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Make a splash
Freshen up your bathroom and
indulge in the latest design trends 7

BATHROOM SPECIAL

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A SLEEK, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Light-filled bathroom retreats are at the cutting edge of interior design, writes **Robyn Willis**

The bathroom sure isn't what it used to be. Not that long ago, it was somewhere to have a wash, brush your teeth and maybe put on some make-up before facing the day.

Bathrooms are now expected to be efficient, rejuvenating and even make an impression on guests.

Sales manager for Eden Brae Homes, Bill Hawie, says most two-storey home designs will have a minimum of three bathrooms — an ensuite off the main bedroom, the family bathroom and a powder room for guests.

“The three main areas for lifestyle changes among home owners are the kitchen, the bathrooms and the ensuite,” Bill says.

Multi-generational living is one of the driving forces behind the increase in the number of bathrooms, he says, with home owners looking after family at both ends of the spectrum.

“A lot more teenagers are staying at home longer and people are thinking about that,” says Bill.

“The Waldorf (display home by Eden Brae) is a popular house at the moment because it suits elderly parents as well.”

But that's not to say that parents are missing out altogether.

The size of the ensuite in the main bedroom is growing, and along with it, the choice of fittings, from freestanding baths to his and her basins and double showers.

BATHING BEAUTIES

The freestanding bath has become the most important feature for today's bathrooms, especially in ensuites where luxury is the priority, says managing director of Paco Jaanson, Ari Zorlu.

“In the old days it was a clawfoot bath and now they are very modern in shape,” says Ari.

“The price has come down on the acrylic version to about \$1500 so they are much more affordable.”

The egg-shaped baths reflect a growing interest in organic bathroom fittings as people try to connect with the environment.

Managing director of Candana Bathware, Marc Reed, says people with deeper pockets are looking to baths made from natural stone or malleable materials such as Corian and Marblo.

“Everything is about water, relaxation and being connected to your environment which is more sensual for the end user,” says Marc.

“Freestanding baths are a big thing at the moment but my advice is to make sure it is practical.”

Connection to the outdoors is also being reflected in shower head design.

Bill Hawie says more buyers are requesting “bushman” style shower heads that are fitted to the ceiling.

Even better is a shower big enough for two with shower heads to match.



BASIC INSTINCT

It will come as no surprise to most that wall-hung basins are here to stay.

Ari says bathroom design is moving away from traditional fitted units to freestanding mobile furniture.

Or, at least, furniture that looks like it is freestanding.

“A ceramic wall-hung basin with storage that is mobile or a drawer unit on legs is the new trend,” he says.

“If you want to spruce up your bathroom, you only need to change a few pieces of furniture. You can have timber veneer drawers now and red gloss in 10 years’ time if you want.”

Basins no longer need to be classic white. Ari says red or orange ceramic basins can look amazing, especially in a powder room where guests can see them.

“There are a lot of groovy colours around now,” he says. “Black and white are also really popular.”

For a more conservative but contemporary look, Bill Hawie says bench-mounted ceramic basins are the go. And his and her basins go without saying.

TOOT TOOT

The toilet is coming out of the closet, so to speak, looking more stylish than ever.

Slimline pans with concealed cisterns are the most obvious trend, although they come at a cost.

“The (flush) button becomes the access

point for any problems with the cistern,” says Ari. “If there is a really big problem, which is rare, then you will need to get into the wall.”

For powder rooms tucked under the stairs a la *The Block*, Ari says European brand Flo has a slimline loo to fit.

Given it is one of the most used features in a bathroom, Marc says a good quality toilet is worth the extra dollars.

ON THE TILES

Such is the importance of the tiled feature wall now that Marc Reed says his company is taking its first steps into the tile market.

Mosaic tiles are a popular choice for walls, moving away from glass towards natural materials like marble.

For those who can afford the price tag, limestone and travertine floors are still the way to go.

Among the luxury finishes though, an old and inexpensive favourite is finding a new audience.

The traditional brick-shaped white tile is back in vogue, laid in a conventional pattern or lengthwise for a more contemporary look.

“Subway tiles are a big thing now, especially if they are laid with dark grout,”

Marc says. robyn.willis@news.com.au

More Candana Bathware, candana.com.au;
Eden Brae, edenbraehomes.com.au; FY2K, fy2k.com.au;
Paco Jaanson, pacojaanson.com.au; Rogerseller, rogerseller.com.au



This Rogerseller bathroom by Bathtime has the latest must haves including a freestanding bath and bench-mounted basin.







Privacy and access to good natural light have been balanced out in the ensuite bathroom of the Waldorf by Eden Brae.

FOCUS



