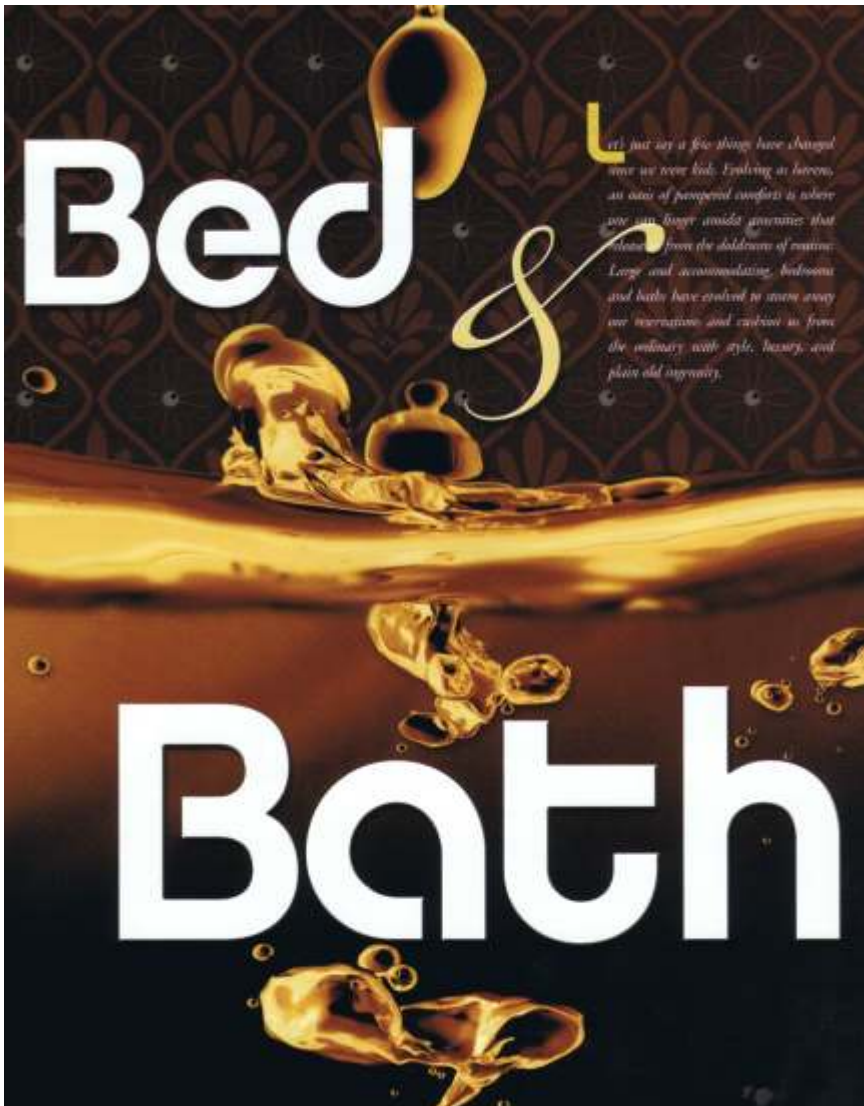


# Best Home - Winter 2006



Bathrooms have emerged in recent home development to satisfy our desire for convenience and enhanced practicality. Easily doubling in size of conventional bathrooms, the ensuite has revolutionized our concept of refreshment through design, function, and innovative materials and products that stimulate the senses with opportunities for time well spent.

Smart and pretty with showering achievements is the preferred combination desired by the industry. The Ensuite is such a distributor with a sprawling Kohler showroom that details a stunning array of product innovation. "The scale of bathrooms has certainly influenced our products," cites design consultant Trevor Symick. "Double sinks, oversized soaker tubs, and steam showers have really enhanced the spa experience." And not just white or biscuit. Darker and more dramatic colours for baths, toilets, and sinks have evolved interesting design options.

The shower experience offers a broad diversity of fixtures to soothe away tensions. One unique option is a ceiling-mounted rain can. "It offers a softer, more of an emotional release that when combined with well-placed body sprays provides a total body and mind experience," states Trevor. One of Kohler's most exciting innovations, the digital thermostatic valve (DTV) controls up to eight shower heads with presets for individual users. Providing spray cycling within a set time, temperature, and water pressure, Trevor adds, "Calgary has sold more DTVs than anywhere in North America. It's a well-travelled, educated, and prosperous demographic, which responds well to our tremendous selection of lines and products that can satisfy any level of luxury and specific style requirements."

In keeping with size, Moen has launched a new vertical spa system that has four body sprays and multiple shower heads within a single package. "Oversized shower heads have been around for a while, but we are addressing water conservation with high velocity shower heads that use less water without sacrificing pressure," offers Michael Klassen of Moen.

