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INDULGENCES MAKE BATHROOMS COMPLETE

North Olmsted, Ohio . . . In a world fascinated by reality TV and constant connectivity, the bathroom may be the last safe haven from the prying eyes of cameras and the incessant buzz of cell phones. Privacy, comfort and “unplugging” (however briefly) are alluring aspects of the bathroom, often in contrast to other living spaces in the home.

The bathroom has become a personal retreat, in reaction to other trends, according to Kathie Kull, a regular contributor to kitchen and bath consumer magazines and past editor of *Better Homes & Gardens Home Products Guide*. “The rest of the house is family focused and wired – huge kitchens are hubs of activity, technology is the focus of entertainment and work areas, open layouts offer little privacy or quiet – people want to make the bathroom truly a living space, a personal zone for privacy and peace.”

The personal sanctuary of the bath does not necessarily require a huge, cavernous room. In fact, says Kull, “People aren’t looking so much for the huge master suites popular in the 90s, but instead are focused on quality fixtures and furnishings that make the bath – no matter how big or small – the haven they seek.” A number of amenities are available today for consumers to reveal the virtues of time spent in the bath – the pleasures of a bit of pampering and reenergizing:

Heated Floors and Towel Warmers

What a treat to wrap up in a thick, warm towel after a shower or bath! Popular in Europe for years, towel warmers are now growing in popularity here in the U.S. Available as hard-wired units that deliver radiant heat – some big enough to provide the room's heat source – or freestanding models that plug into standard household outlets, these heated towel bars (and even warming drawers) offer up toasty warm and comfy towels on demand.

Taking a warming bath experience to the next level, Kull observes that in-floor heating is becoming a mainstream extra in bathrooms. A more involved addition than some, a heating system is installed between the subfloor and finished floor, using a network of electrical heating cables or tubes filled with hot water. Nonetheless, she says, the results are comfortably warm floors, even on the coldest of days, a benefit many homeowners believe is well worth the expense.

Power Showers

The rejuvenating power of the shower comes in more shapes and styles than ever. Moen, for example, offers the 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 sophisticated temperature control systems. These showers offer the relaxation and luxury of a whirlpool spa, but without the time required to fill a large tub. More and more consumers are opting to use shower systems such as these to turn their bathrooms into spa-like havens.

Bath Furniture

To extend the concept of living space to the bath, many people are adapting furniture pieces for bathroom uses, making a personal statement of style in the process. Freestanding units – armoires, tables, chests – are especially inventive and attractive storage alternatives. More traditional vanities have also taken on new characteristics – raised waist-high cabinet heights mean less bending and stooping, and storage units keep everything neatly at hand using rollout trays, drawer organizers, and specialized shelving.

Even seating in the bath is less institutional, more indulgent – chairs, lounges, even sofas that invite rest and relaxation. “Weatherproof patio or deck furniture with indoor/outdoor style is an option that withstands the heat and humidity of the bath,” notes Kull, “especially when the room is properly ventilated. Cotton or terrycloth upholstery or, even better, slipcovers for chairs and ottomans offer a crisp, fresh look and make cleanups or updates easier.”

Fogless Vanity and Shower Mirrors

No more stepping out of a steamy shower and waiting for the fog to clear to get on with preparing for the day! Mirror defoggers, or basically super-thin, specially designed heating pads, are attached to the back of a mirror, existing or newly installed. The area warmed by the defogger is clear and fog free – even in shower mirror versions. Relatively simple to install, these fogless mirror systems offer great grooming flexibility and convenience.

Soaking Tubs

Nothing conjures up the image of a totally relaxing bath experience more than a soaking tub. Sinking into a deep tub of wonderfully scented water soothes the spirit in ways unlike anything else. Particularly popular of late is the vintage or clawfoot look in soaking tubs – the genuine antique article or more modern cast iron or acrylic versions in colors ranging from classic whites and neutrals to bolder shades of red and black.

Filtered Water Dispensers

The notion of readily available, pure water makes sense not just in the kitchen but in the bath as well. Refreshingly clean water for brushing teeth, taking medicines or just a comforting drink – all without leaving the bathroom. A new option for great tasting, filtered water on tap in the bath is the Moen PureTouch® AquaSuite® filtered water dispenser. Beyond providing 24/7 convenience, the AquaSuite is beautifully styled and available in a wide array of finishes to complement any bath.

Accessories

Never underestimate the impact of well considered bathroom accessories, not just to complete a coordinated rather than mismatched look, but to help with organization and reduce clutter. Accessories manufacturer Creative Specialties International offers a variety of accessories to match faucet and shower styles.

- Wall mounted toothbrush tumbler and soap holder to free up space, especially on smaller vanities or pedestal sinks
- Coordinated towel bars, rings and robe hooks – used generously throughout the bath provides for clean, dry towels always within reach
- Glass shelves attached underneath mirrors or around the room to hold items with style and minimize clutter

Such simple indulgences truly complete the bath living experience – bringing us warmth, clarity, comfort, beauty and purity. What more could we ask for to refresh, reenergize, and renew ourselves to boldly re-enter the demanding world beyond the bathroom door.

For more information about remodeling projects or Moen products, contact Moen Incorporated at 25300 Al Moen Drive, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070-8022, call toll free 1-800-BUY MOEN (1-800-289-6636) or visit its web site at www.moen.com.

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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, and bathroom accessories (sold under the brands Moen, Cleveland Faucet Group, and Creative Specialties International).

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