

11/11

The leading business, design
and product resource for
the kitchen & bath trade

www.kitchenbathdesign.com

Kitchen & Bath design news



Custom Touches

Personal elements and unusual pieces that resonate
with the homeowner give kitchens custom appeal

COVER STORY:
Striking Focal Point
Adds Kitchen Flair

Baths Favor
Clean Lines,
Serene Hues

Variety, Texture
Highlight Trends
In Countertops

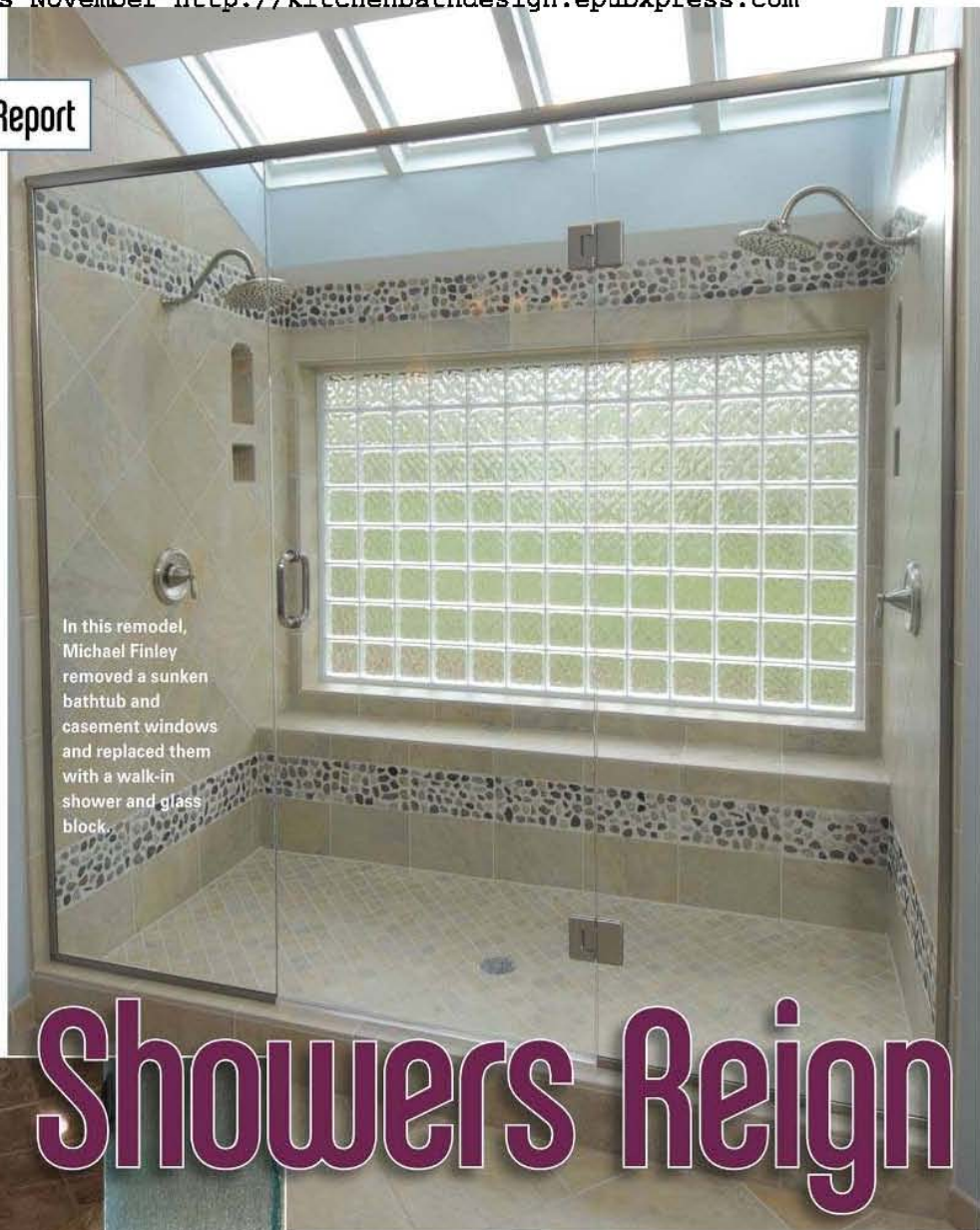
Fall Bath Remodeling Report

Thank goodness for trends. Otherwise people would still be living with green shag carpet, oversized furniture and wagon wheel coffee tables. At least that's the philosophy of Ione Victoria, owner/designer, Paradise Interior Design in Santa Cruz, CA.

Victoria notes that, over the last few decades, design trends have gone from darker, earthy looks to whitewashed. "Now we're living in a design era where we've found the medium. We're into soft colors, low maintenance with less clutter, a little bit of bling in our metals and a small amount of sheen. It's much more versatile. It's peaceful and soothing," she reports.

Bath designers across the country expressed some of the same sentiments when *KBDN* asked them about current trends they see in master bath remodeling.

"Spaces are becoming more simplified," says Sarah Michalowski, CKD, of Sawhill Custom Kitchens & Design, in Minneapolis, MN. "People want a really clean look and they're putting things away. Plugs inside medicine cabinets for electric toothbrushes, curling irons and hair dryers are becoming more popular."



In this remodel, Michael Finley removed a sunken bathtub and casement windows and replaced them with a walk-in shower and glass block.

Photo: Rocky Mountain Bathrooms

Showers Reign



Handheld and rainhead showerheads are popular requests, as are Universal Design features such as the built-in bench seen in this design by Sarah Michalowski.

Photo: Sawhill Custom Kitchens & Design

Fellow Minnesotan Laura Orfield-Skrivseth, AKBD, co-owner and designer/project manager, Orfield Design & Construction in Minnetonka, MN, finds that homeowners are interested in personalizing their spaces. "They don't necessarily worry about fitting into a certain style, allowing 'eclectic' and 'transitional' to represent their personal tastes," she says.

SHOWERS DOMINATE

