



## Episode 81

# KBIS 2023 Trends from the Show Floor



**Jason: (00:00)**

Hello and welcome to designer discussions with Jason, Mirjam and Maria. Today we are talking with Jan about trend on the KBIS 2023 showroom floor.

**Intro: [00:10]**

Welcome to the designer discussions podcast with Jason, Maria, and Mirjam. Tune in each week where we talk about marketing, PR, and business advice for design professionals. Are you wondering where to start marketing your interior design business? We are opening the Designer Discussions Marketing Studio, a monthly series of indepth actionable content to guide your marketing, PR and business development. We want to help you transform your business and elevate it to work with your dream clients. You are going to want to hear this episode. Jason is going to tell you how to get your new website paid for and include all the bells and whistles that you're going to need for 2023. Let's get out there and let's update that interior design website.

**Mirjam: (00:47)**

Okay, so we're here today with Jan Rutgers, who's a veteran interior designer. She specializes in kitchen design and she's also the founder of the Vestibule Design School, which teaches designers how to improve their kitchen design skills. So, welcome, Jan. Well, thanks for having me.

**Jan: (01:10)**

Really excited to be back. We did this last year from KBIS 2022. So it's really exciting to be back now to look at KBIS 2023.

**Mirjam: (01:23)**

Yes, I'm really curious because Jason and I, we were both there also, but we were just talking about how, you know, there were some difficulties in getting around on the travel side as well as on the show side. But I understand you had all of Thursday, you pretty much had a whole day to poke around and get the latest trends on what was shown on the show floor. So what did you see?

**Jan: (01:50)**

Well, again, it's exactly the same. I was down there. KBIS business is always a great place to network and do some business. So I was doing that as there are a lot of other designers were on Tuesday and Wednesday. But I did have Thursday all to myself and I put together. I would try to visit all of the cables displays. As most people that were there, you would know that this show combined both the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show and the International Builders Show in a massive, massive convention center of over a million square feet. So there's no way to hit every booth in one day. But my goal was to look at, to go buy the majority of the kitchen booth so that I could come today and give you some intelligent information about what I saw. And really what I kind of want to preface it with is that I kind of look at trends from a show floor of what am I seeing over and over again. I may not be going in into every booth and going through everything in the display, but what's catching my eye as I walk through the aisles and what's repeating, I'm looking for that repetition, because for me, that is what will denote a potential trend in kitchen design. But I also am looking for kind of one of a kind, so maybe we can get on and talk about that at another time. But today will just be about trends. Sound good? Perfect.

**Mirjam: (03:31)**

Yes. How many are there?

**Jan: (03:34)**

Yeah. So as I was flying back, I started going through all of my images, and I identified six trends from the show floor. I'll just kind of give you them, and then I can talk to you about each one of them. But in no particular order. I was seeing as a trend fluted cabinet doors. I saw this one I really loved. It's called base cabinet light strips. And I'll explain what that is in a minute. Third one was black metal storage. So the way that open shelves and different things are being done with black metal. And then another one really interesting, curvy Islands. I'll explain a little bit about what I deem as Curvy Islands. And then Matte Black Appliances found a great booth that did it really well. But I was seeing that repeated throughout the show. I'm going to end off with talking about the trend that I call the Water appliance. So those are my six trends. Let's dive in. Okay. All right, so let's so let's look at fluted cabinet doors. We've seen this fluted style for a while now. All of us were at the KBIS Show 2022 in Orlando and probably saw it coming up as accents.

**Jan: (05:50)**

So this flooding is where a solid piece of material is routed in vertical strips, either concave or convex or lineal, to produce a textured door. As I said, we were seeing a lot of that in accents, like maybe cladding a custom hood or the back of an island. And I was seeing in more than one display. And as I said, a trend is something where I start spotting it in more than one display. But I was seeing this floating done on solid wood doors. And yeah, very cool. I think that those types of doors bring a lot of interesting texture. They definitely work best on frameless cabinet tree with touch latches or some type of channel. No hardware. Probably going to be something that might be a little difficult to clean as a kitchen cabinet door, but very stylish. So I definitely see it as a lot of talk overhearing different designers talking about it. It gives a very cool, contemporary look. And it's definitely going to be a door style that will show up in manufacturers catalogs in the next few years.

