

# Create a Big Bang with Tile

The kitchen is the one room in your home where you most literally, 'mix it up,' so why not blend different countertop and backsplash surfaces as well? When you're working with a relatively small area like a backsplash, it's the perfect size to make a big impact with fewer dollars. "Because the backsplash area tends to be only 20-30 square feet," says Richard Bard of Florida Tile ([www.floridatile.com](http://www.floridatile.com)), you can use inexpensive products and mix in more expensive and colorful decos to add visual interest."

Angela Sutton of Byrd Tile ([www.byrdtile.com](http://www.byrdtile.com)) agrees. With so many stainless appliances, metal tiles are particularly appealing. She suggests blending metal tiles with glass, slate and marble tiles or mosaic rhomboids. "Striates and burlap textures add to a contemporary feel while traditional, handmade 3x5 subway tile or retro, mosaic marble tile works with older homes" says Sutton. The area above the cook top is also a popular spot to introduce high-relief metal tiles in the forms of dots and medallions with tumbled stone and old-world, oil-rubbed bronze medal accent tile.

Using an ancient 14th century technique started by the Moors, ceramic artist Marina Bosetti of Bosetti Art Tile ([www.bosettiarttile.com](http://www.bosettiarttile.com)) creates bias-relief tiles using hand-painted stoneware clay. At this year's show, she will have a geometric counterpoint to her traditional floral tiles. "The florals tend to be organic and sensual, so I thought it would be nice to have a complementary masculine border of geometrics," Bosetti says. She will also show a completely new line of hand-thrown and painted sinks and mirrors featuring a peacock, know as a symbol of good luck, in aqua, reds and browns, greens and blues.

Granite is such a popular countertop now and continues to be, says Valerie Moody of Service Plus ([www.servicepluscountertops.com](http://www.servicepluscountertops.com)), that you can't even call it a trend anymore. And although laminate sometimes gets a bad rep, it shouldn't, she says. "We still do at least four laminate jobs a day." Most homeowners prefer a post-form where the backsplash and front nose are all one piece. Service Plus will feature a new Deepstar laminate from Wilsonart that is three times as durable as traditional laminate and closely resembles granite. "Granite will continue to grow and it is a beautiful product, but there are other options," Moody adds. Whatever the product you choose, you should choose something that meets your needs and makes you happy, advises Moody.

