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BEST AND BRIGHTEST IN BATHROOMS

Relax and indulge in beautiful bathroom designs to rejuvenate and re-energise, writes **Robyn Willis**

Bathrooms have become a lot more than just somewhere to wash and prepare for the day or the evening.

Part resort and part wellness centre, the emphasis has shifted from a quick run under the shower before bed to an opportunity to relax and rejuvenate after a long day.

Ari Zorlu, director of bathroom products supplier Paco Jaanson, says there is renewed interest in everything from body jets to chromotherapy, a treatment method where coloured light is passed through a water jet to treat diseases.

This move to a more indulgent approach based on wellness principles has been reflected in the growing interest in luxury surfaces with a nod towards the natural world.

Stone such as marble and even semi precious materials such as quartz, agate and amethyst have made their way into the bathroom as materials for benchtops while concrete is the material of choice for others thanks to its industrial feel and practicality.

While it might be tempting to fill your bathroom with lots of beautiful features, interior designer Marika Jarv from Marika Jarv Creative says it works best when you choose one item to be the focus of the room.

“Try to keep things simple which is hard because there are so many beautiful things out there,” she says. “Opening the bathroom to the outside with big windows or even doors and having that inside/outside thing is great, although it’s a little bit harder in an urban environment.” →

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More Marika Jarv Creative, marikajarv.com.au;

Paco Jaanson, pacojaanson.com.au



GOING FOR GOLD IN ULTIMATE LUXURY

Baths used to be the sole domain of small children. But as the ensuite has evolved from a simple washroom to an in-home day spa, the freestanding bath has become a must-have item, along with double showers – and even chandeliers. The good news is, they are more affordable than ever. For a freestanding bath to work well, interior designer Marika Jarv says the key ingredient is space. “I see people choosing those lovely big baths only to put them up against walls way too often and I wonder how they will be able to clean them,” she says. “They have to be in the centre of the room or off the wall at least for easy cleaning.” Twin basins are also a luxury, she says, when one would often do. “They can be a waste of space so that there are two basins but no bench space,” she says.



European trends such as this space from the Accademia Oro range influence local design.



THINKING THROUGH STORAGE



It's easy to get caught up in the latest trends in finishes and fittings but the day-to-day success of your bathroom will probably depend on how well you think through your storage options. Ikea (pictured) has taken their storage expertise into the bathroom with simple solutions for keeping everything within easy reach. Ari Zorlu from Paco Jaanson says there's been a shift recently towards unfitted furniture in the bathroom. "A lot of people are going for freestanding pieces like tallboys rather than a fixed vanity," he says. "It gives people flexibility to change the space easily."



MAKING GOOD SURFACE IMPRESSIONS

The days of the super slick bathroom are numbered with a strong trend emerging towards materials and surfaces with a more organic look. The concrete wall and floor in this bathroom designed by Marika Jarv is a continuation of a concrete slab used in the rest of the house. "You shouldn't make the bathroom a stand alone room, particularly if you have two bathrooms," she says. "I like a house to be cohesive using a limited palette."

Other surfaces coming to the fore are raw timber and natural stone, like marble. Contrast textured surfaces with the warmth of brass in tapware, showerheads or just accessories. A little carefully placed lighting will add sparkle.

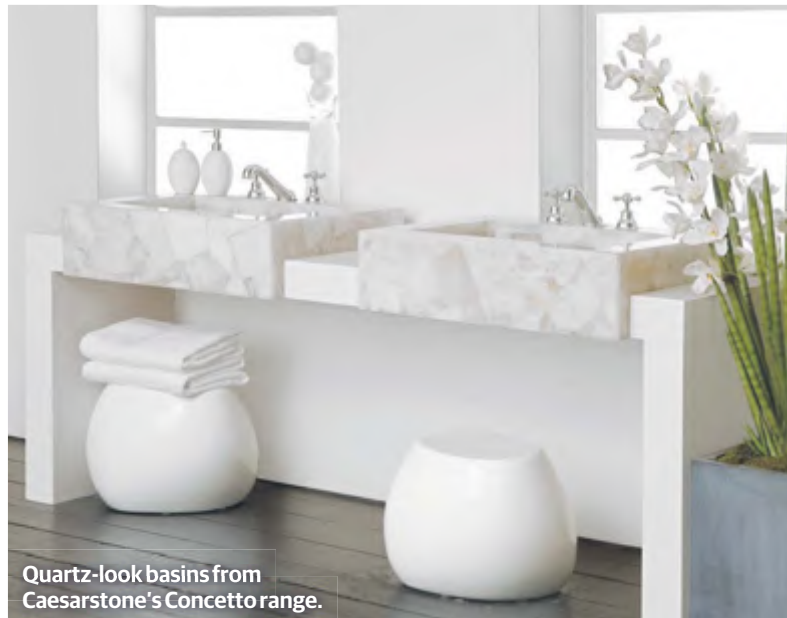


Concrete floors, a black basin and brass taps add drama in this bathroom designed by Marika Jarv.



