



Splash out in style

GO ON, GO FOR IT AND GIVE YOUR BATHROOM THE ULTIMATE IN SPA TREATMENT. BY LINDA BIRD

PROPERTY EXPERTS BELIEVE

bathrooms can be great little earners. An en suite can boost the saleability of your home by as much as 17% according to the NAEA, and the Nationwide calculate that a second bathroom can add as much as 15% to the value of your property. Perhaps this is why bathrooms regularly come top of a homeowner's list of renovation projects.

And then, of course, there is the feelgood factor of a quality bathroom which is much harder to put a price on.

Restful, decadent and streamlined are watchwords for today's spa style bathrooms. Take inspiration from Gidleigh Park, a Devon hotel whose spa suites are fast becoming the talk of the town, and a popular retreat for well-heeled Londoners.

They are bathroom extravaganzas designed by with smart Kohler suites, in-room saunas, huge freestanding baths, hot tubs, dramatic rainfall style showers and heated spa loungers – all walled in the finest Italian marble.

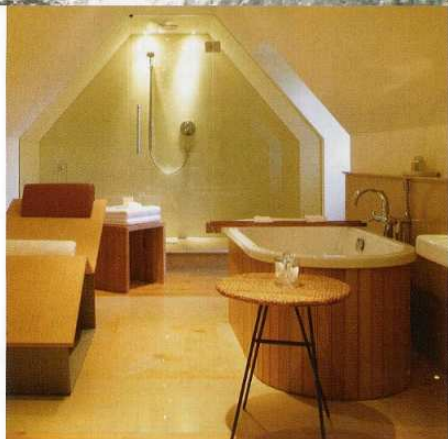
How do you get a similar spa effect in your home? On smaller budgets you can create your own spa with multi-jet body sprays, walk-in shower cubicles, a whirlpool bath, glass walls

and atmospheric lighting.

Stick to restful neutrals – materials such as marble, granite, slate, glass, copper and limestone – woods such as cedar or cypress, and colour schemes in white, sand, stone, champagne or soft greens.

Cheryl Gurner, Creative Director at Bathrooms International (www.bathroomsint.com) (020 7838 7788) shares her top bathroom trends:

- Seek out white crystal – clear and colour transparent shades against dark contrasts are a key theme in bathrooms.
- Consider space, light and height before anything else.
- Keep to your budget by combining expensive with cheap – pay for the technology and always invest in high-quality taps and shower fittings, but economise on accessories such as sanitary ware.
- Earth colours and white work best – especially if you layer the tones and textures.
- Look for natural materials such as stone and wood – recycling and organic principles and materials are key in today's bathrooms.
- Think symmetry when creating a relaxing environment.



GET SOME INSPIRATION

Gidleigh Park (above) rooms from £440 per night, dinner, bed and breakfast.

Contact 01647 432367 for reservations or visit www.gidleigh.com



Creating a beautiful bathroom is creating the perfect place to lie back and relax

Courtesy of Bathrooms International



DO

- Check the position of your water tank – power showers need sufficient water pressure to ensure a steady flow.
- Consider sound-insulation in bathrooms – ceramic tiles tend to echo.
- Investigate hotel-style mod cons – speakers in the ceiling for a sound system and in-spa television. Try www.waterprooftv.co.uk (01162 705777).
- Use large mirrors – they reflect the light and create the illusion of space. Try Catchpole & Rye on www.crye.co.uk (01233 840840).
- Experiment with shape and contours – for some inspiration try www.duravit.com for inspiration.

DON'T

- Sacrifice the main bedroom for a small en suite – better to focus on updating the main bathroom (as a guide, a double bedroom should be 10.2 to 11.2 m²).
- Forget to look for alternatives to enamel – investigate baths fashioned from copper, marble, cast-iron and nickel-coated. Visit www.thebathworks.com (01582 602713) and www.brissi.com (0844 800 9912).
- Dismiss installing your own private sauna. Try www.teuco.co.uk (020 7704 2190) for top of the range saunas and hydros spas.
- Use tiny tiles in small bathrooms – large tiles may make a small room appear larger. Try the selection of natural stone tiles at www.mandarinstone.com (01600 715444).