

HOME STYLE

A Romantic Master Bathroom...Just In Time For Valentine's Day

Colors, Natural Materials, Multi-Function Amenities
Top List of Features Demanded in NoVA's Luxury Spa

By John Byrd, Homefront News

Bathrooms come in many styles these days. Tiling in Mediterranean, glass-and-mirror or ultra-contemporary styling; above-counter sinks in porcelain, stainless steel and jewel-toned artisan glass; Jacuzzis with ergonomically correct head and arm rests, and showers that double as a sauna. These are just a few components in the showroom's 15 fully assembled displays. But more revealing of local trends is how often today's master bathrooms are custom affairs, a product of a burgeoning accessories industry and the homeowner's fervent desire to own luxury now.

"There's really no precedent for the exploding demand for luxury baths," says Micheal Nash president and CEO Sonny Nazemian, who has been watching local trends for 30 years and whose firm has received numerous "Contractor of the Year" awards for excellence and bathroom remodeling.

"Ten years ago, we completed perhaps, 80 new bathrooms a year; five years ago the figure was about 160. Last year, we finished 212 all over northern Virginia—and

the project size and quality has increased exponentially."

Nazemian thinks the psychological element underlying demand is the desire for a "personal cocoon" to which a homeowner can retreat.

"An open, well-lighted space with warm contrasting textures, bold fluffy towels and a two-person Jacuzzi bubbling at your body temperature is a great place to relax," Nazemian chuckles. "We get homeowners who rank the master bath as their favorite part of the house... in fact, of life itself."

Nazemian also observes several design trends that are consistently in play. Among these:

Bathroom Size: It's not just about utility anymore; a master bathroom needs to imply room to stretch out and luxuriate

Multi-functional Amenities: a separate shower and bath are de rigueur in a highend spa, but whirlpools now come with comforting head and arm rests. Above-counter sinks are functional as well as an *objet d'art*.



Textured Materials: Design statements unifying such disparate materials as ceramic tile, stone, granite, marble and glass create a "textured look," which lends your spa a visceral sensuality. Personal art and collectibles are commonly integrated into this picture depending on taste.

Colors For Accent & Spice: A bathroom hasn't been "hospital white" for years, but today's broad palette would satisfy a Wilhelm de Kooning, or any abstract expressionist who made clashes of color and texture into high art. Combining muted tones with bright strokes is a start, but today's bathrooms explore advanced interior design ideas.

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So how does all this play out in the field? A spacious personal spa in the home of Mary Rigg shows some of the ways in which textures and colors are being deployed to maximum effect. Rigg had seen a rare Turkish granite (*roho alhante*) at the NSO Designer Showhouse, then found out Michael Nash had just procured it.

"There was simply no turning back once I knew I could get that color and texture," Rigg says, noting that she opted to "just do the bathroom I always wanted." Set off by a cherry wood Victorian vanity with vessel sinks making the room both lively and warm.

"We had a lot of design help at the showroom. The alternating tile sizes and angles in the shower they proposed create a wonderful visual rhythm," Rigg says. "I've never known a room that makes me feel as good."

In a theme variation, Christa Deford

wanted a retreat not only for herself and her husband, but a family-use facility available to her children.

"I wanted a steam shower and a Jacuzzi for two that looks into our wooded back yard," says Deford. "But I also created the space so all three of our sports-active kids could take turns relaxing in the whirlpool bath after a game or practice."

Deford notes that a kid-friendly television is mounted nearby. The teens are also invited to enjoy the steam shower (complete with bench) that Deford says is more relaxing than a sauna. "Just what active busy people need," she notes.

The master bath was one of three executed by Michael Nash in the same assignment. Deford worked with a showroom staff designer to both create a working space plan and make the selections for floor and wall coverings. The black-and-terracotta granite in combination with a neatly minimalist vanity creates a faintly Mediterranean ambiance, but Deford says she made conservative choices that would "facilitate a resale when needed".

"We're comfortable with our upgrades as an investment," says Deford who had hired Nash to do their kitchen five years ago. "Still if your goal is to make a design statement the showroom does offers an enormous range of choices."

Michael Nash was recently awarded "A Contractor of the Year" Grand award from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry for the best bathroom remodel in a 15 state area.

The firm's staff periodically offers seminars in bathroom design at their Fairfax showroom. For more information: 703-641-9800, or look online at michael-nashkitchens.com.