PRECIOUS STONES AND NATURAL BEAUTY

→ We're all looking for a closer connection to the natural world and the bathroom is a great chance to indulge. But that doesn't mean there's no room for luxury. Natural stone is one of the strongest trends in surfaces right now. For some, only marble will do, with traditional Carrara and Calcutta marble in grey and white tones still proving popular. Others will fall in love with Caesarstone's latest, including amethyst, agate and quartz which can be backlit for added dramatic effect.
Source Caesarstone, caesarstone.com.au

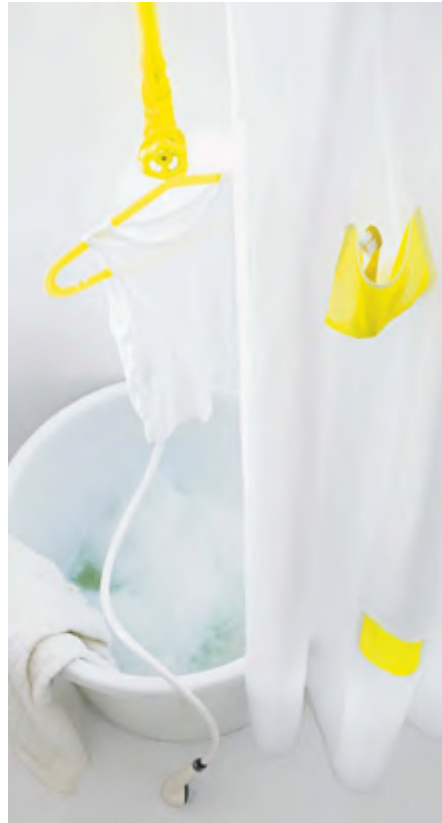


Quartz-look basins from
Caesarstone's Concetto range.



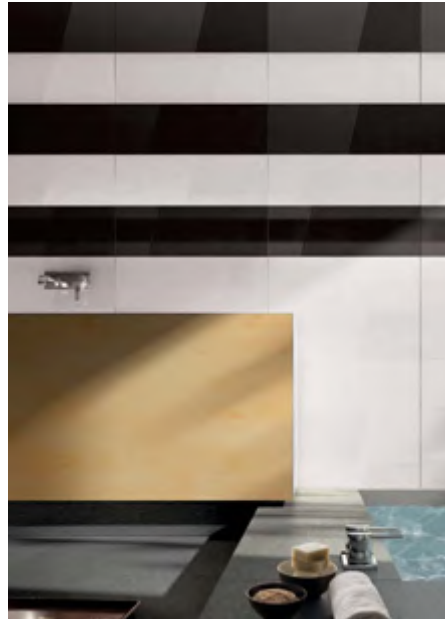
CLEANING UP AT BATH TIME

Bath time for families is all about practicalities but that doesn't mean compromising on style – or fun. Companies like Ikea are an obvious source of inspiration, with their new Sprutt range keeping everything from soap and toothbrushes handy. Portable items such as sturdy stools for reaching the basin and baskets for bath toys are always useful. While many love the simplicity of white, it can be a challenge to keep spotless in busy families. Consider easy clean and hard wearing surfaces for benchtops and floors, preferably in light patterns that are less likely to show up every little mark. Safety is also a key concern in family bathrooms. Nothing beats supervision.
Source Ikea, ikea.com.au





TAKING TILES IN NEW DIRECTIONS



The bathroom is the one room in the house where tiles can really shine. Until recently, however, it was all about large format tiles. Now, Ari Zorlu from Paco Jaanson says more elaborate designs from Europe have begun to filter through. "Some of the European trends are trickling down from the trade fairs," he says. "They are trying to be creative with pattern."

Even classic tiles are being updated, simply by laying them in different patterns such as chevron, or opting for bands of colour. **Source** Academy Tiles, academytiles.com.au



This contemporary look from Academy Tiles takes a classic tile and reinvents it with a chevron pattern.



THE DRAMA IS IN THE DETAIL

A crisp blue and white shower curtain from West Elm steals the show in a simple white bathroom.



Not everyone has the means or the opportunity to give their bathroom an overhaul but that doesn't have to be the end of the story. As the freestanding bath makes a welcome return, the humble shower curtain is back in vogue with a variety of quirky colours and styles available. Match it with your bathmat for a co-ordinated look. Leafy indoor plants, the bigger, the better, bring the outdoors in, along with a wire chair or wooden stool, ideal for stacking towels.
Source West Elm, westelm.com.au