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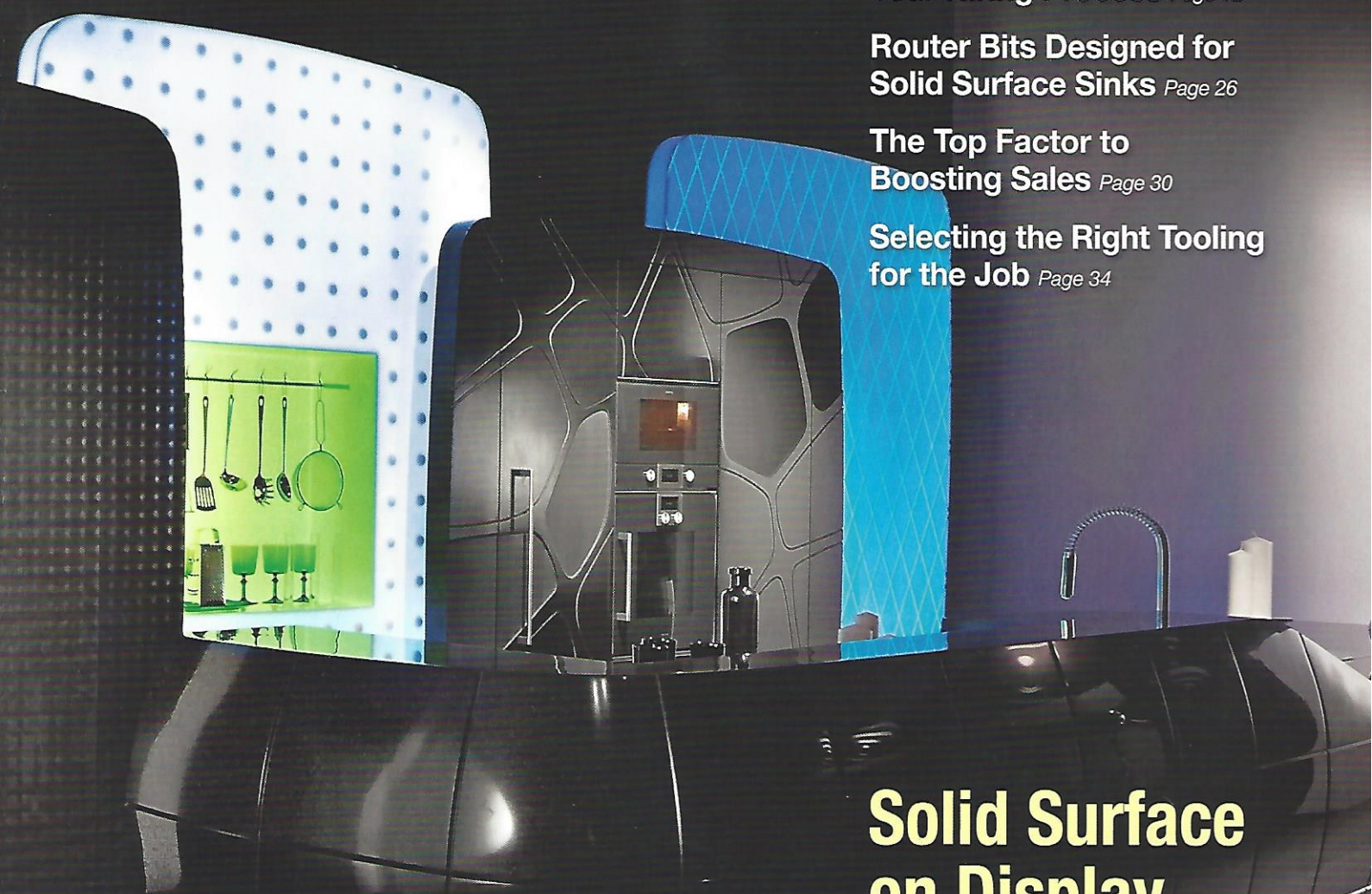

