

Customers look to glass for kitchens, bathrooms



REVIEWS

Jerry
Kuyper

Granite countertop surfaces in the kitchen and bathroom remain popular with homeowners today, but glass is making inroads.

David Heigl, McHenry, has been selling glass products, such as CBD Glass, for more than a year. He said it has become a popular commodity for kitchen and bathroom remodeling as well as for use in new-home construction.

Although he lives in McHenry, Heigl's showroom is at 275 Parkway Drive, Suite 212, in Lincolnshire. In his showroom he also sells WoodMode and Brookhaven cabinetry. "I have been with them for 16 years, but our glass product is relatively new, but we do have ample products on display."

Heigl said glass is a clear alternative to granite as a surface. "The aesthetic advantages and practical flexibility offered by thermoformed glass are unmatched," he said.

Created via a process that uses extreme heat to mold flat objects, thermoformed glass is rigid and strong. "I suppose if you hit it with a hammer, the glass would break, but so would granite," Heigl said. "Our product is as strong as any thick glass would be and it is not as fragile as you might think."

Like granite, the thickness can vary from a half inch to an inch-and-a-half.

Heigl said this glass can resist heat, is scratch and stain resilient, highly reflective of light, and available in a range of shapes, colors, and

textures.

"We design what the customer wants and then we have our suppliers or vendors do the cutting, finishing and installing."

Heigl said glass is an option for those who want a clean, modern look in the bath or kitchen.

"Glass is the material of choice today for people who value a distinctive appearance as well as durable practicality in their kitchen or bath," said Vlad Fridman, founder and owner of CBD Glass, a Toronto-based manufacturer of thermoformed and decorative glass.

Each piece of glass "is as unique as a piece of art. And it works in any room," Heigl said.

President of the David Heigl Design Group, he carries the CKD designation behind his name. "I took and passed that seven-hour test 14 years ago and a lot of study and hard work went into getting that designation," he added.

He emphasizes CBD Glass products at his business.

"The medium can be molded into virtually any shape and will draw out the room's reflective light qualities. I can't think of another medium that can do this," Heigl said.

Naturally green-tinted, the hue of glass countertops can be modified using special translucent or opaque colors pre-coated onto the material's underside or via edge-mounted/under-mounted LED colored lights. "The result is a countertop which glows like a soft lamp, radiates like a dazzling gemstone or shimmers luminously like rippling water," Fridman said.

"You also can choose from an array of finishes and textures. The results are

amazing," he added.

CBD Glass offers a thermoformed one-and-a-half-inch-thick glass product that can produce different effects, such as a pebbled or rippled surface or an exterior that appears snowy or frozen.

With its high tensile strength, glass can bear heavy weight, Heigl noted, and be cantilevered more than two feet without any needed support.

See GLASS, page 4

While granite requires a substrate or plywood base underneath, glass countertops are thick and strong enough to do without it.

"Glass is very easy to maintain and to keep clean," Fridman said. "The surface is nonporous and hygienic, and it doesn't absorb anything. Also, glass is heat resistant and relatively stain proof."

Glass could be a safer and more earth-friendly choice as well, although allegations of granite countertops possibly emitting dangerous levels of radon and radiation remain unproven.

Glass countertops can be melted down, recut and recycled.

The malleable properties of glass are its greatest attribute, Fridman said. One-piece integrated countertops

with custom-formed sinks can be created with glass for a uniform look. Unique etchings and detailed carvings can be made on its surface to create an impression.

"When you use glass, the level of inventiveness and artistry you can infuse into your home is only limited by the imagination. You can create multi-tiered vanity tops, incorporate curvilinear angles and shapes, showcase rustic, antique or metallic

finishes, mimic the look of onyx or clear blue water. The possibilities are endless," Fridman bragged.

Fridman was a designer and glass artisan years ago in Moscow, Russia, where he was trained at the College of Art. His scientific and artistic discoveries have led to new designs, techniques, finishes, textures and technology in the glass industry during the past 28 years.

Countertops and sinks aren't the only components which can be reinvented via glass. Floors, backsplashes, cabinet door inserts, dividers, frameless doors, sculptured walls, showers, skylights, railings, fountains, suspended ceilings and even fireplaces can be wrought from glass and attractively tinted, textured and shaped to make a dramatic statement, Heigl noted.

"Decorative glass is an extraordinarily versatile material. There is currently a CBD Glass project in the works for a home, which is being made up of multiple layers of glass, and those layers will be incorporated

into a floor. Each layer has a different part of a flower, almost making the flower come to life in 3-D," Heigl said. "You can opt for a style that is simple or ornate, contemporary or traditional. But one thing you can count on is lasting value. With proper care, glass is meant to last a lifetime."

