

ADVERTISEMENT

Ads by Google

Send feedback Why this ad? ▸

FORBES > REAL ESTATE

# New Survey Highlights Longevity As A Kitchen Design Trend

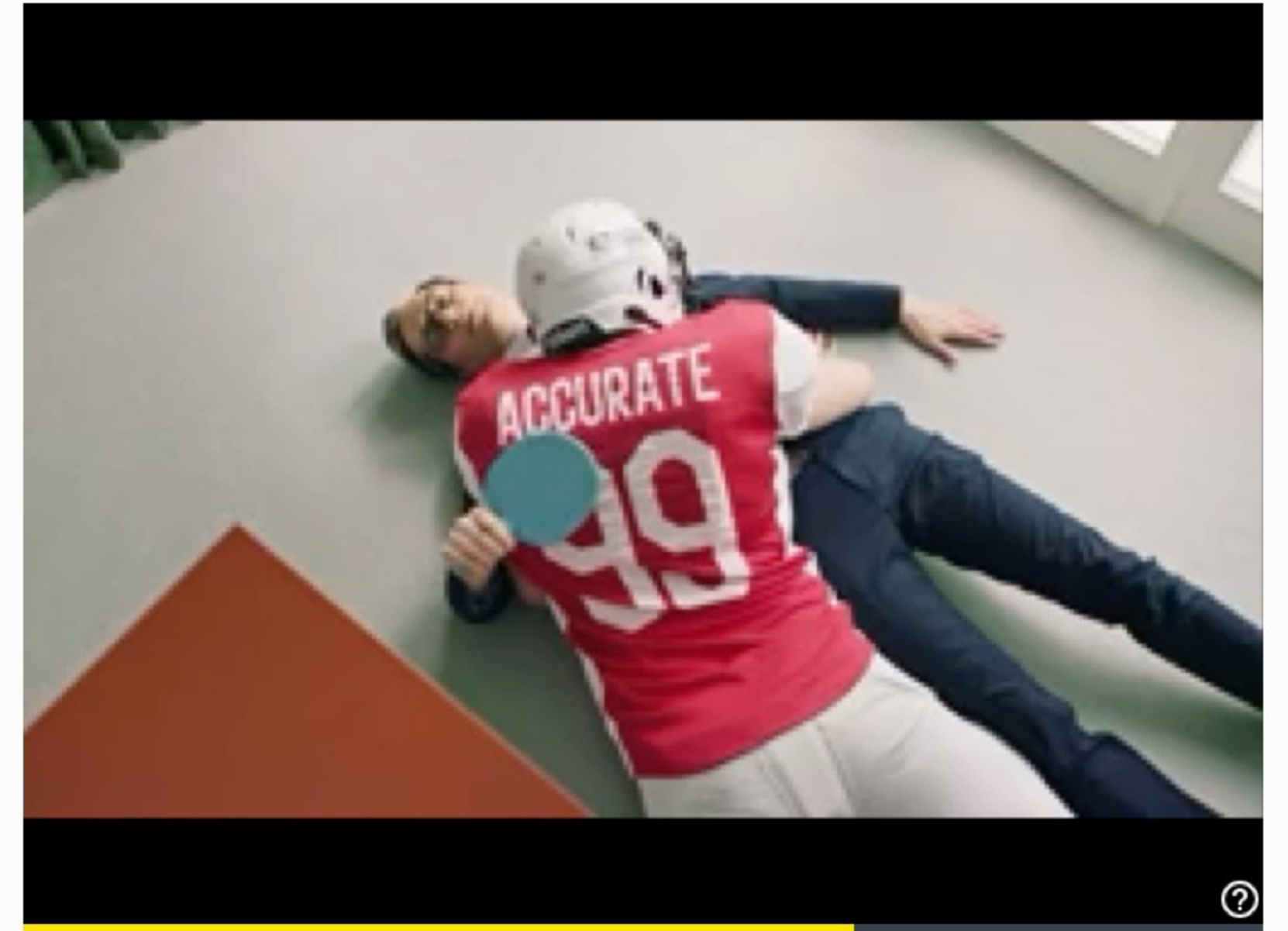
Jamie Gold Contributor

I write about residential wellness design and related housing trends.