Like our preference for dogs or cats, bath people have not been left out to dry. "Air-jetted tubs are quieter and more hygienic than water-jet options," explains Trevor. "They apply heated air for maintenance of water temperature, and there are more ports in the system, allowing for a denser stimulation of water circulation." Also at The Ensuite, the Sök overflow bath has effervescent, air-jetted ports with chromatherapy lighting for added ambience and offers a dual bath model for shared relaxation.

Often with low flow water conservation systems, toilets have been upgraded, so to speak. "Kohler's 'hat box' toilet is made at a higher more comfortable height with no tank and an electric motor that pushes water through the bowl," describes Trevor. Offering fresh versatility

and able to fit any toilet, bidet seats accommodate multiple features within the convenience of a single commode, providing remote control of spray, temperature, and pressure with bidet and night light options.

Not to be upstaged, sinks have evolved to tie in other materials and add whimsical charm. "Glass, metal, and china sinks with gold and platinum filigrees are emerging as real sry pieces," says Trevor of the Ensuite that offers under-mount sinks in granite and marble that afford continuous character to countertop selections.

Well-known for their quality and good looks, for almost seventy years Moen has supplied faucet fashion where it's all about details, design, and comprehensive décor. Recently launching their Show House brand, they have introduced a wealth of products to satisfy premium taste selections, such as the 'Vivid' faucet. With an innovative open glass spout, its diamond fusion technology does not allow water to come in contact with the spout, eliminating water spots and bacteria.

Hypnos on page 3, last 3 paragraphs

Manufacturers of the M-Pact rough-in valve system that allows easy installation of all Moen faucets to facilitate trend changes within their wide family of design lines, Michael adds, "Now people can imprint their own style whenever they want—without expert installation or even having to shut off the water—within our fourteen different design lines that offer hundreds of style and finish combinations."

Sculptural Design Studios, a boutique designer and manufacturing specialist of concrete elements, exhibits their flair with an assortment of unique sinks in a variety of shapes and sizes. From pedestals to vessel and bowls integrated into the countertop, this light weight concrete offers possibilities in any colour palette imaginable. Hand-formed, sealed, and machine waxed, concrete is durable and simple to maintain. Benjamin Salloum, CEO of Sculptural Design, states, "Working with concrete can provide easy design solutions for both contemporary allure or traditional warmth."

Offering turn-key solutions from concept to installation, The Suite Life in Calgary is a Kohler showroom that also carries major main brands of faucets such as Grohe, Blanco, Maax, and Brizo with complete renovation services to simplify solutions. "Powder room sets are popular with a sink, cabinet, mirror, and faucet that complement a variety of décor styles and help minimize design anxiety," offers owner Jim Moore, adding that the selection of more natural countertop surfaces such as granite, marble, and limestone have increased due to more affordable pricing.

"Darker cabinets with European clean lines are also emerging in the bathroom with chrome and oil-rubbed bronze popular choices for faucet finishes," adds Jim Moore. Bathrooms have also advanced in layout with more custom cabinetry that allows for individual configurations that suit the homeowner, making standard cabinet concepts obsolete.

"People are feeling a real sense of entitlement with skyrocketing property values, and that is being reflected in the luxury and opulence of their ensuites," states Scott Berry of Berry Flooring. "Large showers with bench seating are being predominately clad in tile with ornate trim borders, use of natural stone, and tumbled travertine mosaics that incorporate custom tile designs for original character," observes Scott on the growing awareness of quality design. Also with an eye on energy efficiency, thermostat controlled in-floor heating has also surfaced as a popular option, with Nuheat mat technology making it simpler than ever to install.

Suppliers of Italian porcelain tile, natural stone, and glass tile, Santino Bossio of A Tile & Stone agrees that the focus is on ornate patterns and custom design. "I create a spa setting, more clients are applying a classic look with limestone, larger tile on the wall and floor, and tumbled stone with old-world appeal," says Santino. For those desiring a more contemporary décor, glass tile has invaded the bath with mosaic inlays and borders as well as entire surfaces that offer a dazzling aesthetic. "Clients are now blending glass with stone for a very glamorous look," observes Santino, who also distributes Italian hand-carved limestone fireplace surrounds that add original style to bedroom décors.

Known for their high-end distribution design, and manufacture of premium glass panels, vessel sinks, and a variety of decorator ceramic tile, Edmonton's Panach Showroom also features Bisazza Italia tile and hand-hammered copper tile from India. "Personalization is the focus with the use of glass, precious stones, and gold and silver leaf accents," says owner Ros Haugland of Panache. "LED tile countertops are hot right now and look fantastic with textured vessel sinks," adds Ros who offers unique one-of-a-kind pieces to enhance your own exclusive retreat.

And what about our bedrooms? Style, colour, and inventive combinations of fabrics have revolutionized this setting with a host of eclectic possibilities. With more room to take décors to the extreme, wall-in closets have removed bureaus and storage from the bedroom and embody the owner's style with functional articulation.