Solid Surface on Display

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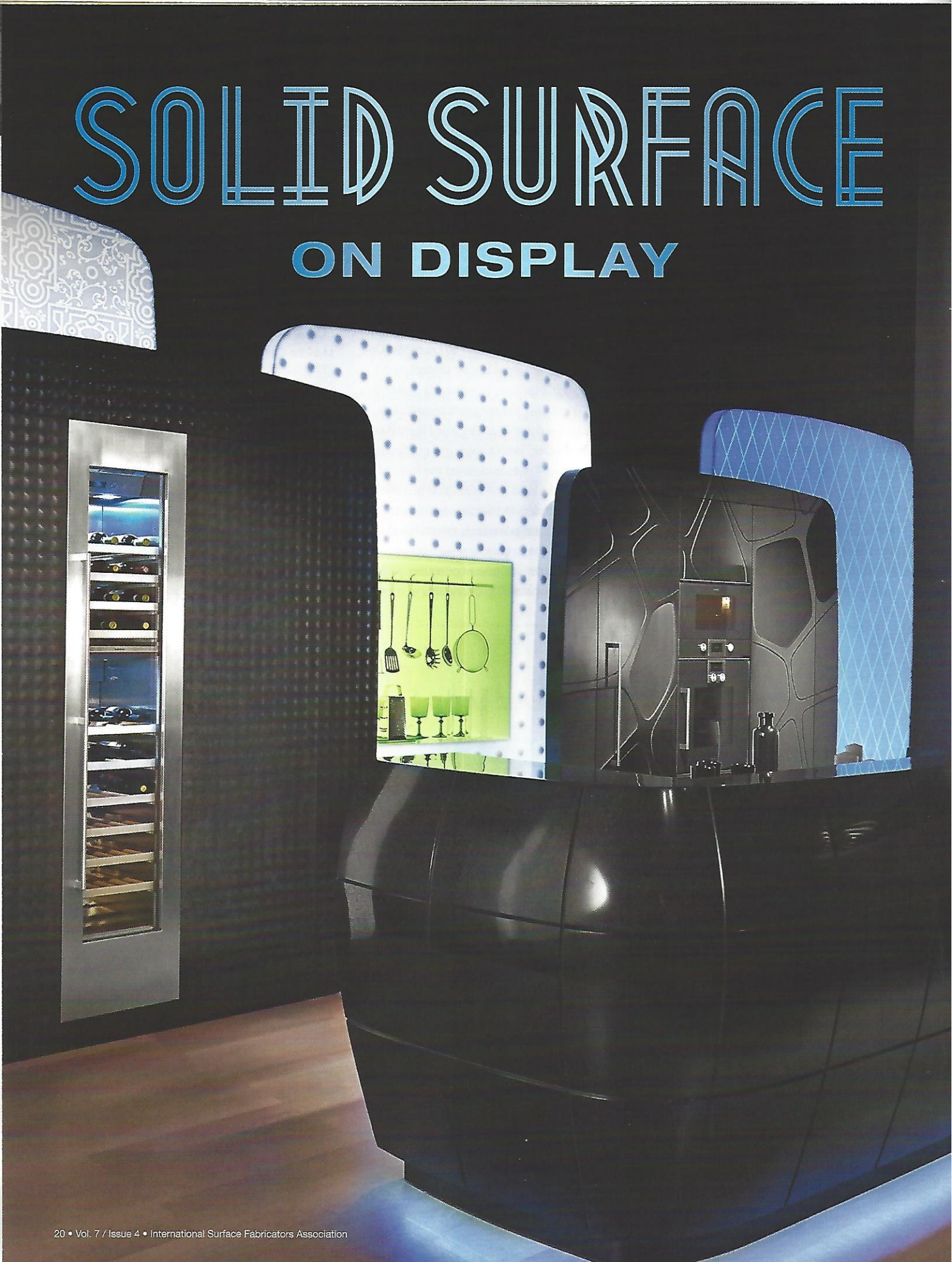
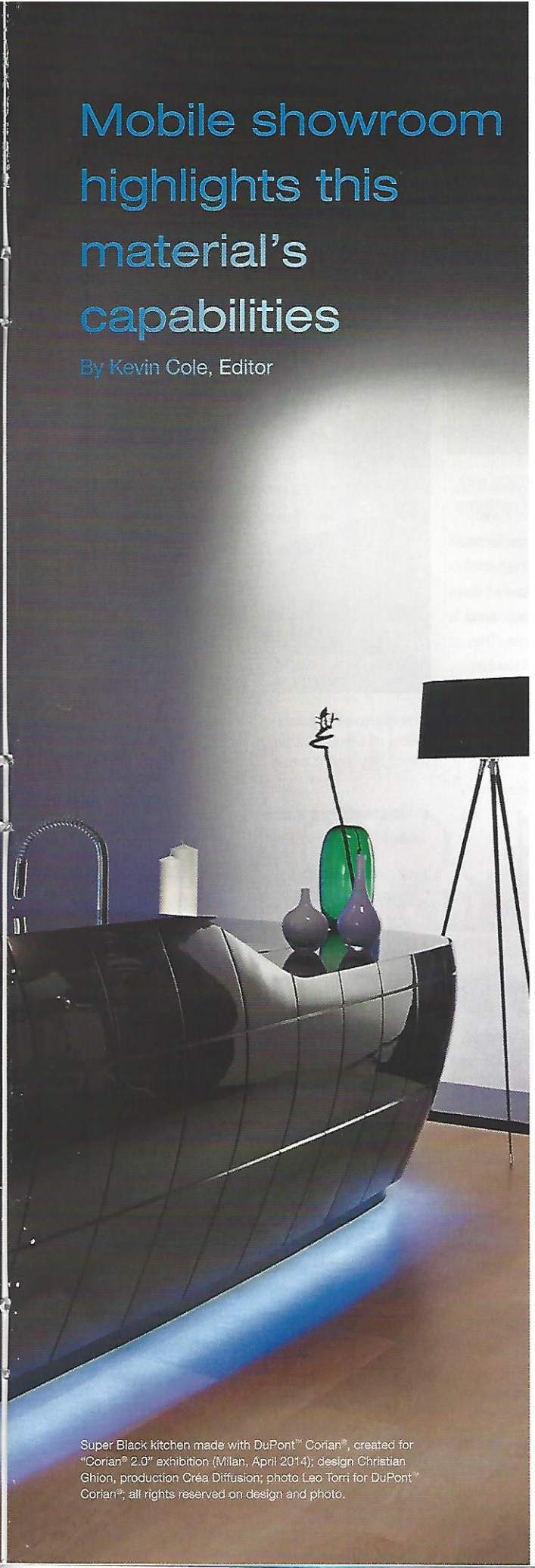
SOLID SURFACE