Follow

0

Feb 6, 2024, 06:00am EST



ADVERTISEMENT



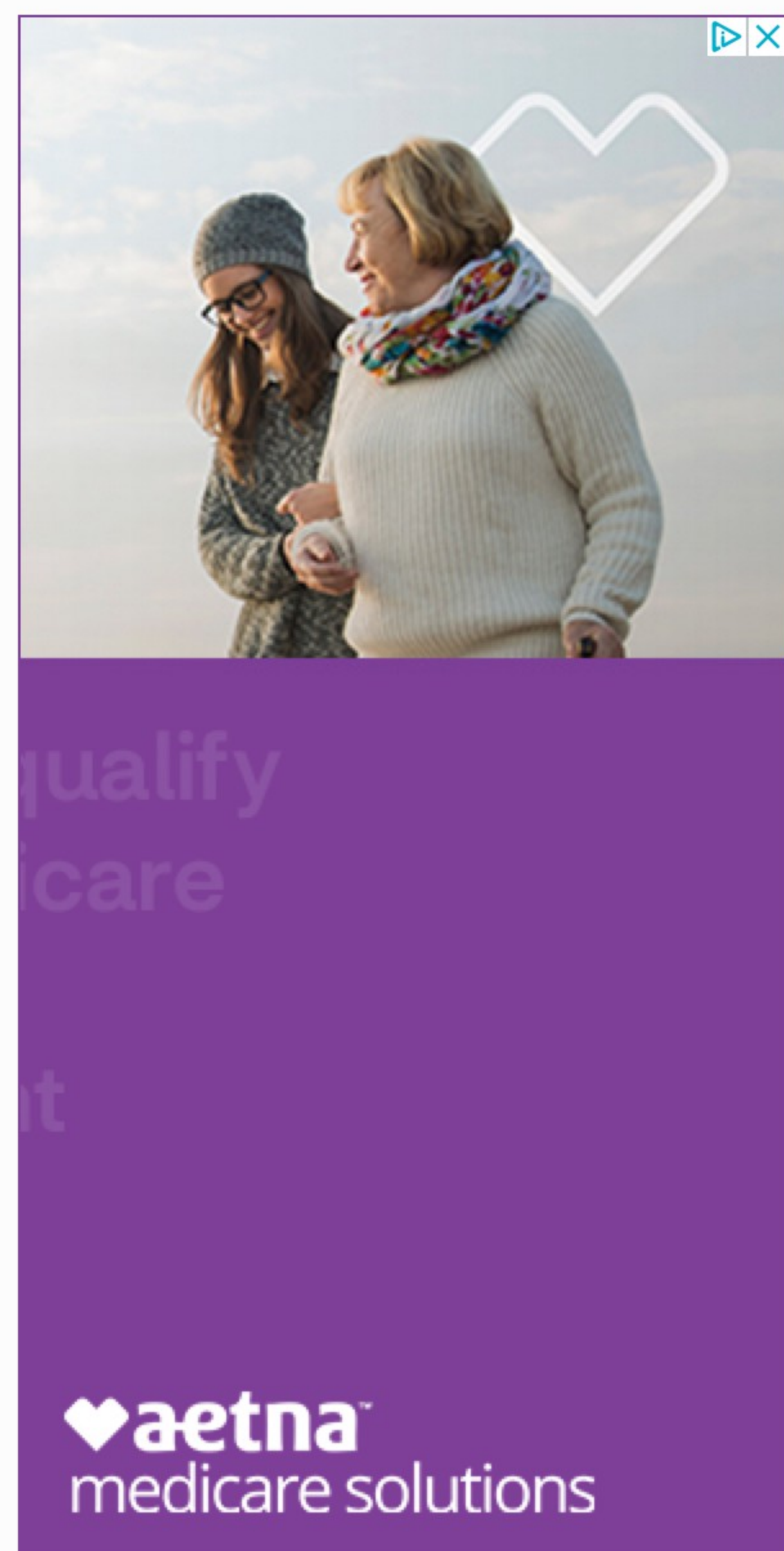
Homeowners are seeking design features that enhance longevity, such as smart appliances, nonslip ... [+] LEGACY CDM INC., CRAIG HAMPTON, BROOKE WAGNER DESIGN © MELLON STUDIO (PHOTOGRAPHER) VIA HOUZZ

