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bathrooms: what the pros know

Designers share their top choices for today's baths

EUROPEAN-STYLE SHOWER

Deryl Carter: "I gravitate toward fixtures that are time honored, such as a European-style exposed shower. I often use Waterworks' Etoile Exposed Thermostat System. It comes in an unlacquered brass finish, which only improves over time." waterworks.com



CLAW-FOOT TUB

Ellen Hamilton: "I love old-school claw-foot bathtubs. I recently had a project where I sent six of them overseas to a transplanted Brooklyn family. They just had to have their favorite tubs." classicclawfoottubs.com



GOLD FINISHES

Alex Papachristias: "I still love nickel, but I feel like I'm seeing it everywhere. So, I'm going back to gold finishes, which add old-world glamour to the bathroom. The TRG Spirit Widespread Ivory Set in polished gold is a favorite of mine." thebrasserie.com



GLASS SINK LEGS

Cailee Kemble: "In my home, clear-glass legs support a marble top and double sinks. They add unexpected delicacy, and I don't for one second regret the trade-off of storage for sparkle." Straight Legs or Industrial Base washstands in glass; urbanarchaeology.com



CONCRETE TILE

Merin Brudnick: "At the Soho Beach House in Miami, I designed bathrooms using hexagonal concrete tile. The shape creates an interesting pattern, while the material can withstand spills, sun, and sand." Ann Sacks Honeycomb Tile; annsacks.com



SEXY LIGHTING

Aixa Hampton: "Bathroom lighting should be glamorous. I like it to look like crystal chandelier, with faceting and '90s-style sex appeal." Try Hinkley Lighting's Tidas sconce (hinkleylighting.com) or Hampton's out-crystal Ava sconce. istd.com



BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE

First popularized in Japan, luxurious high-tech toilets are the latest bathroom status fixture. Some top models: French design provocateur Philippe Starck calls his Duravit SenseWash a "shower toilet." This sleek \$1,895 unit has a bidet-like spray system, warm-air dryer, and LED night-light. From Japan, Toto's Washlet toilet has a soft, heated seat and spray nozzles. The company's entry-level B100 model is a relatively affordable \$650. Kohler's fully loaded Numi, left, incorporates an interactive LCD touch-screen interface, a motion-activated trigger that opens and closes the seat, a foot warmer, and a built-in music system. At \$6,390, it's the king of royal flushes.

trend report: bathrooms

We asked the experts what's new in bathroom design and where they think this essential space is headed.



BARBARA SALLICK, cofounder and senior vice president of design, Waterworks:

"Environmental building codes are revamping the bathroom as we know it. Brass fixtures are now lead free. Years ago, a toilet flush took many gallons of water; we're now down to 1.2 gallons a flush. Recycled shower water—known as gray water—is next. In the past, a plumber showed you your options for a bathroom. Today, the bath is decorated with the same care and attention as the rest of the house. You can have music, furniture, textiles, and refrigerators—and if you want to drink Champagne in the bath, why not?"

"My fantasy would be to offer a bathroom in a box: bathtub, sink or vanity, toilet, surface materials, and simple installation manual. It would be a curated package for people who don't have a designer or who are in a hurry."

JUDD LORD, director of industrial design, Delta Faucet Company:

"We're seeing clean, minimalist design dressed in warmer, traditional finishes such as shades of bronze. There is a move to eliminate hardware, with hidden, built-in handles for a cleaner look."

"In the future, bathroom layouts will include more zones, such as dry or wet areas. There will be more individual spaces—dedicated dressing and makeup areas and water closets."

DAVID KOHLER, president and COO, Kohler Company:

"The bathroom of the future will be enabled by advanced electronics, but not just for the sake of technology. It's about creating new experiences and having intuitive control and convenience while conserving water. In many ways, the technology is already here. Our DTV Promot Digital Showering System has smart features such as a warm-up mode, timer, and the ability to pause water flow. And Robem's TVID mirrored bath cabinet (above) has an 8-inch LCD television incorporated in the door."

AMY TANENBAUM, executive vice president, Sicis North America:

"Bath design has been focused on sustainability. Now we're starting to address a more personal element: how our rooms make us feel. The more our society delves into technology, the more we'll need to surround ourselves with nature. Sicis's Biophilia tile collection (top) has imagery—flowers, birds, trees, and butterflies—that re-creates the outdoors inside."

BY INGRID ABRAMOVITZ