ON DISPLAY



Mobile showroom highlights this material's capabilities

By Kevin Cole, Editor



Super Black kitchen made with DuPont™ Corian®, created for "Corian® 2.0" exhibition (Milan, April 2014); design Christian Ghion, production Créa Diffusion; photo Leo Torri for DuPont™ Corian®; all rights reserved on design and photo.

When Jean-Yves Bach, the European manager for DuPont™ Corian®, decided to participate in the Milan Furniture Fair, he wanted a display that would not only be spectacular to view, but would show off the expanding capabilities of Corian solid surface. Who better to bring onboard for the project than famous French designer Christian Ghion? And so that is what he did.

The project was to be called "Corian 2.0" and would be a showroom that could be assembled at the event and would feature three separate components, a kitchen, a bathroom and a lounge. The overall idea was to combine innovative solutions for our increasingly digital society with the high-quality design capable with solid surface and top class furnishings. The project was to feature translucency with advanced lighting and electronic systems in a way that also showcased the company's new and exclusive manufacturing process, DeepColor™ Technology.

The Men Behind the Design

Born in 1958 in France, Ghion earned a law degree before deciding to study design. He graduated in 1987 from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la création industrielle (ENSCI) and went on to win the prestigious "Grand Prix de la création de la ville de Paris" in 1990. His unique designs and artistic vision that focuses on imaginative functionality has since led him to work for a variety of well-known furniture manufacturers. His successes have driven his work to now be found in such honorific locales as the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, as well as the Guggenheim Museum New York. It is these laurels that made him the top choice for designing the display.

When employed to develop a concept, Ghion knew just who to turn to for assistance — renown European fabricator Thierry Delles of Créa Diffusion. Créa Diffusion has among its conquests some of the most complex and unique solid surface projects in the world, including work at the Palace of Versailles, the headquarters of the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg and cladding the entire exterior of the Abidjan Convention Center in the Ivory Coast of Africa, just to name a few.

Ghion and Delles had worked together in the past on other solid surface projects and had established not only a successful business relationship, but also a friendship. Bach had also worked with Delles and knew how adept his operation was, so when they turned to him for assistance, it was a perfect match both in capabilities and personalities.

