

# Spending on Luxury Kitchen and Bath Amenities Picks Up

Kitchens and baths are getting larger and more upscale, according to a panel of residential architects reporting to the Home Design Trends Survey.

The fourth-quarter findings collected by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) reflected a stronger market compared with the last quarter of 2012 as projects improved steadily over the past two years. Project back-logs also increased.

Among the popular kitchen features that architects are spec'ing for clients are LED lighting, integration with family space, larger pantry space computer area/recharging stations, wine refrigerator/storage, upper-end appliances, and drinking-water filtration systems.

LED lighting also was the most popular bathroom feature followed by large walk-in showers, stall showers without tubes, accessibility/universal design, doorless showers, water-saving toilets, hand showers, radiant-heated floors, and upscale shower systems.

“Now that home prices have hit bottom and are beginning to recover, households are more willing to invest in their homes, looking for more features in new homes that they are purchasing, and willing to undertake higher-end home improvement projects,” says Kermit Baker, chief economist for AIA. “Kitchens and baths tend to be the areas that household first look to when they want to upscale their home as markets improve, just as they remained a high priority even during the depths of the downturn.”