Much of the advice homeowners seek focuses heavily on the shower. Walk-in showers with glass block, frameless glass or even without doors are common. Handheld and rainhead showerheads, heated shower seating and flooring, integrated ledges and niches, and beautiful tile ranging from natural stone and limestone to recycled glass are all popular.

"Homeowners on all levels of economy and scale are placing more

emphasis on the shower. It's something they use every day," reports Michael Finley, owner, Rocky Mountain Bathrooms in Littleton, CO. "A lot of times, we'll completely remove bathtubs and enlarge showers in the master bath. In our projects, the shower is the dominant focus."

Michalowski finds much of the same in her market, especially when homeowners are tight for space. "People are tending to stay in their current homes rather than build larger ones," she says. "They're working with the space they have. And if it's a smaller space, they'll forego the bathtub for a larger shower."

For many of Victoria's clients, it's all about opening up the room with beautiful, oftentimes doorless, walk-in showers in spaces inspired by nature with lots of windows and skylights. "A lot of people don't want any doors [on their showers] if they can get away with it," she says. "Depend-

ing on the size of the space, it really isn't necessary. With handheld and rainhead showerheads, you don't have to worry as much about overspray. And by incorporating radiant heat floors, warmth is not an issue, either. Plus, you can have a beautiful, continuous floor."

ECONOMIC INFLUENCES

Victoria indicates that she sees design trends influenced by location (climate), technology (what's new and improved), politics (green products), economics (what's cost effective) and current fashion (which reflects human emotions).

She notes that, in her market, homeowners are in their bathrooms only as long as necessary. "We have an outdoor mentality," she says. "We're very organic here. Homeowners love natural stone. If a client wants color, it's usually more of an accent rather than a mainstay. For a bit of glitz, I'll use recycled glass mosaic. It's so easy with the materials available today to create something beautiful."

Walk-in showers continue to gain dominance in baths that are peaceful and soothing, spaces that speak to homeowners' personal styles.