Getting Started

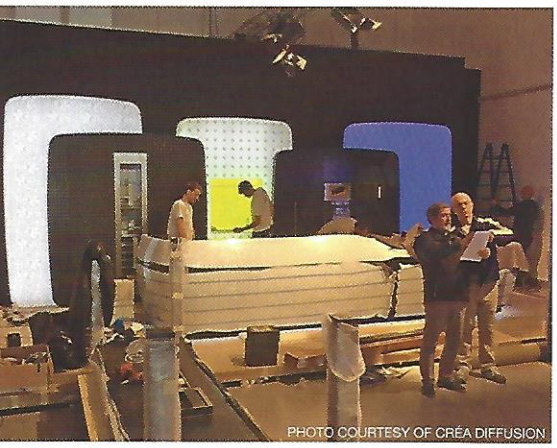
After an initial meeting to discuss the project, see the prototype of the new colors and lay out the parameters, Delles found himself a bit surprised when Ghion asked to come to his shop to look around and get a "little refresher course" on solid surface and the equipment in the workshop. Delles knew Ghion was very familiar with both his company and the properties of solid surface, but was impressed to have a designer that was so interested in all of the intimate details of the fabrication processes and equipment.

"First thing, Ghion went to the waste containers, found some small scraps from previous jobs, some of which had intricate etchings and reliefs, and began to study them," explained Delles. "He looked at them from above, below, on the side, under the light and asked how the work was done and if the projects they were used in were successful. He wanted the operations of each machine explained and asked why a particular thing was done. It was almost like a child exploring. He liked to see, to feel and even to smell all the possibilities of the material with one obsession — to not lose something that could feed his creativity."

After the tour of the shop, which included in-depth looks at Créa's custom products shop, industrial products area, and molding and thermoforming area, Ghion left with the inspiration he needed to formulate a design.

Two weeks later he phoned Bach and Delles to offer four completely different

Créa Diffusion had to refine its sanding technique to bring this black DeepColor Technology Corian countertop up to a high-gloss finish in a way that would hold up to a lot of exposure from the public.



Over a six-week period, 33 sheets of solid surface were cut, thermoformed, engraved, joined and backlit for this project which took 1,365 man-hours to fabricate.

project options. Bach was very excited; Delles was a little bit less so. The work was definitely complex and used shapes that could be very difficult to create. However, Delles was up to the challenge, and together the three discussed the options and selected one of the proposals.

The selected design, which encompassed all three of the required areas, included an eye-catching kitchen space dominated by a wonderful kitchen island with multifunctional wall system entirely fabricated in solid surface. Called "Super Black," the kitchen incorporates high-quality appliances by Gaggenau, a special wireless smartphone recharger from Powermat Technologies also offering networking capabilities, functional hardware for cabinets from Blum and a tap made by Fir Italia.

The bathroom space would use elegant furnishings and accessories designed and produced in solid surface that also incorporated the wireless recharging system and have a beautiful backlit solid surface wall that featured intricate engraved relief patterns.

The lounge space focused on a new decorative solution for interior environments — the Ambium® Dynamic LEDwall by Koledo — combined with furnishings from Moroso, also including several solid surface products. This space also proposed a new solid surface bar table concept called "Blackground." The table is characterized by a bold black and white pattern, includes Powermat's devices for wireless recharging and operates as a virtual computer thanks to a system by Connecting Technology.

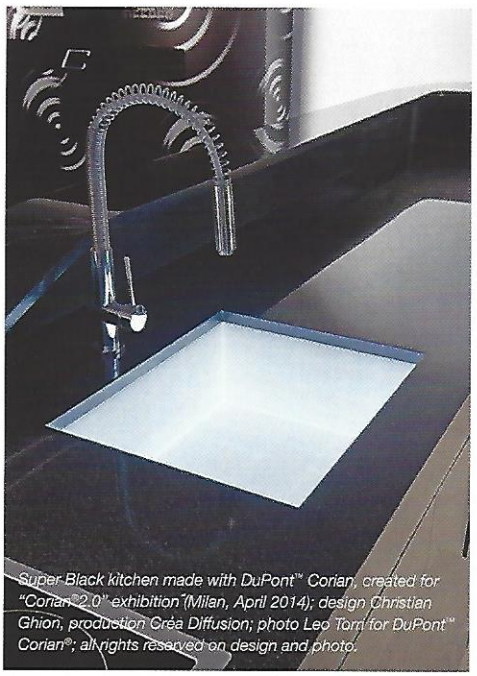
Because of the size of the project and the limited time frame to complete it (about six weeks from start to completion), additional fabricators would have to be brought in to handle the various pieces and applications.

While Créa Diffusion assisted with portions of the other two parts of the project, its main focus was on the Super Black kitchen display, which it handled completely. The bathroom was mainly fabricated by Rexa Design, with Créa doing the backlit wall. And the lounge area was made through a combination of efforts by three fabricators: Gielisssen, which fabricated the LEDwall; TechLab Italia, which fabricated various solid surface furnishings; and Créa, which built the solid surface bar table.