Designing with longevity in mind was the first bullet point in home improvement platform Houzz's announcement of its 2024 U.S. Houzz Kitchen Trends Study. With a wellness-focused post-pandemic population and rapidly aging society, it's no wonder! So how is that trend showing up in the heart of our homes? I set out to find out by asking these eight top design professionals about what they're seeing in their practices around the country:

- Kristin Harrison, a Northern Virginia-based interior designer
- Philadelphia-based kitchen designer Michael Kaesnter
- Washington, D.C.-based architect Seth Ballard
- General contractor Elizabeth Scruggs in the Nashville area
- Interior designer Cathleen Gruver in Northern Virginia
- Denver-based interior designer Elizabeth Lord-Levitt
- Interior designer Alison Truelock in San Diego
- Interior designer Dana Lacuesta in both the Detroit & Nashville metro areas.

Here are their written responses to emailed and industry group questions, along with Houzz's relevant findings.

## Design Adaptations







Houzz says homeowners are designing to accommodate aging household members' future and current needs. To achieve this, they're including features like pullout cabinets, extra lighting and wide drawer pulls (58%, 54% and 48%, respectively).

“Ninety-five of our projects now are planned for aging in place,” declared Ballard, though it’s less about universal design than about adaptability and livability for aging in place decisions, he explained. In his kitchens that means cabinet pull-outs and organizers, ADA-friendly faucets, wider work aisles and planned appliance heights for accessibility.

MORE FOR YOU

[Google Makes Surprise New Offer To Pixel 8 Pro Buyers](#)

[We May Be Heading Toward Suicide Squad Save The Justice League This Year](#)

[Nikki Haley Loses To None Of These Candidates In Nevada GOP Primary But Trump Will Still Probably Get The State s Delegates](#)

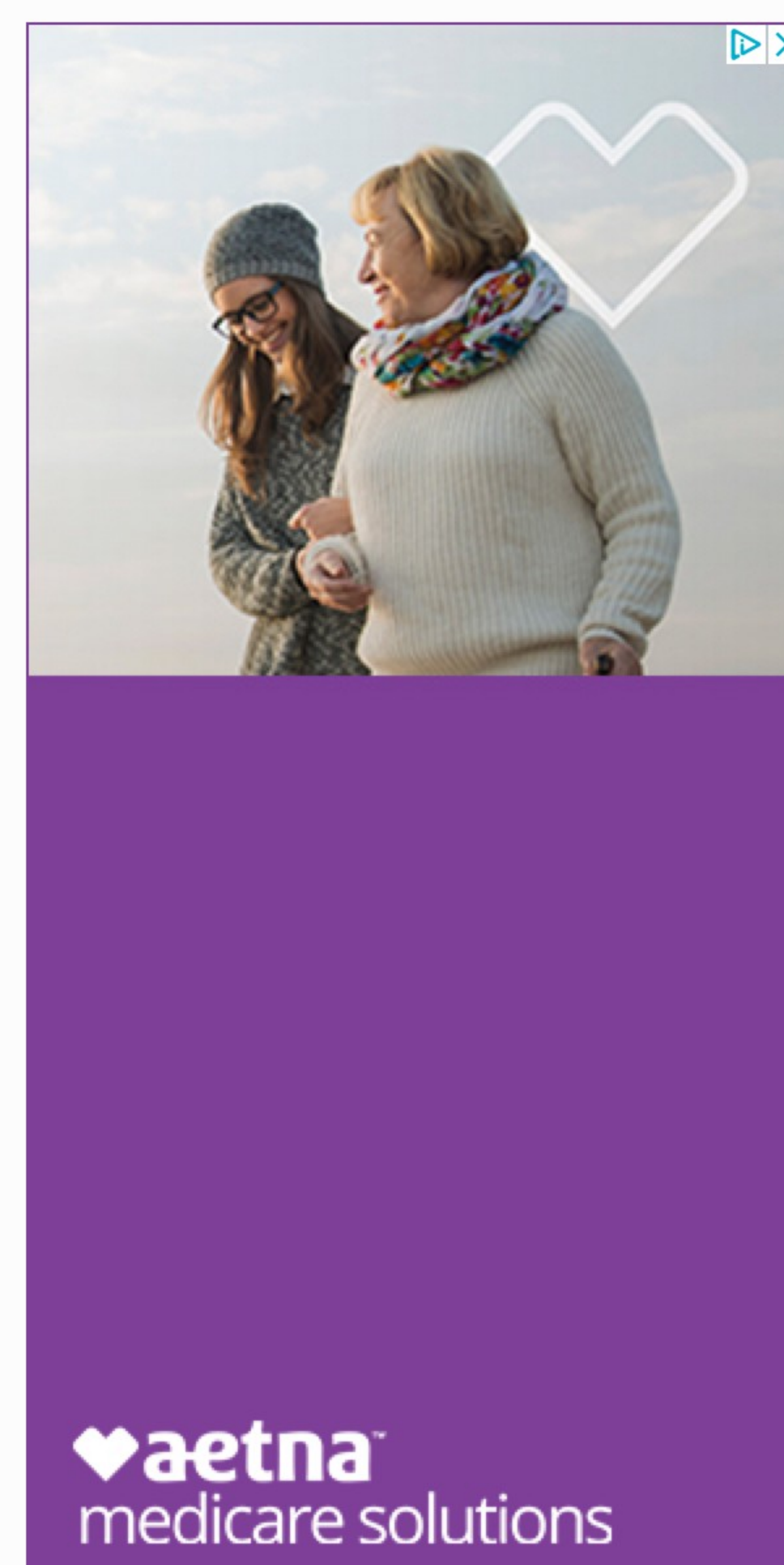
“If an individual hopes to live independently in their home for the foreseeable future, designing in functional modifications can provide security and longevity, without compromising the aesthetic,” noted Lord-Levitt. She includes easily reached organizers and appliances like microwave drawers. “I also give adequate walkway clearances for individuals who may need assistance with a wheelchair or walker and make sure turning radii are compatible with the homeowners’ maneuverability.” She also plans easy-to-grip pulls and finish contrasts for clients with vision issues and adequate lighting – all on dimmers.

