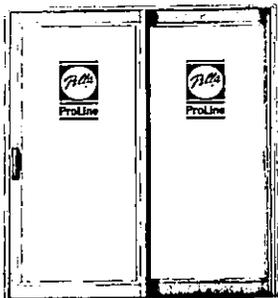


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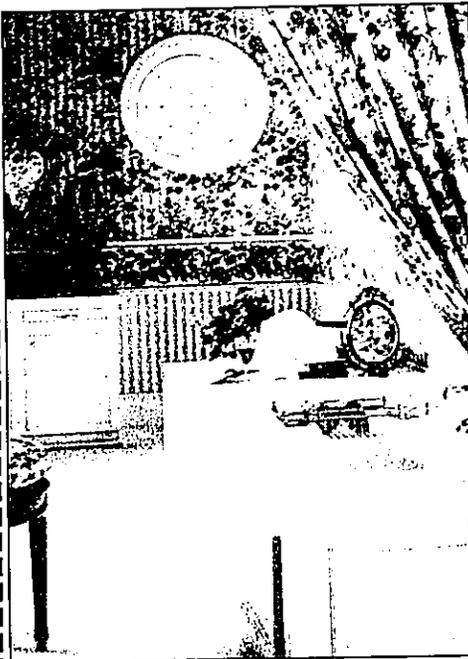
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CORBIS NEWS SERVICE

Bathroom beauty: A few luxurious touches can turn any bathroom into an inviting haven. Large whirlpool tubs in the master suite are popular and provide a getaway ambience. Shown: Wallcovering and fabric by Village.

Add creature comforts to bathroom amenities

BY SUSAN BROEHMAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Not long ago, the bathroom was considered a mundane part of the American home.

The "necessary room," as it originally was called, usually contained no more than a toilet, sink and bathtub. Homeowners never spent more time than was necessary in these basic, boxlike rooms.

These days, however, the rules have changed. In the '90s, spaciousness, style and attention to detail are the hallmarks of many of today's bathroom designs.

These rooms frequently are devoted more to leisure and comfort because home buyers want a private place to escape.

Douglas Buster, director of home design and development for a Midwest home builder, says the larger master bathroom plays an increasingly prominent role in today's double-income households, where a husband and wife must simultaneously prepare for work. And parents also have found they want bathrooms separate from their children's.

Master bathrooms contained within lavish bedroom suites incorporate such sought-after amenities as sitdown arenas to apply makeup, separate showers and enclosed toilets to offer a sense of roominess and privacy. Long, double-bowl vanities often are raised 3/4 to four inches above the norm to bring the sink area

closer to its users.

"We carefully design each bathroom to fully utilize all available space," Buster said. "Today's larger master bathrooms are no longer centered around the bath itself. Most of the master bathrooms in our single-family series and luxury town homes contain features that allow its users to unwind, relax and feel comfortable."

Elegance no longer is restricted to formal rooms, such as a living room or dining room, in the home. An abundance of marble, ceramic tile and glass in the master bathroom transform a "necessary" room into an extras room.

In many of today's home designs, skylights, standard windows and transom windows over tubs are prominent features in the master bath, allowing natural light to flood the room. Also, a wide use of extended mirrors creates not only more reflected light but also the impression of more space.

Many homeowners create comfortable atmospheres with large built-in, fiberglass garden tubs or whirlpool tubs to soak in after a hard day's work or play. Fiberglass tubs are not only economical, they come in many styles and colors and can match perfectly just about any room.

"Home buyers simply are no longer content with conventional washrooms," Buster said.