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# kitchen & bath DESIGN NEWS®

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PRODUCT TREND REPORT

# Responsible Refuges

Attention to water savings, technology and personalized options helps designers create fulfilling experiences in the shower space.

BY ELIZABETH RICHARDS

Consumer concern for the environment and stringent regulations on water usage can make designing a great shower experience a challenge. Innovative product development, options in water delivery and attention to customization help designers give homeowners the shower spaces they crave in an environmentally responsible way.

Showers continue to be a refuge for homeowners, a space away from the bustle of the world. The creation of a spa-like environment is still at the top of the list for bathroom trends, particularly in the master bath.

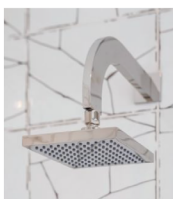
"We continue to see a need for spa-like bathrooms and shower spaces as homeowners place emphasis on holistic wellbeing within their homes," says Justin Storm, group product manager of House of Rohl in Irvine, CA. "Today, there's a transformation going on in how our segments define the showering space. It has become a luxury space, a serene sanctuary, where function marries with mindfulness. It is a place for wellness rituals and spa treatments, one that encourages immersion in a setting that helps erase the everyday."

Both function and aesthetics are important. For a true spa feel, the space must have products that deliver a satisfying shower as well as promote a sense of calm, quiet refuge.

Adriana Bertolino, business development manager at Gessi North America in Anaheim, CA notes, "At Gessi, we see the shower trend going beyond the traditional concept of function to a space of aesthetic



Showers bases from **MTI Baths** are now available in the company's new DoloMatte material, which delivers a velvety soft touch. DoloMatte is a solid surface made of specialty polymer blended with ground minerals. It is molded and hand finished, and is impact, scratch and stain resistant. [mtibaths.com](http://mtibaths.com)



From **Franz Viegner** comes the Edge Collection, which showcases an ultra-modern style. The company's ultra-thin showerheads are fashioned using layers of attenuated steel sheets and operate with minimum pressure, providing a steady cascade while using less water, notes the firm. [franzviegner.com](http://franzviegner.com)



**Aston's ELYSE XL** Collection is a ready-to-install 80"-high fixed panel frameless shower door. Constructed of tempered 3/8" glass with StarCast by EnduroShield coating, the ELYSE XL is offered in width models 30" to 38" with six hardware finish options. The panel can be adjusted up to 1" out of plumb. [astonbath.com](http://astonbath.com)



The **House of Rohl** has simplified its valve offering to support shower configurations across three of its brands - ROHL, Perrin & Rowe and Riobel. Users can customize their shower experience with a multitude of showerhead, body spray and handshower variations across all three brands. [houseofrohl.com](http://houseofrohl.com)

importance where an inhabitant can spend quality time for one's body and mind."

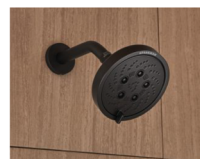
"Refreshment in the morning, relaxation in the evening or regeneration after exercise: the daily shower fulfills a variety of functions going way beyond personal hygiene. Its positive impact on physical and emotional well-being makes it an important component of a health-conscious lifestyle for many," explains Christopher Barger, president & CEO of Dornbracht Americas, based in Duluth, GA. "Accordingly, there is an increasing desire for shower furnishings that take aesthetic ideas as much into account as functional and health aspects."

Designing the space for the individual user is also important, particularly when it comes to technology. Digital controls are becoming more desired, but need to be intuitive and offer the user exactly what they're looking for.

"You want to go in and have a great experience, but one that's catered to you," remarks Alisha McFetridge, CEO at RainStick Shower in Kelowna, BC, Canada. "Technology should add value rather than just be there. It needs to be thoughtful and intentional, tailored to the individual."

Other top trends include expansive showers, particularly in the master bath; a move towards connectivity; a focus on matte black and brushed finishes; and a range of features to truly customize the showering experience. So say manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.