**Mirjam: (06:31)**

Just for those who are now wondering what that actually looks like, you did write a blog post, and we'll link to it in the show notes. And I'm sure you're going to have pictures in there, right?

**Jan: (06:34)**

Yes, I did exactly all of these trends. I've got pictures, and it publishes on the best blog tomorrow morning. And great place to check it out because then you can see some images of what I'm talking about. So the set that I was seeing at the show, and I absolutely loved it, is what I'm calling base cabinet light strips. So just again, to try to describe it, it is frameless cabinetry that has a channel that allows you to open the doors or the drawers on the static part of that channel. Light strips have been routed in or embedded or attached to the cabinet. So when you look at the island or the back wall cabinet tree, you see this soft glow in horizontal strips of light. It looks really cool, but it's absolutely one of the best functional things I saw at the show. Because when up to that cabinet and open that drawer, that light shines down and will illuminate all the contents inside the drawer. Or if it's a base cabinet, again, you open up the door and that light is shining down from the static portion of that channel and it's illuminating the interior of the cabinet.

**Jan: (08:00)**

And I saw this mostly on the European manufacturers that we're displaying at KBIS. And again, I said it's really something that is going to be most effective in frameless cabinet tree because you want that continuous line. And I think that one of the big reasons that we can even see it as a trend now has been how progress cabinet related lighting has really progressed in the last few years. So it's as easy as adhering a ribbon light into that space. But as Miriam, Jason and Maria have known me now for quite a few years, you know that I really, really specialize in functional kitchen design. So for living in place, for people that are getting a little bit older and they want to have better illumination in the kitchen, you can't get better than this. And it was really cool. I really liked it. Probably my favorite one, my favorite trend. So the the third one that I have on my list that I was seeing at the show is what I call black metal storage. Now, I was at the Euro Kucina show in Milan in 2018. They're starting to open up that show again. But that was the last big show before the Pandemic, and that was the big major trend coming out of the European market and Milan being, in my opinion, kind of the area where all the big trends in kitchen design begin. So I was seeing this metal black metal framing used as open shelves, floating shelves. I look at it as something that's very open. Like it feels less bulky than like a whole wall of closed door cabinets, but the dark color gives it enough that it's not out of proportion with the rest of the kitchen. And I was really excited to see that a lot of manufacturers were embracing it and taking it in new directions. One manufacturer I saw had taken this metal framed look and incorporated it as an actual cabinet with doors. And it gives a really skinny profile that I think makes for a really modern, contemporary look. And it's a nice way to introduce something interesting into your kitchen designs, rather than walls and walls of solid wood doors. It gives kind of a nice lightness to things. Definitely something I have been integrating into my kitchen design since I saw it in Milan. But it's now great that you're going to have more access. That's always a tough one. You can see something that's really cool and you'd love to integrate, but if you can't get it, it's tough. You have to be reinventing the wheel. And I was seeing it time and time again as I was going through the display. So it should be something that every kitchen designer should be able to access. Now, the fourth one, curvy Islands. I think if you were to ask any designer kitchen designer specifically, what has been the trending shape of islands in the last ten years? We have I don't know, for some reason, our islands got very hard and I felt harsh over the last ten years. They became kind of rectangular boxes with a slab of courts, rectangular courts stuck on them. You might get a waterfall, you might get something. And I was thrilled to see that many, many of the displays were introducing curves. There's a very famous kitchen designer out of England called his name is Johnny Gray, and he had developed a concept quite a few years ago called soft geometry. And when I walked in and started seeing all these islands with curves on the end, I just thought about that, because geometry is a theory that you don't want any hard edges in your kitchen.





