

THE HOME YOU OWN

KitchenAid's gorgeous new mixer sold out. Bakers won't touch it.

The model features an eye-catching wooden bowl. But can you whip egg whites in it?

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KitchenAid's 2024 Design Series Evergreen stand mixer. (KitchenAid)

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When KitchenAid unveiled the latest designer version of its iconic stand mixer this month, the century-old appliance had some new features: a deep green matte finish called “Evergreen,” brass accents and the coup de grâce: the brand’s first-ever walnut wood bowl.

“Evergreen brings the beauty of nature to your countertop as it connects you with the outdoors every time you enter the kitchen,” proclaimed the company’s press release.

And there’s no denying that the stand mixer, which retails for \$699.99, is gorgeous. But the many people who want to, say, use the appliance, well ... they have questions. Bakers, in particular, find the walnut choice perplexing at best, a gesture at aesthetics that renders the product useless.

KitchenAid grants that “the walnut bowl requires different care and maintenance than other KitchenAid Stand Mixer bowls,” Brittini Pertijs, design manager of color, material and finish design at Whirlpool Corporation, which owns KitchenAid, said in an email. Still, she maintains that “Evergreen was designed to create in the kitchen.” Like KitchenAid’s comparable mixers, the designer version is compatible with more than 10 of the company’s attachments, including its metal bowls — sold separately, of course — to make “anything from fresh pasta and burgers to veggie noodles, ice cream and more,” she adds. (You cannot, however, buy the walnut bowl separately.)

The new member of the stand mixer family has received “an overwhelmingly positive response,” Pertijs says. “The response has been so positive that in less than one week, Evergreen sold out on [KitchenAid.com](https://www.kitchenaid.com). We are working diligently on restocking product to allow more customers to bring Evergreen into their kitchens.”

KitchenAid’s mixers put the “stand” in “home cook’s standard.” They’re consistently top-rated, deeply trusted and among the top wedding registry items at retailer Crate & Barrel and Zola, an online wedding registry and e-commerce business.

They’ve also become something of a status symbol. “The KitchenAid mixer in a lot of ways for younger folks could mean, you know what, I’ve made it,” says Tracy Morris, principal of [Tracy Morris Design](https://www.tracymorrisdesign.com) in McLean, Va. “I have arrived in my kitchen and I am doing big things.”

Morris has had the same white KitchenAid stand mixer for more than 20 years. “It was just super, super, super important to me to have a stand mixer because I absolutely love, love, love to bake,” she says. She’s bought new attachments multiple times when the old ones dulled, but otherwise it’s still working great. (She loves how the Evergreen version looks but acknowledges that the walnut bowl is better for serving salad than mixing baking ingredients.)

While other kitchen appliances tend to make their homes in drawers or cabinets, people with enough countertop space will often display their stand mixers. “It’s just a sculpture, really, a beautiful object. ... If you can give it some air and you can really kind of feature it on the counter and you have space, it’s such a beautiful addition to a kitchen,” says [Annie Elliott](https://www.annieelliott.com), a D.C.-based interior designer. “It telegraphs that you’re a good cook, you’re a serious baker, you care. And it also says that you can afford a KitchenAid mixer.”

Elliott says the Evergreen with the walnut bowl is especially lovely to look at but, because of its impracticalities, “this does seem more statusy than pride in being an accomplished baker or cook.”

KitchenAid frequently rolls out different versions of the product it has sold since 1919, most notably with new colorways. It even takes a leaf out of Pantone's book and proclaims a "Color of the Year" for its stand mixers. (This year's was a periwinkle shade called Blue Salt and last year's was Hibiscus, which tied in with Pantone's choice of Viva Magenta.) Its designer series in particular, which launched in 2017, plays around with color and texture, including Blossom, which paired a light green base with a hammered copper bowl that "develops a unique patina over time, reflecting your growth as a maker," per the press release. Or there's Light & Shadow, a white mixer with a black studded ceramic bowl.

Consumers can decide whether they want to shell out extra dough for the copper-clad and ceramic versions of the mixing bowl, but those options are relatively low-maintenance and unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the food. The same cannot be said of wood. It's notorious for absorbing odors. And there's this, from the instruction manual: "For best care, regularly season Bowl after each use with food-safe mineral oil, manufactured food safe wood polish, or walnut oil." Most home cooks struggle with properly maintaining their wood cutting boards and utensils. It requires little in the way of imagination to assume the same would go for a mixer bowl.

When it comes to some of the most common culinary tasks for a stand mixer, a wood bowl makes even less practical sense. If you want to crank out a batch of whipped cream, chilling the bowl (and the whisk attachment) is one way to guarantee maximum volume. Pop a bowl made out of metal, a conductor, in the refrigerator or freezer, and it will quickly and effectively take on the cold. Wood, an insulator, not so much.

Even more problematic is beating egg whites, as you would for meringues, angel food cake and more. Fat, including the oil you are coating the wood bowl with after every use, can interfere with the foam you're trying to create. While it won't necessarily doom you to failure, the fat can "make you work harder and longer, and the foam won't be as light or stable," food science expert Harold McGee explains in "On Food and Cooking." For this very reason, KitchenAid says on its site that "it is not recommended to use the oiled wood bowl for whipped egg creations."

Yet this new iteration appears to be a hit with consumers. "Our customers have already been loving the new piece, with hundreds sold within a few days," Alicia Waters, brand president at Crate & Barrel, said in an email, noting that the product is "quickly becoming a bestseller."

Perhaps that's because, despite the clear-cut culinary woes, the walnut bowl is in keeping with the current move toward a "quiet luxury" aesthetic. "Wood is a very timeless material," says Cathleen Gruver, principal at Gruver Cooley Interiors in Purcellville, Va. Even if it's not exactly practical as a bowl in a stand mixer, "it's also very popular in kitchen design right now. ... It just kind of has a little bit more character and feels more heirloom-y and collected and not quite as sterile."

But while you might not want your kitchen to look sterile, you do want the room — and the appliances in it — to be clean. The walnut bowl is challenging there, too. You're not supposed to fully submerge wood in water, let alone put it in the dishwasher.

Compare this mixer with other KitchenAid offerings to see where it falls short. The company is charging a design premium on a model that many bakers, including those on The Washington Post's Food team, consider to be the inferior style of stand mixer — it has a tilt head, which has less power, and has smaller bowls and a more annoying locking mechanism than KitchenAid's bowl-lift models. The first-ever wooden bowl also lacks the handle included on many, but not all, of KitchenAid's other stand mixer bowls. That presents a maneuverability challenge. And the stand mixers aren't exactly easy to lift.

Their heft is frequently a challenge for interior designers. Gruver often incorporates stand mixer lifts into the kitchens she designs — meaning a shelf inside a cabinet with a spring that boosts the appliance to countertop-level. Morris likes to use appliance “garages” so the mixer is easily accessible but not cluttering the counter.

Indeed, most of the time that Morris leaves the KitchenAid stand mixer on display, she's staging a home for sale rather than designing a kitchen for people to use and enjoy. “When you're trying to make a kitchen look sweet and well-lived and well-appointed,” the mixer stays out, she says.

And that's precisely what the Evergreen stand mixer's purpose seems to be: for show, rather than for use. But that show seems to be selling out.