt outlet. This year's judges appreciated its ease of use and installation, as well as its space-saving capabilities and short cook time.





## HONORABLE MENTIONS-BATH

### Integrated Deck Designs by MTI Baths

INTEGRATED DECK DESIGNS WERE CREATED to surround the company's freestanding tubs and supply a mounting space for faucets, as well as a spot on which to set whatever your client wants to bring along on the soak.

"Typically, the integrated deck will be installed first, then the deck-mount faucet," said Art Gambill, director of product development for MTI Baths. "After the faucet has been water tested, the tub slides in place against the deck and will be color-match caulked. If the tub features a thermo-air massage system that includes a heated air blower,

that blower can be mounted under the integrated deck, and an access panel can also be provided."

The product, which ranges in price from \$3,500-\$7,000 and was only used in the hospitality market, is now available in custom sizes for residential applications. The company has plans to design optional storage cubbies and adjacent benches that can connect to other areas in the bathroom.

"These integrated decks revolutionize freestanding tub plumbing but still keep the overall aesthetic of the tub," said Erin Serventi, one of this year's judges.



### Elemental Collection by Stone Forest

STONE FOREST'S ELEMENTAL COLLECTION of vanities and integrated sinks allows for total customization of this area of bath consoles and/or stand-alone storage systems. The modular concept allows you to mix sinks, wood drawers and steel or wood shelving in a variety of combinations for every bathroom size.

"In general, the designer and client would begin by reviewing the 20+ standard Elemental configurations together," said Michael Zimmer, Stone Forest's founder and president. "They might choose one of the configurations we show or set the designer loose to create a unique configuration."

The vanities feature legs with knurled fittings—available in brushed brass or polished nickel—in

a combination of stone, wood and steel components. Simple configurations of the collection start at \$2,735, and it is available as a single or double vanity with a choice of two Stone Forest sinks: Ventus and Terra.

Zimmer said the company will be adding accessories to the collection, including a toilet paper holder, towel bars and a robe hook, and more storage solutions, including drawers cut out for the P-trap that can be stacked to maximize storage space. The company is also exploring lighting to round out the collection.

This year's judges were impressed by the Elemental Collection's fit, finish, flexibility and mix of materials.



### TubShroom Chrome Edition by Juka Innovations Corp.

TUBSHROOM IS A HAIR STOPPER that fits inside the existing drain of a tub/shower combo. It is now available in the Chrome Edition, which is an improvement over the original model released in 2016.

"We heard the feedback—from people wanting it to match their bathrooms, to some asking for improved water flow, and some asked

for even easier cleaning," said Serge Karnegie, inventor and co-founder of Juka Innovations Corp. "We addressed all these issues with our latest release."

The \$13.99 Chrome Edition blends in with almost any bathroom, offers more mildew resistance, and its new hole size accommodates maximum water flow. The company plans to roll out a kitchen sink version later this year, and it already offers stoppers for bathroom sinks and stand-up shower stalls.

"This is a simple solution to a problem my clients bring up all the time," said John Conroy, one of this year's judges.