Doorless showers are frequent requests from lone Victoria's clients.



Photos: lone Victoria



option where we can polish a corner of a framed-glass shower to get rid of the frame to open up the space."

Orfield-Skrivseth finds that the economy has curbed her clients a bit, too. "I have found my clientele to be much more frugal in mindset.

"But that doesn't mean 'cheap,'" she insists. "They are taking a lot more time to plan before jumping into a project. They are considering respect for the earth's renewable materials and the green movement. They are deciding that it's best to do it right once, taking into consideration not just the [bathroom] space, but how it relates to the rest of the structure and rooms as a whole."

In that regard, Orfield-Skrivseth finds her clients are demanding knowledgeable and creative designers/remodelers as they become readily educated by the consequences of artistic choices. "Considering these [influences], they are more open to reusing salvageable materials or re-purposing them," she says. "They accept compromises on personal wish lists for the good of the whole project (budget driven and/or best practices usually)."

This spa bath designed by Laura Orfield-Skrivseth features a two-person curbless steam shower with a frameless glass door. Functional storage and intricate details add to the design.

By Kim Berndtson

Supreme

Victoria relates that, with so many influences, it's exciting to see how design makes spaces more interesting and easier to live in.

Finley finds that many of his clients are toning things down to keep costs in check. "We've seen a trend from major remodels to more of a focus on value," he says.

Although homeowners may be taking a step back, Finley says they still expect beautiful spaces. To achieve the desired effect, he gets creative. In one particular remodel, he created custom storage with a standard linen closet. "We built the cabinet into the wall," he says. "It was a nice cost savings for the homeowner without having to do custom-built cabinets."

Finley also offers different levels of glass options. "Full-framed glass is less expensive than frameless," he says. "But we also offer a hybrid



Photo: www.OrfieldDesign.com



Fall Bath Remodeling Report

Hot Water: The Indispensable Luxury

By Jason Fleming

Hot water is central to any luxury bathroom. Regardless of how the bath or shower is configured, abundant supplies of hot water at the desired temperature are what drive consumer satisfaction in the bath.

Successful bath design professionals know they are selling a total experience, not just a collection of products. In luxury bath sales, hot-water delivery systems may play an unglamorous, behind-the-scenes role, but one that is no less critical to a client's ultimate satisfaction.

WATER HEATING 101

The most common method of heating water in the U.S. is with conventional tank-style, storage water heaters, which heat and store 30 to 75 gallons of hot water like a thermos, regardless of immediate need; i.e., the unit is cooking water even if no one is using it.

Tank-type water heaters generally have about 70 percent usable capacity, meaning a typical 50-gallon tank has about 30 to 35 gallons of truly hot water in reserve for usage. If demand runs higher than usual over a short period, the reservoir can run dry.

To put this in perspective, a standard tank-style heater in a comparatively cold climate delivers enough hot water to power two, 2.5 gallons-per-minute (gpm) showerheads and three 1 gpm body sprays long enough to take a four-and-a-half-minute shower.

A newer technology (for the U.S. at least), tankless water heating performs the same hot-water delivery function as a conventional water heater. But, if properly sized for the application, it does its work in *seconds*, rather than hours. This savings in time translates into gains in energy efficiency with no sacrifice in comfort or convenience.

As the name indicates, there is no hot-water storage with tankless technology. Instead of heating stored water 24/7, tankless units fire up

only in response to demand.

By using more powerful gas burners, a tankless water heater will boost the temperature of the cold water coming into the unit much more quickly than a tank heater can, providing a continuous flow of hot water at the preset temperature.

Beyond speed, there are differences in the energy consumed by tank-style and tankless heaters.

- The average tank-style heater offers a 60 percent efficiency rating (six of every 10 dollars spent on energy produces hot water), while conventional tankless units average 83 percent.

- Condensing tankless water heaters use a second heat exchanger to capture even more heat from the combustion process, raising efficiency to more than 90 percent.