### Jan: (12:00)

You're moving around all the time and there's multiple people, and these sharp corners can be hip bangers to adults and temple hitters or I don't even know what to call it. But you see Toddler I get so nervous when I see toddlers running around a kitchen and that sharp edge of an island overhang is right at temple height. So these curves, they were producing them in many different ways. In a couple of displays I saw, it was just the countertop. They'd still have the rectangular box for the cabinet tree in the island on top, and curving the dining bar, curving the edges, really, really simple to do. Any designer can do that in their projects. Another way that it was being done was the fluting. Again, here's, a lot of that fluted material actually comes from I know I'm really going to date myself here, but on the Timber appliance garage doors that we were doing 20 years ago, you know, those roll top desks, that's really what fluting is. So just another little hint. If if you can't get a flute, a solid, fluid door in your manufacturer, you can take a slab door and adhere that tambor material, it's available in tons onto the door and get the look. But this is also the perfect way to get a curved end to an island is to use that timber material. And instead of having it horizontal as a roll top desk. You install it vertically, and it will bend around the corner and give you that really cool, curved look with your countertop on top of it. And I've got a picture of this on my blog. Another manufacturer had a very custom look where they had taken veneer, and they had curved the veneer probably around some type of pre built substrate. And then they even embedded a metal, what would you call it, a reveal, about three or four really high style. I think it's the return of the islands that are going to have more detail in them, specifically with contemporary design. But it is something that I was seeing again and again and again. The appliance manufacturers were doing it. The cabinet manufacturers were doing it. So probably a trend. And I would say to any designer, you want to really upgrade your designs, look at putting some curves in it's, really going to bring it into 2023 and beyond islands and then appliances. So I wanted to kind of look at appliances to see what was trending. We were all for 2022. We saw that monogram booth that was just kind of blowing everybody away with their design. And I think because we hadn't been to a design show for quite a few years, you know, for two, sometimes three years, this was a time for the appliance manufacturers to start introducing us to some new products. I saw that even more at Capex 2023. The manufacturers really pulled out all the stops. And something that caught my eye was the matte black finishes. Stainless steel across the board. You can get it. Everybody can get it. And there was color, definitely. There was the enamel color. We've seen a lot of that. But I started from the European manufacturers, this matte black finish, absolutely stunning. I was talking to one of the manufacturers, Folgar milano people, and they were explaining to me that they were producing their matte black finish from using the same techniques that they had the under drip pans for their gas cooktops. So it's got to be really durable. And if you look at that area on a cooktop, that stainless steel. Often your stainless steel grates will get pitted. But the matte black always seems to look great.

**Jan: (16:00)**

That is the technique they were used. Now you're able to get black appliances that don't look like those 90 shiny black appliances that we had. And it's different than the enamel. There's a lot of high end enamels, say range fronts and refrigerator fronts that are quite glossy. So I thought that this matte black was really cool. And I can see how it started to become a trend, because again, I saw it in Milan, because all of the kitchens there in 2018 were moody, dark, these really muted tones. So now, introducing it to the North American market, they were showing these matte black appliances in lighter backgrounds. Again, I think living in place. High gloss can be something that is very fatiguing to your eyes if everything is glossy in your kitchen. And the matte black appliances pair beautifully with the matte black hardware that's become really popular in the last few years and matte black faucets that we're seeing. So now you kind of get the whole suite with that. All right, my very last one is what I'm calling the Water appliance. And you just needed to walk down a few aisles at Cabus 2023 to see that the sink was taking center, that everybody was like, every sink manufacturer was really showing a ton of great stuff. So I've kind of deemed this six trend. I'm calling it the Water appliance because we truly are seeing that the sink, the way that sinks are now being designed, becomes a complete prep center, that typically they would be single bowl sinks around 36 inches or 90 CM wide. There'd be one big single bowl, quite deep, but then it would be outfitted with multiple accessories. There would be the traditional cutting board. We've always been able to get a top of our sink. But now you had cutting boards. You had drain boards that could roll up or fold up. There were actual bowls that would fit into the sink with your strainer. So if you're making a chicken broth or something like that, you could strain right into the sink and still grab your broth, your broth come into the bowl. You have so many accessories that you could customize your sink to your specific prep needs. And definitely, I've seen this type of sink a few years ago, probably maybe about five years ago, the big, big dual sinks with dual faucets, and they could be up to 4ft, 5ft, 6ft wide. We're seeing more manufacturers now introducing those sizing. So we'll start to see the pricing come down, and I definitely will be watching the trends, but I do believe we're going to start seeing the sink becoming a focal area in the future. And people will be proud to stick them on their islands because they're going to be so tricked out. So that's what I saw. As I said, there was a ton of stuff to see. And I'm going to write another post looking at one of a kind things, because there was some really cool stuff. But as I said, my criteria for trends was if I'm starting to see them over, because that, you know, means that they're going to be great accessibility, that we're going to be able to find them all across North America, and it's going to be something that the designers will have access to. So we'll see more and more of it.

