



BATHROOMS AS A DESTINATION

Contemporary hotel bathrooms are much more than utilitarian private areas dedicated to hygienic procedures, *Jane Ram* writes

Today's guest bathrooms are larger and make use of high technology to create a lifestyle statement as indulgent private sanctuaries.

Kohler's new DTV+ technology (Digital Showering System) seamlessly integrates water, sound, steam and lighting elements to create true multi-sensory showering experiences, says Les Peich, the company's senior product manager for performance showering.

"DTV+ elevates the act of showering to a personalised spa experience. Showering is so much more than just getting clean. The showering space is increasingly a destination where one goes to relax, de-stress or relieve everyday aches and pains."

When selecting bathroom furniture - four pieces in most countries, five in the Middle East and some parts of Europe

where a bidet is essential - price must balance looks, quality and durability.

Environmental considerations are becoming more important, encouraging people to use less water while still enjoying a luxurious experience.

Grohe promises "a smarter way to enjoy water". Roca's W+W brand fuses wash basin and water closet in a single L-shaped piece, saving space and water: waste water from the wash basin filters into the toilet cistern to produce "a meeting of the ways between sophistication and love for the planet," says David Chiu, senior officer of brand and product development, BSC ColourLiving.

"Bathroom furniture, especially baths, are becoming signature pieces," says Karen Hay, an interior designer focusing on hotels and resorts.

Bathrooms at the 137 Pillars Suites Bangkok, opening in mid-February, feature

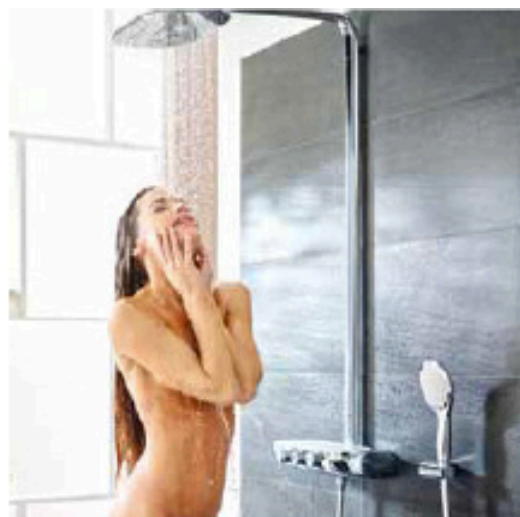
a round tub as the suite itself is designed with round shapes, says Chris Stafford, COO of 137 Pillars Hotels & Resorts.

Other attractions include high ceilings and more advanced mood lighting for the romantics.

"Flow rate controls and the highest-end Japanese toilet seats make the 137 Pillars Suites Bangkok bathrooms state of the current art, while retaining a walk-in wardrobe and great spaces for pre and post bath relaxation."

Victoria and Albert brand products are beautiful enough for a museum and, although the idea would have seemed bizarre or even decadent only decades ago, the bath often has pride of place in the main guestroom.

The Posadero bath series features a unique wave-shaped rim. "Sculpted details on the inside and outside of the bath



Smooth operation and functionality for Grohe



Grohe's push button technology



Olivier Triquand,
VP, The Strand Hotel
and Cruise group

create crisp shadow lines that accentuate the dynamic contours of the rim," say the manufacturers. Providing a deep and double-ended bathing well, it is ideal for one or two people. This free-standing bath makes "a confident design statement," says Chiu.

THE WET ROOM

The rising popularity of cruising means new design challenges. "Weight is a special consideration when building and fitting out a cruise ship," explains Olivier Triquand, vice president of The Strand Hotel and Cruise group.

"The Strand Cruise is a luxury ship, so there could be no compromise when it came to design elements, as it's essential to provide the best possible experience for guests."

To keep a balance between functionality and design, lacquerware accessories were chosen for the bathrooms on-board. These pieces have the dual attraction of reflecting Myanmar's traditional culture and being

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Karen Hay, interior designer

ultra-lightweight.

Bathroom accessories are a study in themselves. At the soon-to-open Nanhai Wing of the Hilton Shenzhen Zhen Nanhai Hotel, bathroom accessories are a way to stand out from the crowd, says John Burger, cluster general manager, Hilton and Doubletree by Hilton Hotels, Shenzhen Area.

"We are looking at bathroom things like jewellery holders and soap containers."

Hi-tech rules with modern shower controls like the unique Grohe Rainshower system, featuring innovative SmartControl push button technology developed through extensive knowledge transfer within the Lixil Water Technology Group.

Further optimised for Grohe, it delivers the kind of smooth operation and functionality consumers rightfully expect of a new shower control system bearing the prestigious Grohe name, says Donald Lo, the company's Hong Kong assistant marketing manager.

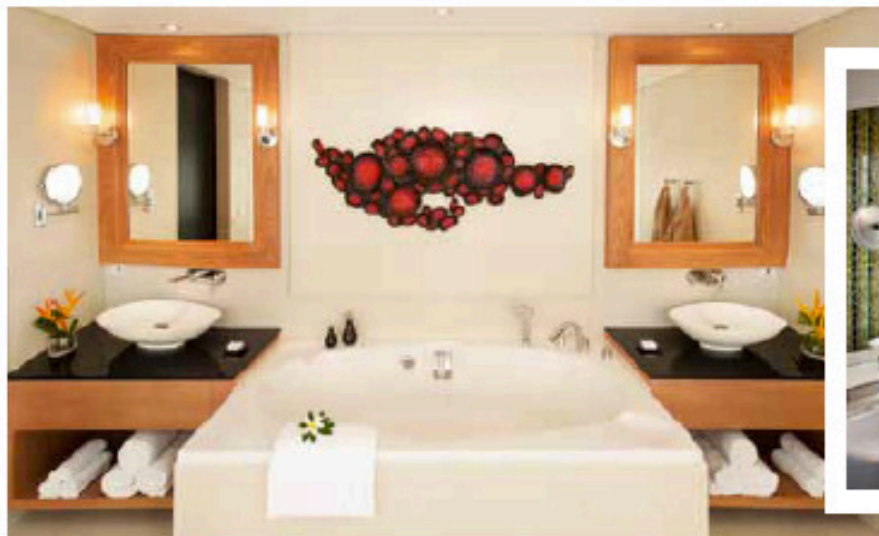
Personalising all shower functions "has never been easier." The spray pattern can be selected and started by pushing one of the buttons on the wall-mounted chassis whereas the water volume can be personalised by turning the button.

Shower controls are only part of the modern bathroom story. "Toilets are now so hi-tech that while you are on a warm seat, you can have a wash and blow dry!" says Hay.

"They can be set with sensors to acknowledge your arrival. Cleanliness and hygiene is now a major consideration in the designs and they are becoming more streamlined with easier cleaning in mind. One brand actually has an app for your phone whereby you can sit on the toilet and programme the functions."

Mirrors with anti-steam lining and integrated LED TV screens in the bathroom are almost standard features these days.

Lighting is important in the bathroom to allow an adjustable soft, warm light, says Hay. "Lighting around the mirror should be outward facing not directly above to enable ladies to apply their make-up without shadowing." **AJDN**



Bathrooms today, such as those at Anantara Vacation Club Phuket Mai Khao, are anything but utilitarian



Environmental considerations are now much more important in bathroom design (Photo courtesy: Crowne Plaza, Changi Airport Singapore)