



## Ask the Experts

The virtues of back-painted glass; replacing vintage needlepoint upholstery; greener gardening

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Back-painted glass from GlassWorks brightens a kitchen designed by JS Interiors Group in a Lake Shore Drive condo.

**Q.** We love the look of back-painted glass and would like a backsplash of this material in our kitchen. How pricey is it, and how should we proceed?

**A.** Back-painted glass is simply glass that is painted on the back and then sealed or baked, but its color shows through with a depth and glow that are captivating. It's a wonderful material to use as a kitchen backsplash because it looks luscious and luminous, but crisp and clean, too, and maintenance is a breeze. Back-painted glass is reminiscent of Vitrolite and other types of pigmented glass that were popular in the 1920s and 1930s for interior surfaces and for exteriors of everything from jewelry stores to insurance offices.

There are a few variables involved in the fabrication and installation of back-painted glass that affect its price, according to Chris Parker, manager of GlassWorks (1647 N. Clybourn Ave., 312-337-2300; glassworks.net). The first consideration is the type of glass to be used. You can choose either regular or starfire glass. Starfire, which is lead-free and low-iron and lacks the slight greenish tinge of the regular kind, is more expensive. Tempered glass, which is recommended for use behind a stove but is not necessary behind a kitchen counter or sink, is also more expensive because it adds another step to the manufacturing process. Textured glass adds to the bill, too.

The next consideration is the paint. GlassWorks has 11 stock colors but can also match any color in your kitchen using Benjamin Moore paint. You can also have a design or image painted on the glass. The cost will depend on how much custom work is involved, including cuts in the glass for outlets and light switches. Parker says the general price range is \$45 to \$60 per square foot.

Back-painted glass behind a stove is one of the most expensive installations, especially if it needs to be fitted in behind an