

THE INDEPENDENT



MAKE A SPLASH: THE STYLISH SHOWER

Homeowners are replacing their dated bathrooms with luxury shower rooms. But it pays to do your research first, says **AMIRA HASHISH**

Turning a dated bathroom into a modern shower room can create the illusion of more space. "The trend for homeowners to replace an old bath with a stylish shower is on the rise," says Peter Andrews, who heads up the bathroom department of London's Finisco Plumbers (finiscoplumbers.co.uk).

Before taking the plunge do the research. A faulty job could result in extra charges in the long run. Check on the statutory guarantee period too. For example, Finisco Plumbers usually offers a period of 12 months. The peace of mind from having the project managed can be worth an additional cost.

The right plumber will offer an initial consultation to help establish the ideal design while keeping in mind practical elements. "We like to speak to homeowners about their lifestyles. Will the shower room be somewhere to wash before rushing out or a retreat? We then create a CGH of a shower room to suit them," says Andrews. If the CGH doesn't represent what you want from the space then ask for it to be changed until you are satisfied.

Not only do the tradesmen need to be reliable, Andrews also warns against suppliers that sell products for seemingly bargain prices. "We regularly receive calls from homeowners who have had cheap products installed, which have then broken easily or damaged their tiles. Often repairing the damage means starting again, proving costly."

So choose your website wisely. Big brands such as Vitelore & Boch are sold for reasonable prices at UKbathrooms.com and the customer care line 01753 696290 is very helpful. The two-man delivery option, where items are carried into the property, is preferable.

When deciding on the right shower, check water pressure to ensure compatibility. "Have as big a shower as your space will allow, it is your luxury item," says Andrews. Family run company Mira, part of the Sobler group, makes showers with British homes in mind. Designer Simon Bowring works with his team to create "spa like" experiences. Go digital for the perfect temperature and flow every time. The Mira jet showerhead features five zones to technology with four different spray patterns - from a soft and soothing soak to a fully drenching spray.

Tiles can make a huge impact and Original Style (originalstyle.co.uk) produces a vast selection of beautiful options. Ask the fitter to create a recess in the shower, a nifty way to build in extra storage without taking up space. "Use the same colour tiles on floor and walls. The bigger the tile the better (from a 300mm work wall), to make the room feel larger," says Jo Gallagher from Castles Tiles (castlestiles.co.uk) which stocks a good selection from the brand. "Opt for a lighter colour for a bright and airy feel."

Hang a generously sized heated towel rail on a wall. Stainless steel is smart and easily maintained and Bisque (Bisque.co.uk) has a knack for making essential household items. Check out the latest offerings. Also choose a wall hung WC to save on space and match it with compact basin that still has enough depth to be practical. A basin with a single or double drawer is another storage solution. Finally, installing a generously sized mirror and clever lighting can maximize an area. Andrews recom-



BEFORE



AFTER

ends Chelsea Glass (chelseaglass.co.uk). Commercial clients include the Four Seasons hotel group but prices for residential projects are competitive. Expect to pay around £250 plus VAT for a 1270mm x 1900mm mirror. The Lighting Store (lightingstoredirect.co.uk) has an impressive variety of statement spotlights for various budgets. By keeping the base colours of the shower room as neutral as possible there is plenty of scope to jazz things up with the right accessories once the fixtures and fittings have been installed. Visit standard.co.uk for more ideas for suggestions.

SHOPPING LIST

Shower: Mira Vitelore Dual Rear Feed digital shower (£823; Shower tray (£285.50); 1 x 800mm beam pivot door (£296; all from mira-showers.co.uk)

Basin & WC: Vitelore & Boch Subway washbasin (£180); Central Line vanity unit (£666); Managrahe basin mixer (£275.82); V&B Subway toilet pan with a soft close seat (£269; ukbathrooms.com); State Compositon dual flush seat plate (£201.13; probi.co.uk)

Fittings: Pera heated towel rail (£550; bisque.co.uk); Serenity extractor fan (£217; bisque.co.uk); four light low voltage mirrored bathroom spotlight (£179.40; lightingstoredirect.co.uk)

Walls and ceiling: Santa Monica tiles from Original Style; Sands collection (originalstyle.com); Dulux soft sheen bathroom emulsion (£23.99 for 2.5L; www.dulux.com) for the ceiling.

Life
A H
The
take
out

Heal's
best
out
was
to
plenty
bright;
Here
to
kick
a
house
into
a
1
what
what
Disco
camp
genre
previe
more
h
with
the
times
in
all
but
chance
swait
in
room
a
of
Lund
Shore
produc
for
the
range
revert
2014
V
King
Lund
high
in
seats
at
£200
Best
straw
Oliver
one
Singh
pione
gave
his
award
stock
in
which
side
car
£175
Spr
invest
future
deputy
in
L
ate
pic
Search
hand
p



AFTER

Hang a generously sized heated towel rail on a wall. Stainless steel is smart and easily maintained and Bisque (Bisque.co.uk) has a knack for making essential household items.

Fittings: Pera heated towel rail (£550; bisque.co.uk); Serenity extractor fan (£217; bisque.co.uk); four light low voltage mirrored bathroom spotlight (£179.40; lightingstoredirect.co.uk)



BISQUE

**INDEPENDENT
JANUARY 2015**