**Mirjam: (20:58)**

Now, that makes me think that I didn't walk the show enough. Want to go see all these matte black appliances, especially.

**Jan: (21:09)**

They were so cool. Miriam that I really saw that it could be the next big thing. We've had stainless steel, what 15 years, probably. What's the biggest complaint? Fingerprints. And also trying to match up variety of stainless steel. So you would never want to be able to mix two manufacturers because the quality of the stainless steel can be different. I think they may be on to something here with the map block of being able to get a nice suite of appliances.

**Mirjam: (21:42)**

So let me ask you, because when you talk about the booth design, like the curved islands and things like that so when you, as a designer walk the show, then you don't just take cues from the actual products. That are introduced, but also from the way that the booths are designed, which I find that interesting because I was always on the manufacturer side.

**Jan: (22:06)**

Absolutely like that. And there's something that I noticed at last year's show, and I've been talking to a lot of my clients that I co consulting with cabinet people, you better watch out. The appliance people are coming on strong in design. And absolutely the best way to look for trends is to see what are the other manufacturers doing? So when you look at an appliance manufacturer doing some really cool things in kitchen design or a plumbing manufacturer putting together an unbelievable principal suite display, you know that design isn't just about the products. You do need to look at how all these manufacturers are vying for what it was 1600 booths between Ibiz and KBIS. That's a lot of you got to be attracting people. So it's kind of looking at what's going to make for an exciting booth, what's going to draw that designer in. And I was fortunate enough to have a tour of the Brizo Delta booth. I'd come down to the show with some of my students from taught at the college, the local college here this fall. And three of them signed up to come down to Gabas. And I took arranged for a tour at a plumbing wholesaler. Just watching them and seeing how they and I remember we were going into one display where they had used a lot it was a plumbing display and they'd used a lot of wood. You don't really think about water and plumbing and wood, but it really attracted these young designers at going, oh, there is ways that I can do that and put it together. And normally we would have gone to the cabinet display to look at wood cabinetry. Here we're finding it in a plumbing manufacturer who's not even selling it. And I think maybe that's another thing too. If you do really go and look at the displays of, say, an appliance manufacturer or plumbing manufacturer, they don't typically have functional cabinetry in there. Like a lot of times you go up and you grab the door, it doesn't even open. It's just a facade. But they're pushing the limits. It's designers to really think beyond product and how is the whole thing coming together? To me, that's what's going to elicit the trends. That's what's going to get us excited about designing unique kitchen spaces.



**Mirjam: (24:42)**

I love it. That's so interesting. So the gist I get from you is that even though traveling and getting around with a major hustle, it's still worth headache.

**Jan: (25:06)**

Yeah, exactly. And you've got to do that. I was saying to you before we got online, I was 2 hours at the Las Vegas airport on Monday night room. But you know what one should be?

**Mirjam: (25:15)**

I didn't even get there Monday.