**Investing Digest: Know what's moving the financial markets and what smart money is buying with Forbes Investing Digest.**

[Sign Up](#)

By signing up, you accept and agree to our [Terms of Service](#) (including the class action waiver and arbitration provisions), and [Privacy Statement](#).

Lacuesta is definitely seeing a longevity focus in her market with a large retirement age population, she shared. “We are absolutely specifying lots of easy-to-access organizational accessories, especially in hard-to-reach areas such as corner cabinets. Undercounter appliances such as microwave and dishwasher drawers and beverage refrigerators also help make the kitchen accessible for everyone.” Along with that, she’s designing in wider clearances and rounded countertop corners to help with maneuverability. “We've also discovered that a creative combination of LED task lighting options—undercabinet lighting, sconces, and even toe kick lighting can improve the kitchen experience for aging household members,” she added.







Gruver is also taking an accessible approach to cabinet design, she shared: “I have been seeing a rise in the use of drawers because it makes it that much easier for our clients to access items inside. We have been doing a lot more drawer inserts as well, to give that extra level of function.”

Harrison summed up her clients’ storage preferences this way: “People are less concerned about having as many cabinets as possible, and more concerned about making the cabinets they do have functional for how they operate in their space. Pullout cabinets allow for ease of use in both the young and older populations, and I think they’re here to stay.”

### Safety Choices

*Houzz says homeowners are also opting for safety features including nonslip flooring and rounded countertops (37% and 34%, respectively).*

Gruver has an artistic approach to nonslip flooring: “Mosaic flooring has increased because of the extra grout lines. Some of the most beautiful tiles are mosaics, so the client never feels like they are sacrificing on this.”

“As a designer who has multiple elderly relatives using walkers to navigate their homes, I can attest to the benefit of flooring that inhibits slipping,” Kaestner declared. “After eliminating throw rugs and floor mats that can actually cause a fall, the next line of defense would be installing non-slip flooring that allows someone to move safely about their dwelling.”

“We always use pull-outs and extra lighting, and we have had requests for handle-less cabinets,” Scruggs commented, adding, “Rounded countertops are a given, and non-slip flooring in wet areas as well. Additionally, we have requests for elevators, and we specify induction cooktops for safety concerns for aging household members, along with grab bars in wet areas.”

