

# Splashing out

No longer simply a place to wash, bathrooms are emerging as the most stylish room in a house. Gabrielle Fagan picks out the key designer trends

Bathrooms - once unassuming and functional - are now regarded as places to socialise, relax and even romance.

Inspired by hotels here and abroad, many of us are picking up on luxury ideas and raising our expectations of what a good bathroom should deliver.

Extra-spacious tubs, hydrotherapy systems, beautiful furniture and mood lighting are just some of the developments, but perhaps the most drastic of all is the removal of all the walls - a significant trend for 2010/11 is the merging of bathroom and bedroom to create a boudoir/dressing area rather than a standard en suite.

"Combining bathroom and sleeping zones makes sense if you have the space, while a free-standing bath in a bedroom is a true touch of indulgence," says Laurence Pigeon, director of Alternative Plans, a specialist in designer bathrooms.

"A popular and practical concept is to divide the open plan area by using a screen to separate the two areas. Sophisticated glass room dividers can, at the touch of a button, become opaque for privacy." Style consultant for Dolphin Bathrooms and designer Laurence

Llewelyn-Bowen welcomes a trend for more glamorous bathrooms. "For me, the bathroom should not only feel like an extension of the bedroom but every bit as romantic and decorative as that room," he says.

"Comfy, upholstered occasional chairs, pictures and wallpaper help turn a bathroom into an indulgent, sensual space. And adding elements that echo your taste and lifestyle will create a uniqueness no hotel can match."

Cheryl Gurner, creative director of internationally renowned Bathrooms International, London, has also seen a big hike in the bath-in-the-bedroom trend. She says: "The bedroom's the most intimate space shared by couples and the incorporation of the bath brings an added element of sensuality to the experience."

"One of the best features is the sunken bath for its spacious spa design and feeling of luxury."

Whether you go for 'sleek and contemporary' or 'romantic and traditional', there's a wow-factor bath that could add value to your home. Here are the trends to look out for...

Take inspiration from opulent hotel bathrooms.

Bathroom with onyx marble on walls and floors and inlaid-Mother-of-Pearl detail and platinum-leaf gilded cabinets. POA, designed by Argent Design





Make tubs a central feature in a bathroom by contrasting colour with neutral tones.

Greenwich slipper bath, whose exterior skirt can be matched to a client's colour specification.

From £2,145, BC Sanitan

Use bold, striking colours to create maximum impact.

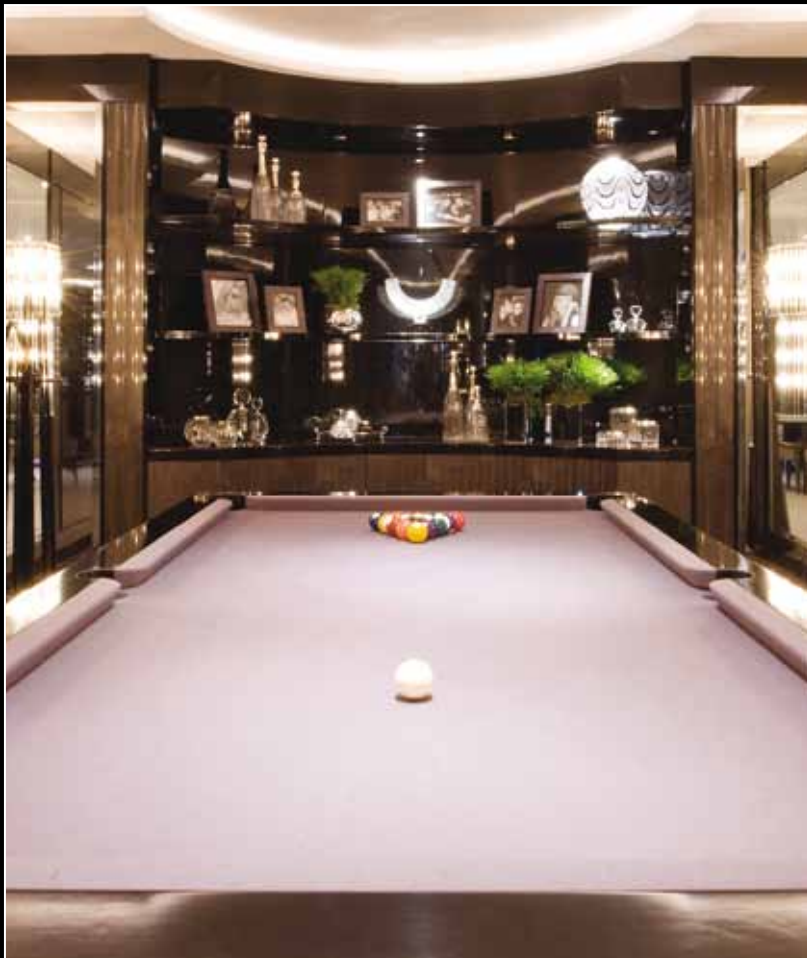
Bathroom in Silestone, a semi-precious natural stone quartz, including tiles, flooring and bath surround.

Starts from £850 for a Simplicity Sink, Cosentino



Baths now incorporate the latest technology to turn a bathing experience into a well-being and hydrotherapy session.

Aquasoul Extra bath, from £7,204 for a free-standing bath and from £6,386 for an inset bath, Jacuzzi



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Blur the distinction between different rooms by borrowing furnishing ideas from other areas of the house.

Artelinea glass-fronted units and tops are available in orange, gold, red and pastels. Wall-hung drawer unit, from £2,193; matching basin, from £270, C.P. Hart

Natural colour tones and materials create a calming atmosphere.

Summit bathroom range: washbasin unit in Lux/Perle lacquer, £1,298; wall unit, £1,466; base unit (on right), £1,024; Vov bath, £7,637, The Alternative Bathroom Company



A free-standing bath in a bedroom is a statement of indulgence.

La Belle bathroom range: bath, from £3,805; vanity unit, from £1,668.50; mirror, from £1,706, Villeroy & Boch



Mirrors give an illusion of space.

Lomond cast-iron bath, £2,526, (surround not supplied);  
Lion Head bath mixer in solid brass (also available in nickel or chrome), £1,821, Drummonds

Make bathing a sociable affair.

Ufo extra-large enamel bath, also available in polished stainless steel, fitted with a CristalPlant backrest.  
From £12,480, Alternative Plans



International travel is shaping the style of bathrooms as illustrated by this sunken Moroccan-inspired bath.

Nara infinity bath, £7,862;  
Waterfall spout, from £1225,  
Bathroom International

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