

Fabulous FURNITURE 2001

Luxury is the word in bathroom design today

BY JOAN BORAM
SPECIAL WRITER

Nearly 4,000 years ago in the palace of Knossos in Crete, an ingenious system of basins, sinks, water closets and cisterns, all linked with terra cotta pipes, bore separate water lines for waste, washing, and drinking. The royal bathtub looked almost exactly like a modern tub.

Several thousand years later, when Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, there was no bathroom in Buckingham Palace. In 2001, the rallying cry seems to be: "To each his/her own spa!"

Every bathroom, of course, is equipped with the same basic fixtures: a tub, a sink, a water closet, and, usually, a shower. If we're lucky, there's at least minimal storage space.

Then the fun begins. Within limitations of space, money and our imagination, the sky's the limit. We can luxuriate in a room with high-tech chrome and plexiglass, or we can "go Hollywood," with wall-to-ceiling mirrors, deep white shag carpeting, and lavish use of scented lotions and potions, soaps and oils.

Christie Stevens, owner of

Classic Kitchen & Bath in Rochester Hills, recently converted a bedroom into a luxurious bath and walk-in closet for a couple whose last child had just gone off to college.

"The son's bedroom was next to the master bedroom. We just broke a double doorway through and installed French doors leading into the new master bath, which was four times larger than the existing bath had been. The clients specified a large two-person whirlpool, a glass-enclosed shower that measured 3-by-4 feet, and two pedestal sinks, four feet apart.

"Over the sinks we installed a huge mirror - 4 feet tall and 8 feet wide, making the room look even larger. The water closet was in an enclosure with a wood door. We replaced the outside brick wall with glass block, giving the area an exposure to natural light."

Adjacent to the bath was a huge walk-in closet, with built-in laminate shelving for everything from sweaters to shoes.

Another client had a whirlpool installed on the top floor of her house so she could meditate while contemplating trees and

the stars. "The house was on top of a hill, surrounded by trees," says Stevens. "We installed windows that went to the ceiling, starting 3 feet off the floor, giving her a clear view. The client told me, 'If you've never done

(meditation), you'll never understand."

Stevens says that everyone who remodels asks for a whirlpool. However, he tries to convince them to forget it if they don't have a tub that's at least

36-by-66 inches. If a tub won't hold 35 to 50 gallons of water, "forget it," Stevens said.

A smaller, 30-by-60 inch tub won't allow a person to stretch out and get the benefit of the whirlpool on his knees and neck,

Stevens said.

He also advises against stairs leading to the tub, explaining that they're hazardous. The best alternative to steps is a 6- to 8-inch wide platform around the

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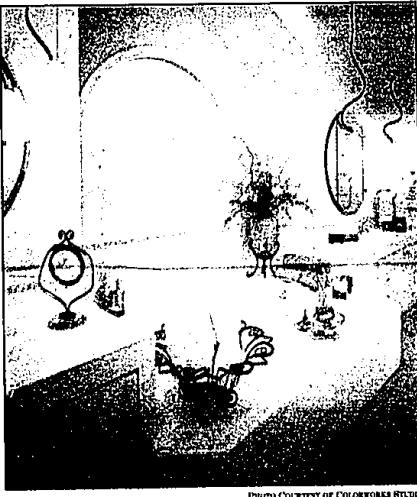
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