PRODUCT TREND REPORT



The Vector showerhead is part of **Speakman's** partnership with interior designer Roger Thomas. The modern Vector collection sports strong lines, and the multi-function showerhead features five plungers, 149 sprays and four spray patterns. The showerhead is available in multiple flow rates. [speakman.com](http://speakman.com)



The latest rain showers from **Dornbracht** are inspired by the experience of natural rainfall. Dornbracht's raindrops fall without pressure, with the huge droplets landing gently on the body. The showers are install flush with the ceiling and are available with two integrated light sources that can be selected via controllers or voice command. [dornbracht.com](http://dornbracht.com)



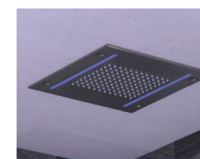
**CEA Design's** Acquachiarà is inspired by the fusion of water and light, where rain, waterfall, mists and spray jets are colored with chromatherapy or white. The limited number of jets allows them to be adjusted with a single control, or connected to CEA's infrared sensors to control the opening and closing of the jets. [ceadesign.it](http://ceadesign.it)



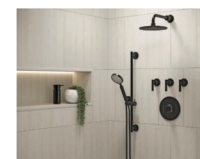
The **American Standard Studio S** Rain Showerhead features a sleek, geometric design. The piece includes an 8" diameter for a drenching spray, and is available in three finishes. The showerhead complements the rest of the Studio S collection. [americanstandard-us.com](http://americanstandard-us.com)



**Brizo's** 14" Raincan Shower Head, part of the Essential Shower Series, features the new H20kinetic Drenching Spray for a broader, more immersive shower experience. The spray uses water-sculpting chips to create thousands of droplets pouring down in alternating patterns. It is available in two styles - square and linear round - and 10 finishes. [brizo.com](http://brizo.com)



**ThermaSol's** new HydroVive brings the multi-sensory powers of light, sound and water under the user's control in a more compact design. HydroVive 14 has a clean, integrated look, and when paired with the firm's Smart Shower Valve, Therma-Touch interface or the SignaTouch controller, each element of the shower can be personalized. [thermasol.com](http://thermasol.com)



**California Faucets** now offers pre-configured kits for its Style-Therm Shower Systems, making the company's most popular designs more accessible. Each kit offers a complete thermostatic shower solution with precision temperature control, state-of-the-art showerheads, handshower, body sprays and luxury drains. [calfaucets.com](http://calfaucets.com)



**Infinity Drain** has introduced a standard 30"x60" Stainless Steel Shower Base that can integrate for either curb or curbless showers. The bases are made from 304L 16-gauge stainless steel, and arrive factory flood-tested and ready for installation with an integral drain, pre-sloped floor and primed for tile installation. [infinitydrain.com](http://infinitydrain.com)

Bertolino says that color as freedom of expression in the bath is important. "ORIGINI, just launched at Salone di Milan, was born from the union of archetypal forms with metachromatic harmonies, created by mixing and matching colors, materials and finishes. [It is] a collection that offers customers color choices based on five iconic shades and combinations according to one's taste."

## LUXURIOUS MASTER

A move towards showers rather than bathtubs and a desire for flexible options leads to larger, more expansive showering spaces, manufacturers say, especially in the master bath.

"We are seeing showers continuing to grow in importance as the main focus of the bathroom for wellness, and size depends on the particular application," reports Bertolino. "We are seeing the expansion of the shower in the master bath to create a private wellness sanctuary in the home."

"Though the industry trend of cultivating spa-like bathrooms applies to all bath spaces in the home, we have seen a particular focus in the primary bath as homeowners place emphasis on holistic wellbeing in their most personal spaces," explains Storm. "The primary bath is no longer just another bathroom - it's a space where one can relax, rejuvenate and recharge, and the showers within are now being designed as settings that can help homeowners retreat and erase the everyday."

Sindelar states that main showers tend to be a little larger, and include multiple water outlets like a showerhead plus a handshower, rainhead or body sprays.

Secondary showers are smaller, or are a tub/shower combination, he says, and may include a single showerhead. However, he adds, many are upgrading to include a showerhead/handshower combination or showerheads that can play music via Bluetooth.

Horwitz notes, "Master showers can be more extravagant. They may use body jets to get a full body shower. They often incorporate rain showers and handshowers as part of the set up, whereas the kids' bathroom may have a more simplified set up with just a fixed showerhead and a handshower." He states that shower size isn't expanding, but more consideration is given to aging in place, such as low-threshold entrances or moving handles closer to the entrance so it is easier to adjust water volume and temperature from outside the shower.

McFetridge notes that, in the master, not only are people increasing the size of their shower, but some are even putting double showers in their enclosures. This allows for personalization for more than one user.

Storm concurs. "We've also seen an increase in demand for double showers, with independent controls that can invite two people to share the shower experience, while each enjoys their preferred temperature and settings." ■