

MANSION

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THE MOVE TO MODERN CABINETS

Americans are turning away from traditional oak in favor of more exotic—and generally more expensive—alternatives



Cabinets are becoming more cutting edge.

According to on-line surveys by MasterBrand Cabinets, the largest cabinet manufacturer in

North America, traditional materials are losing favor to more exotic—and generally more expensive—alternatives. Although oak and maple still make up the largest dollar share of cabinet purchases, both have lost steam: Oak material now makes up 28% of total dollars spent—a decline of 20% over the past five years, according to the survey. In contrast, woods like alder, pecan, pine and walnut grew 44% in total dollars spent over that same period.

Cabinets—most of which are purchased for a kitchen—remain in homes for 20 to 25 years on average before being replaced. “The kitchen is so much the heart of the home,” says Jane Henderson Kenyon, broker associate with Callaway Henderson Sotheby’s International Realty in



Cabinet Positions

Top-selling materials and finishes in cabinets, by region:

Cabinet material	% of sales 2007-2008	% of sales 2011-2012	% change	Top region for sales
Oak (1)	35%	28%	-20%	Midwest
Maple (2)	28%	27%	-4%	Northeast
Cherry (3)	16%	16%	0%	Northeast
Other wood (4) (alder, pecan, pine, walnut: shown)	9%	13%	44%	West
Birch (5)	3%	6%	100%	West
Other material (6) (particle board/pressed wood, laminate, plastic, steel)	6%	6%	0%	South
Hickory (7)	3%	4%	33%	Northeast and South

Note: KeyStat Marketing and Burke survey of 2,343 people in 2007-08 and 5,641 people in 2011-12
Source: MasterBrand Cabinets Inc.



MasterBrand Cabinets (7)

Princeton, N.J. “Whatever people put in there runs through the rest of the house.” As such, the shift to bolder cabinet materials indicates a broader move toward more modern designs, says Beth Dibert, senior manager for market research for MasterBrand.

Together with third-party researchers KeyStat Marketing and Burke, MasterBrand surveyed 2,343 individuals in 2007 to 2008 and 5,641 individuals in 2011 to 2012 on how much they spent on cabinet materials and finishes.

Consumers are experimenting with bolder woods and colors. Medium-colored finishes still make up the largest share of cabinet finishes, but painted and dark-colored finishes both gained more than 40% in dollar share in the past five years.

Fancier woods usually mean fancier price tags. For instance, the Artesia cabinet style made by MasterBrand subsidiary Dynasty by Omega can be 20% more expensive if it uses pecan or walnut, and 10% less expensive if it uses oak or cherry.

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