

Contact: Ginny Long  
Director of Public Affairs  
Moen Incorporated  
(800) 321-8809, Ext. 2019

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Jennifer Allanson  
Robert Falls & Co. Public Relations  
(216) 696-0229

## **Luxury Abounds in Today's Bathroom**

### ***The Top 10 Amenities Every Luxury Bath Needs***

*North Olmsted, Ohio . . .* More than ever, today's bathrooms provide an escape from reality and the daily stresses of life. With hectic schedules, family obligations and careers, sometimes the bathroom seems like the only place in the home to find peace and quiet. But in recent years, the bathroom has assumed new significance – no longer is it just functional, it's now a therapeutic oasis.

To truly make their bathroom a haven of rest and relaxation, Americans are knocking out walls to increase the size of their bathrooms, while adding a host of amenities. The master bathroom is now becoming the focal point of the master suite, providing both opulent luxuries and a host of modern conveniences.

So what items are consumers adding or including in their luxury bath? According to a recent survey by the *National Kitchen & Bath Association* (NKBA), there are numerous luxury items. Below are the top items that consumers say they are adding – or want to add -- to their baths:

#### **1. Whirlpool Tubs**

Once only thought of for exclusive spas, the whirlpool tub is now a common item in today's luxury baths. With its pulsating jets, it is like having a massage right at home.

Offered in a range of sizes, configurations and color options, the luxury bath can be equipped with a whirlpool unit custom-tailored to the needs of the homeowner. But while these tubs certainly offer a great getaway from life, they do have a few drawbacks including the length of time it takes to fill and how quickly the water can cool off.

## **2. Showering Upgrades**

Since not everyone likes to wait for a whirlpool tub to fill, many of the latest “hi-tech” shower systems now offer immediate gratification and relaxation. Shower researchers have identified four types of showers – routine, refreshing, therapeutic and relaxing – and while each shower is taken for a different reason, each produces rejuvenation. As a result, one plumbing manufacturer, Moen, recently introduced its vertical spa experience which allows consumers to customize their shower with body sprays, single or multi-function showerheads, hand showers, multi-function transfer valves and other options. These types of shower systems are now at the top of every consumer’s list as they remodel or construct a new bath.

## **3. Flooring Options**

There’s nothing that says high style more than marble flooring. Although a bit pricey, it holds its value and gives any bathroom a truly spa-like appearance. Mosaic tiles are another high-end flooring option that add a dramatic flair to the room – they can even be hand painted or arranged in a pattern to create personalization. Stone and concrete are modern flooring materials that are now making their way into the luxury bathroom as well.

## **4. Entertainment Center**

You may have taken advantage of these options at fine hotels. . . why not incorporate them into your own bathroom? Color television and the latest sound systems are also being incorporated into the bathroom to offer the perfect way to catch up on the day’s news while getting ready in the morning or listening to music while unwinding in the shower or tub.

## **5. Heated Floor/Towel Bars**

Consumers are also adding heated flooring systems to further their bath luxury. No more cold floors after a hot shower on a winter's day, as a heating system, installed between the subfloor and finish floor, is now often the answer. The heat is accomplished through a network of electrical heating cables or hot water-filled tubes. To complement the warming floor, consumers can also install heated towel racks so that towels will be warm and "toasty" upon exiting the bath or shower.

## **6. Sinks with Style**

Today's bathroom sink trends include "vessel bowls" that sit on top of the counter – rather than in it – or in their own, separate stands. These bowls truly make a design statement and will make your luxury bathroom stand out. Rather than settle for the traditional vitreous china, luxury bath owners are turning to these avant-garde sinks which are made with materials like colored glass or stone. Other hot looks in these and other sinks include ornate etchings, raised details and unique shapes.

## **7. Natural Light**

Today's luxury bathrooms crave an abundance of natural light. This can be accomplished by installing a skylight or a wall of windows. Another option is using lighted glass blocks to divide the room or for shower enclosures. This creates an open and airy feeling and provides needed natural light for applying makeup or other tasks.

## **8. Custom Cabinetry**

Armoires, bookshelves, tables, chests and shelving units are also finding their place in today's luxury bathroom. These not only create the look of furniture in the bath but they can carry on a furniture theme from the master bedroom. Popular cabinet lines like Aristokraft and Schrock report that extras like rollout trays for makeup and toiletries, drawer organizers or even inside door mount racks for holding hair dryers, curling irons and hair care products are making life easier for the homeowner. Other preferences for medicine cabinets that offer special amenities such as electrical plugs, multi-level shelves and magnifying mirrors are also on the rise.

## 9. High-Style Faucets and Bathroom Suites

Move over plain and enter the exquisite! Manufacturers such as Moen have dramatically expanded the styles of faucets available in recent years. What's more, today's faucets tend to provide what all consumers are asking for – a coordinated suite look between faucets, shower, bath and accessories. One of the newest looks in these coordinated “suites” is the Asceri™ Collection. This Moen suite pays special attention to detail with features like non-tarnish finishes, solid ceramic inlays, etched handle hubs, arched spouts and wing-styled handles – these extra decorative touches really makes a room special. In addition, a host of exceptional never-before-seen finish combinations will help luxury bath owners make a style statement.

## 10. Vanities

Freestanding furniture style vanities are gaining popularity in today's luxury bathroom. Rather than the built-ins that are the norm for most bathrooms, these freestanding pieces offer an extra measure of intricate design. Decora bath vanities, for example, offer detailed carvings, designed feet and creative finish options for an additional form of expression in the bath.

There you have it – the top 10 list of bathroom luxuries to create a spa of rejuvenation and the much-needed privacy you deserve after a long day!

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**EDITORS NOTE:** Moen Incorporated is one of the world's largest producers of residential and commercial plumbing products. Moen is the #1 brand of faucets in North America. The company manufactures a complete line of single and two-handle faucets in a wide assortment of styles and finishes. It is also a leading producer of residential and commercial sinks, a variety of shower accessories, bathroom accessories and a complete line of plumbing parts and accessories (sold under the trade names Moen, Chicago Specialty, Cleveland Faucet Group, Creative Specialties International, Dearborn Brass, Hoov-R-Line and Wrightway Manufacturing).

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