Experts in creating storage solutions and maximizing existing capacities, Calgary Custom Closets has removed the rod and shelf concept and added accessories that fit the needs of today's fashionable homeowner with tie and belt racks, jewelry drawer wall safes, and unique racking innovations such as spiral rods that utilize corners with

décor," says Scott. An especially practical choice, cork is warm and adopts ambient room temperatures faster than other hard surfaces, is environmentally friendly (bark harvested), and has sound-deadening and insulating benefits. For the wee ones and especially children prone to allergies, Berry Flooring features FiberFloor, a softly cushioned system of high-performance floating fiberglass reinforced vinyl that captures playful imaginations with a variety of entertaining and colourful patterns designed especially for kids.

For the grownups, Valerianne of Calgary hosts decadent bedding and accessories for both bed and bath. "Mike and Ally bath accessories are imbedded with semi-precious stones and enamels that really add sparkle to a room," says owner Glenda Wiens, who also features a pretty selection of custom hand-painted iron beds from Georgia. Importers of Sfera Brothers that features high-thread count Egyptian cottons woven in Italy, and Belle Notte, a premium manufacturer of family-friendly bedding, they also carry Sweet Dreams recognized for their luxuriously detailed and finely crafted bedding designs.

"Change your bedding and you can completely change your space," offers Gail Thomson of Cricklewood

rows and rows of easy access shoe shelves. With both open and closed cabinet convenience, finishes can be selected to match bath or bedroom décors.

"What we do is design closets," says owner Gordon Dilling. "Finishing carpenters are not closet designers; nor are architects, for that matter." Featuring a winning combination of beauty and function, often secondary bedrooms are re-created to allow for expanded creativity and design. "In condo room is at a premium and we can increase usable space by fifty per cent," says Gordon, who uses three-dimensional designing software that allow customer to conceptualize their space, add background wall colours, and even patterns for a complete visualization of end design.

Flooring choices demand comfort with plush, high-grade materials the obvious choice for ultimate warmth and beauty. "Premium carpeting like iCress StainMaster nylon has the feel of cotton and the performance of nylon," states Scott Berry of Berry Flooring, with ornately sculpted patterns to create unique visual interests within luxurious warmth.

"There has been a trend of using cork or hardwood in the bedroom with an area rug that complements

Interiors. "Big, overstuffed duvets and featherbeds are amazing, or you can opt for the stream-lined, low platform beds that work well in contemporary spaces." With bedroom furniture, mattresses, and bedding, Cricklewood observes buyers moving away from bedroom suites and being drawn to luxurious chairs and chaises for reading corners that complement stylish king-size beds.

Featuring lines like Daniel Stuart that accommodates the seasons and challenges the imagination, they create homey country settings with fur throws, leather, and fringes with a unique use of tweeds, plaids, and Burberry. "The mainstay is a duvet and two shams," says Gail. "Then you can play with throws and pillows and once that trend or season is over you can change it up again."

McElheran's Fine Furniture in Edmonton features premium bedroom furniture and bedding accessories with unique statement beds that are upholstered in fabric, leather, and interesting combinations. "Upholstered headboards and frames has been a big design trend these last couple of years," states Jeff McElheran. "It's practical. Instead of pillows you have a comfortable backrest to enjoy a good book." With sleigh beds still immensely popular, what has changed is lower footboards that eliminate that closed in feeling. With painted night tables replacing bedroom suites, a more eclectic approach is becoming the new norm with chests and round tables providing a cozy, more personalized living space.

Hosting a unique line of beds, luxury bedding, and accessories, Melinda Martin of Etagere Interiors in Edmonton has designs on bedrooms. "We have mirrored headboards, leather headboards with stamped prints, and upholstered headboards in velvets and silks with beautiful trims." For period-style ambience, Etagerre also features solid wood and metal bed frame combinations with faux finishes blended with silver and gold leaf that brings the past forward. To facilitate complete bedroom ensembles Etagerre also hosts the innovative Marge Carson line of bedroom furniture that is matched with upholstery and bedding that coordinates with each collection.

Distributors of the ultra-luxurious Hypnos mattress, Rogers Sleep Shop in Edmonton and Rogers Sleep & Comfort in Calgary have luxury mattresses and quality bedding and linens, making a good night's sleep their priority. The Hypnos brand, named for the Greek god of sleep, has been awarded the Royal Warrant from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the ultimate designation for exceptional quality crafted products.

For the past hundred years, artisans at Hypnos Ltd. have employed craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail to create a bed of supreme comfort—some say the most comfortable bed in the world. Each mattress is custom made to order, contouring the entire body with luxurious, calico-encased pocket coils, richly layered with cashmere and silk, and trimmed with brass-finished air vents. "It's the Rolls Royce of beds," states Rogers Sleep Shop general manager Doug Podmore.

So whether you're looking for a good night's sleep or are just content to look, a satisfying rendezvous at home, even alone, can fulfill your dreams. 🏠

