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FROM WASTE

Breathe easy. Volatile organic compounds are carbon-based chemicals that become airborne or volatile at room temperature, which is bad for indoor air quality and our health. Unfortunately the resins, glues and preservatives (such as formaldehyde) used in kitchen cabinetry often contain VOCs. Many suppliers are looking at ways to make it easier to go green in the kitchen without compromising design or functionality.

CONCRETE

No longer relegated to industrial or commercial use, concrete is increasingly being used for polished floors as well as kitchen and bathroom benchtops. However it is on the expensive end of the scale, due to the labour and effort involved to install without cracking.

The production of cement, the key ingredient in concrete, is one of the highest causes of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide, but around 30% of the cement content in concrete can be replaced with recycled fly-ash, a power plant waste product.

Not only does it make good use of fly-ash that would otherwise end up as landfill, but concrete made with fly-ash is less porous than concrete made with only Portland cement, as the particles are more closely packed together. This creates a denser finish which results in a great sheen when polished. Concrete made with fly-ash also dries harder and uses less water, sand and electricity in production.

greenstyle

Kitchens




1. Corian® benchtop - Design: Ikal Kitchens.
2. Corian® benchtop - Design: Ultra Space.
3. and 4. Concrete benchtop - Stoneart Aust.

TO WOW

RESIN

A popular seamless and non-porous benchtop material, Corian® by DuPont™ is made from natural minerals and acrylic resin. Both the material itself and joining adhesive are Greenguard Indoor Air Quality certified for low VOC emissions by the Greenguard Environmental Institute in the US. The manufacturing process also abides to strict standards in limiting waste and energy consumption at all stages of the production process. Another resin certified for its low VOCs, Staron® by Samsung, has a range of colours available that also contain 5% to 30% of recycled resin and chip content.

LAMINATE

On the surface laminate countertops might not look very green, but the Laminex Group now offers its Greenfirst™ range of high-pressure laminates that have been certified by Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) for having low VOC and formaldehyde emissions. Its MDF is also made of recycled or reclaimed wood fibre. Look out for the GECA label, which acknowledges products as meeting or exceeding the voluntary environmental declaration standards, which are scientifically and internationally recognised. 

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