- Both types of tankless water heaters will maintain this thermal efficiency rating throughout their 20-year life expectancies, whereas the efficiency of a storage-type unit will drop over its eight- to 10-year lifecycle.

PROPER SIZING

Tankless water heaters are sized by calculating the required temperature rise at a given flow rate, or gpm, for an application. That is, how many degrees the heater must raise the incoming water temperature to deliver the preset temperature at the outlet. Most manufacturers offer sizing guides or online software that help determine the unit best suited to a family's hot-water needs.

Plumbing system designers and installers consider the following in determining this:

- The **flow rate** (gpm) required to meet peak hot water demand in a household.

- The **cold-water input temperature**: the temperature of the water entering the tankless unit.



Tankless water heaters, like the Noritz America model shown, can save valuable bath space.

- The **hot-water output temperature**: The desired, or preset, temperature of the water exiting the unit.

Using the earlier example of an application requiring a flow rate of 8 gpm for two, 2.5 gpm showerheads and three, 1 gpm body sprays, people would need a water heater capable of delivering 8 gpm at a 70°F rise.

SMARTER HOT WATER

Two other key benefits of tankless water heating include:

- **Cleaner water**: Continuously heating water in a vessel inevitably generates sediment that accumulates at the bottom of the tank, undercutting water heater performance and shortening its life cycle. In addition, because of all of that sediment, the hot water coming from such a unit isn't terribly clean. Technology exists to suppress scale buildup in tankless water heater systems, providing cleaner water for showering and laundry.

- **Zero footprint = design flexibility**: Tankless units are compact and hang on a wall, so they can be located virtually anywhere inside the home. This means these heaters can also be installed closer to the point of use – such as a new master bathroom. This proximity should result in reduced waiting time for hot water.

Many bath designers do not get involved in selecting and sizing water heating systems. But taking a more comprehensive approach will enhance a designer's value to the clients, while ensuring the performance of the space.

Jason Fleming, a six-year veteran of the tankless water heating business, serves as national sales manager, wholesale for Noritz America, based at the company's suburban California location. He may be reached at: (949) 468-9634; e-mail: jfleming@noritz.com

ADDED AMENITIES

As far as trending products within the master bath, Michalowski and Orfield-Skrivseth find that steam showers are popular. Offers Michalowski: "While some homeowners may be tightening their budgets in some areas, many still want a steam shower for its added health and wellness benefits."

"My clients consider this space their relaxing spa area instead of driving to a gym for these amenities," Orfield-Skrivseth adds.

Michalowski is also seeing more media move into the master bath. "A lot of my clients want a TV in the space, regardless of whether or not

they can see it," she relates. "It's more about hearing the news in the background as they're getting ready in the morning."

Other trending products include those related to aging in place. Larger showers and built-in seating can provide immediate benefits for those in need or can fulfill perceived needs in the future.

"We're doing fewer showers with curbs," says Michalowski. "It adds to the clean lines and improves safety."

Orfield-Skrivseth also sees Universal Design products and features becoming more popular. Good lighting – general and task as well

as controllable – single-hole faucets and lever handles that are designed for users of any age are all popular right now.

"Many people are combining their family households," she says. "Children are moving in with parents and grandparents are moving in with children. This is causing them to design for both short- and long-term use. Creating attractive flexibility for users of all ages and mobility may involve non-slip materials, diverse lighting solutions, wider entrances, low-maintenance materials, structural backing for future grab bars, cabinetry of vary-

ing heights and a lot of storage – all inside the bathroom! The linen-in-the-hallway concept is being replaced by incorporating full storage inside the bathroom. It is ready when needed. It's an important detail for multi-gendered households so family members don't have to 'streak' down the hall to get a forgotten towel or washcloth."

Many of Victoria's clients desire the spa look with open spaces. "For us, it's about freedom of movement," she says. "It's about air. It's about daylight. Any design that accomplishes that is always welcomed, and always enjoyed!" **KBDN**