**Jan: (25:27)**

Yes, that's right. Miriam and I were texting. I think you were stuck in Denver, right? Yeah, it was cold. But yeah, again, you fight through the crowds on the Monterey or Uber, however you're getting there. But yeah, once you get there, you just got to kind of put yourself into a I'm here to learn. I'm here to observe. And I know my first few days were really, really busy. I had other commitments, but that was my approach on Thursday. And another little hint. If you're going to the show and you can only be there one day, go for the last day. The crowds are less good to I was able to get into booths that on the first day were lined up. I was able to walk right in. You're able to get some pictures of not 800 million people in them. So my little tip, if you can only go for one day, go for the last day. There just needs to be more elbow room, but yeah, way more. For me, any type of design show is like taking your inner artist on a date. You're there to just go through, observe, and really observe. As I said, I'd love to come back in a few weeks or a few months and talk to you about some of the little finds that I found. And it was all about observing, going, something looks interesting in that corner and going over there, and in one instance, button and a stand mixer elevated out of the blind corner. And I'm like, wow, that's innovative. There was some cool, innovative stuff there as well.

**Mirjam: (27:04)**

Very cool. I'd love to hear about that sometime. I just want to bring Jason in quick because I know that both Jen, you and him, you've both been voices of the industry. So you've had presentations at the show. And when you're talking all about learning, obviously there's all these educational opportunities with presentation. Maybe, Jason, tell us a little bit about yours and how that went and what else there was to learn.

**Jason: (27:33)**

There was a lot going on that day, and there were probably 20 presentations each day that were happening throughout the four or five rooms that they had. My talk was on developing a marketing plan for 2023. It was a follow up from what happened in 2022. And I had about four people that attended last year that came back this year and said that they hadn't had a chance to do everything because of how busy they were as remodelers last year. So they needed to have a refresher.



**Jan: (28:06)**

Oh, it's a good idea.

**Jason: (28:09)**

Yeah. So I'm hoping if I'm allowed to speak next year, I'll be able to see those same people and they've implemented what I talked about this time. So that's what I emphasize, that I can help you develop a plan, but in terms of action, that's what's going to have to happen when you get home to do that. But there was a lot happening in terms of everything from design to helping you on the business side to helping you like Jan talked about with the trends. But in terms of the education, there was a lot to be had there as well. So, I mean, whether and that was a great tip about Thursday, being there on a Thursday when there's not as much traffic, you can get in, get out and see what you need to see, because on Tuesday it was packaged. There was a lot of people there, and it was like being at an amusement park, standing in line for a ride. It was a lot of people there.

**Jan: (29:06)**

I agree with Jason on the education. I didn't speak this year because I had some other commitments, but I did pop into a couple of the presentations, and one that I went to because it's kind of something I'm working on right now. It was called there's an app for this. And just talking about how our positions as designers is really changing and technology is really there to help us along. And I popped into that one because I know I've mentioned to Miriam I'm working on a kitchen and bath industry, a qualifying app, something that can help them qualify their prospects before all this formal design work done is being done. And it's exciting to see that our industry is beginning to adopt all those different types of technology. And I know I've worked with Jason in the past on simple things of getting my business cards done. Well, I didn't have to go and sit with his designer in a room or whatever. We did everything like, I live in Vancouver, Canada, he's in Texas, and we were able to communicate and get things done using the Internet, using different apps, using things. So I guess if we were to talk about a general trend, technology is going to be in our businesses in a variety of different ways. And so that's going to be something that we really want to watch for too.

**Mirjam: (30:42)**

Absolutely. Well, thank you both and special you, Jan, so much for coming on and talking to us about trends. Just remind us where people can find you and we'll link to your blog post about these trends in the show notes that will go to your website too. But if people want to find you, where do they go?

**Jan: (31:06)**

Yeah, the best place is on the website. It's vestabul spelled vestabul.com. You can go there on the contact you get directly to me. I have all of those emails coming to my personal email, so that's a great place to find me. Or through designer discussions. They know where I live, so they will do that too.

**Mirjam: (31:22)**

Thank you so much for joining us on today's podcast. That's it for this episode of Designer Discussions, and we hope to see you all here next week.

**Outro: (31:38)**

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