Typically, glass costs more than granite. Three-quarter-inch thick granite is often priced from \$65 a square foot and up compared to \$85 per square foot and higher for thermoformed glass. Even so, Fridman said practical benefits and esthetic charms make glass a better value.

If you've made the decision to go with glass, it's important to select the right fabricator and installer, Heigl added.

"Vlad's clients, for example, tend to choose CBD Glass, because, quite simply, they can do far more than other glass manufacturers. Because of the wide range of what they can do and offer, I have a difficult time refer-

ring to them as a manufacturer. They are truly glass artisans, just on a larger scale. There are only a hand-

ful of people in the world who are able to work with glass as Fridman can," Heigl said.

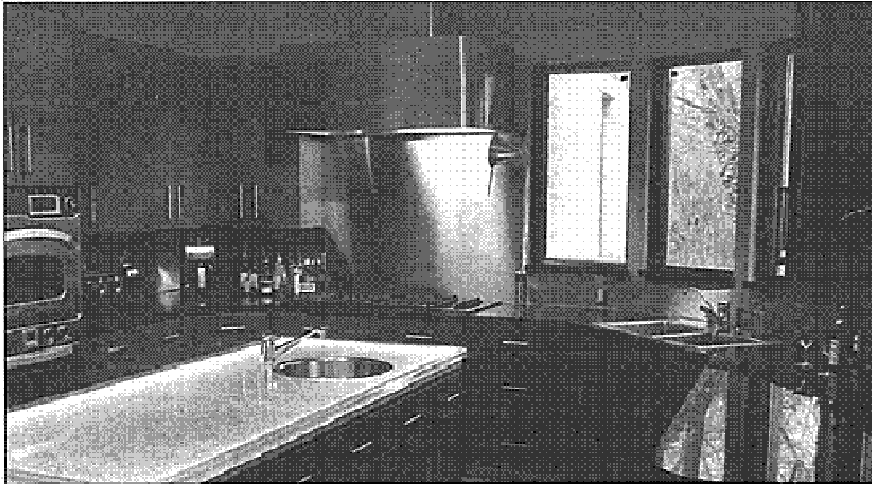
One of Fridman's clients, for example, is Donald Trump, whose Las Vegas hotel features CBD Glass originals.

"We're dedicated to producing the most superb and lasting artistic glass that reflects your individual taste and personality," Fridman said. "Our designs and hand-crafted creations do more than evoke the resplendent beauty of nature - they maximize your home's potential to induce an inviting, refined and comfortable environment."

CBD Glass has a showroom in Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

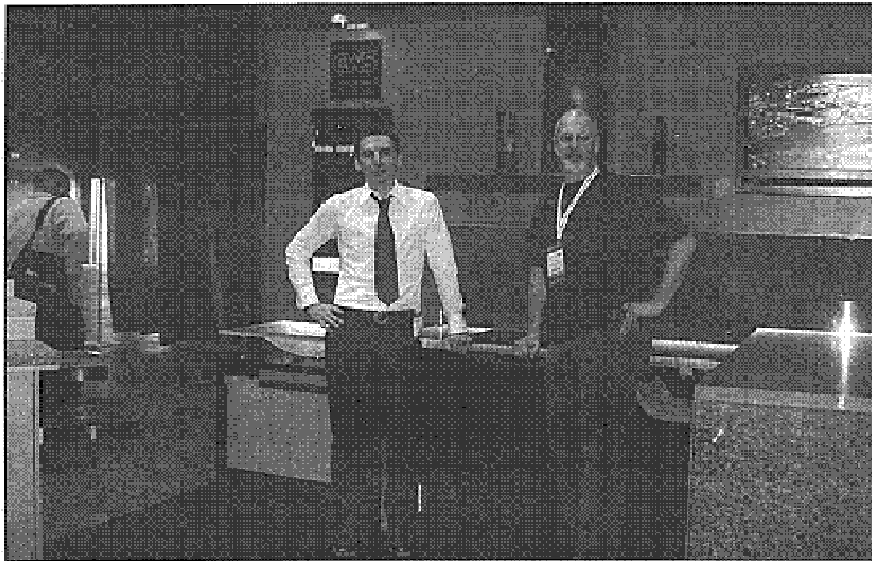
For information, call 312-644-4466 or visit www.CBDGlass.com.

To contact Heigl, call 815-245-2304 or visit www.DHDesignGroup.com.



Glass countertops can add a sleek and modern look to the bathroom. A thermallyformed ultra-clear glass countertop featuring a galaxy texture is pictured.

Photo provided



Vlad Fridman (left), founder and owner of CBB Glass of Toronto, Canada, joined David Helgi of McHenry at a kitchen and bath show in Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

Photo provided