Truelock’s clients are definitely looking for long-term living solutions, the San Diego designer noted. “Safety features have been a consideration in the form of nonslip flooring, favoring natural wood or luxury vinyl which can be less slippery and is softer underfoot.”

Harrison pointed out that what’s good for the grandparents is also good for the grandchildren: “I definitely think there has been a shift to non-slip flooring materials like natural stone, matte porcelain/ceramic, concrete, etc. Not only does it help with safety for aging adults, but it also helps those with young kids who sometimes have the same type of issues.”

### Connected Appliances

*Houzz says homeowners are choosing high tech appliances (showing a 5-point increase to 44%). Nearly a third of homeowners now choose appliances with Wi-Fi connectivity (30%) and some prefer those controllable via smartphones and tablets (29%), both figures rising by 5 percentage points. Interest in features like touchscreen displays, smart-home connectivity, and built-in apps and cameras has also grown compared to last year.*

ADVERTISEMENT

**VIVAIA**

Water Repellent    Stretch Knit Upper    Anti-Slip Rubber Outsole

**Designed for All-day Walking**

**SHOP NOW >**

ADVERTISEMENT

**Light in the box**

**UP TO 70% OFF**    **SHOP NOW >**



Ballard reported that all of the fridges he's specifying have connectivity, 30% of his lighting systems have phone apps and 35% of his kitchen faucets are hands-free. Phone-controlled skylights and window coverings are also going into 10% and 25% of his projects respectively.

Harrison shared that "Older clients love that their ovens specifically can be controlled by their phones, and have sensors that can be inserted into whatever is cooking. For some, as they age, they lose their sense of smell. Having an appliance that can assist in stopping the potential burning of food (that they're now unable to detect by scent) is a big plus. It also can serve as a safety feature; no more forgetting to turn off the oven."

Truelock's San Diego clientele are also bullish on tech, she commented. "High tech appliances are gaining popularity for remote control, energy monitoring and automated settings." She pointed to ease of use and the ability to check on meals and food stocks remotely as a benefit. "Overall, the ability for smart tech in the home allows the user convenience and control to make adjustments when they're away from home."

Gruver observed that her clients are interested in automation to make their daily tasks easier. "I am seeing our clients place an emphasis on having appliances that can almost be like an assistant. Thermostats that send reminders to change filters onto phones, or leak detectors doing the same thing. Also, refrigerators that can remind you of expiration dates, or even take pictures of the contents inside, have been in higher demand. The smart screens also offer clients an easier way to control their appliances," she added.

## Conclusions

I expect to see more longevity-enhancing features in the 2024 bathroom trends study when it's released, and in future kitchen reports. None of us is getting any younger and our expectations of what our homes can – and, yes, should do for us – keep growing.

Follow me on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#). Check out my [website](#) or some of my other work [here](#).



Jamie Gold

Follow

I'm a Wellness Design Consultant and Mayo Clinic Certified Wellness Coach with 19 years in the building, home design and... [Read More](#)

[Editorial Standards](#)

[Print](#)

[Reprints & Permissions](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

### RELATED TOPICS

- 01. KITCHEN CEILING LIGHTING >
- 02. TOP 10 KITCHEN DESIGNS >
- 03. BEST KITCHEN CABINET COLOR TRENDS >
- 04. 10 BEST KITCHEN DESIGN IDEAS >
- 05. KITCHEN BACKSPLASH IDEAS 2023 >
- 06. TOP 10 KITCHEN CABINET COLOR TRENDS >

### RELATED TOPICS

- 01. KITCHEN CEILING LIGHTING >
- 02. TOP 10 KITCHEN DESIGNS >
- 03. BEST KITCHEN CABINET COLOR TRENDS >
- 04. 10 BEST KITCHEN DESIGN IDEAS >
- 05. KITCHEN BACKSPLASH IDEAS 2023 >
- 06. TOP 10 KITCHEN CABINET COLOR TRENDS >

ADVERTISEMENT



The New York Times

## Obsessed? Us too.

The Athletic is included in a Times subscription.

**\$6.25 \$1/week for your first six months.**

SUBSCRIBE NOW

The New York Times

## Obsessed? Us too.

The Athletic is included in a Times subscription.

**\$6.25 \$1/week for your first six months.**

SUBSCRIBE NOW