

BATHROOMS UNPLUGGED

HOMEOWNERS SPEND WISELY

Janita Singh

THE global recession has affected the way homeowners invest in bathrooms, with many playing it safe and spending wisely.

People are showing preference for more functional, low-profile designs and relying more on accessories in good brands for style and versatility.

"Bold, statement-making pieces have taken a backseat," Tradelink brand manager Tim Dawson says.

Mr Dawson, who sources new products to suit this conservative bathroom trend, says most are focussing on cosmetic upgrades than making big-budget changes.

"They are looking for taps,

showers and toilets on low budgets," he says.

However, the ensuite is where people will go for broke.

Bathroom designers say homeowners are giving more prominence to ensuites – which act as extra luxury spaces and extensions to their bedroom.

"They are making them bigger and functional in terms of adding showering and extra storage facilities," Mr Dawson says.

But value for money is still the key determining factor, says Mark Bickerstaffe, Kohler director of new product development.

Investing in bathroom acces-

sories, from the same design footprint is a smarter way to keep everything simple and make savings, Mr Bickerstaffe says.

More people are looking at energy labelling and water ratings to keep ongoing costs down. "Since (Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards, WELS) regulation – all showers, toilets and taps have now restrictors and energy labelling which definitely impacts what people choose," says Ari Zorlu, owner of Paco Jaanson.

It's sure to be appreciated by future owners too.

■ tradelink.com.au; kohler.com.au; pacojaanson.com.au



Great value, pictured, bathroom with budget-conscious accessories from Tradelink.