Fabrication Challenges in the Kitchen

With most of his efforts focused on the Super Black kitchen, Delles and his crew dove right in and made the project their own.

"The first step when you have this kind of work is to understand the essential spirit of the project and main message the designer wants to convey," explained Delles. "We are not here to change the design of a project like this. After understanding the project, we must adapt our work to make it a reality."



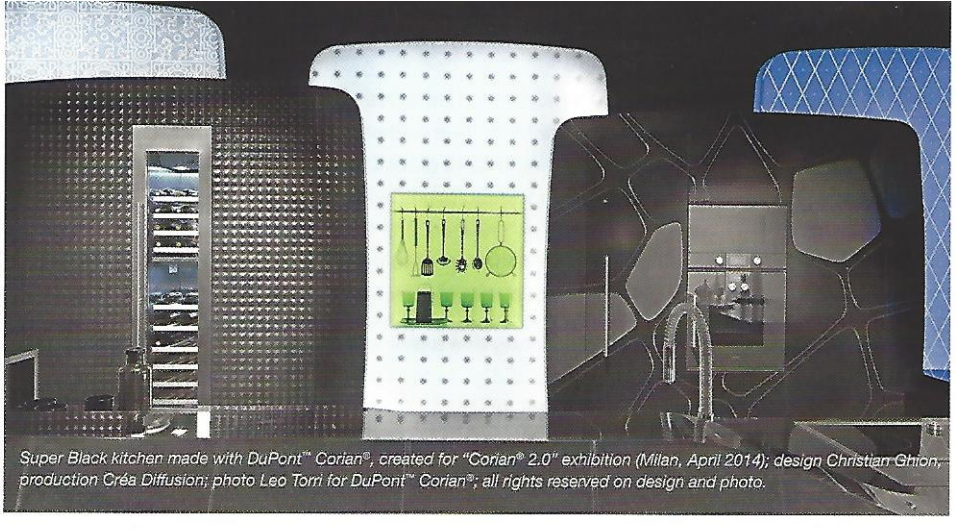
The completed kitchen featured an island base made of Deep Nocturne, a top made of Deep Night Sky and a backlit sink in Glacier Ice Corian.

And while Créa Diffusion is well versed in adapting to these types of projects, it wasn't without its difficulties. The main issues that had to be overcome were the complex engraving, the use of dark colors and the dynamic shapes prescribed by the design.

When it came to the engraved vertical surfaces, Créa definitely had the upper hand, having performed and perfected this sort of work in the past. "The different patterns were inspired from other works that Créa Diffusion had done previously, like one of the walls in the Palace of Versailles, a facade done in Paris and another from a bathroom in Côte d'Azur (the French Riviera) in the south of France," said Delles. "Overall, there were six different relief aspects; some were created by an engraving CNC process, while others were made using double-mold thermoforming."

However, the design called for these panels to really stand out boldly, so adapting the engraving process to the patterns called for was just the first step in the process.

"One of Ghion's main ideas was to mingle the



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The multifunctional wall system (from left to right) included backlit Glacier Ice; Deep Black Quartz; Glacier Ice with a niche in backlit Lime Ice; Deep Anthracite; and backlit Blueberry Ice Corian.

dark and the light, so we used LEDs to backlight colored translucent panels which gave more relief to the engraving," explained Delles.

Another challenge, which Delles thought would be the toughest going into the project, was the fact that all of the main pieces of furniture were designed using varying shades of black Corian: Deep Nocturne, Deep Night Sky, Deep Black Quartz and Deep Anthracite. "Darker colors do not have a good reputation as being easy to work with," he explained. "They tend to show imperfections easier and are historically tougher to thermoform. And when a company works [on a project] for a show, that means it is exposed to the eyes of its colleagues and before its competitors and critics, leaving no room to fail!"

Additionally, the design called for the worktop to be sanded to a high-gloss finish, which is typically tougher on black solid surface, and the finish would have to hold up to the exposure to large crowds at the show — not an easy prospect.

Prior to this project nobody had worked with the new Deep Colors technology. The idea behind the technology was that darker colors would be more durable and less prone to show wear because of a technique used in the manufacturing process. This technique made for material that, when scratched, would scratch dark instead of white like typical dark colors of solid surface.

"The solid surface sheets had to be thermoformed into difficult 3-D shapes, and the colors were new for us and untested," said