



# Functional Luxury

**Master bath remodeling trends focus on adding luxury to personalized, functional spaces.**

By Kim Berndtson

Given today's fast-paced lifestyle, many homeowners are looking at their master bathrooms as a place to pamper themselves. "Our clients tell us they need a retreat...somewhere to go and relax, de-stress and rejuvenate," says Erica Westeroth, XTC Design, Inc., in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. And they want that retreat to be at home, "especially if they have a family and it isn't easy to get away to a gym or spa."

Yet, these spaces need to be highly functional and efficient, as well. An aging population – many of whom desire to age in place – is impacting bath remodeling, as is the growing obesity demographic in the U.S. (see related story, Page 22). Additionally, technology is impacting not only product design, but the growing desire for a spa-like escape.

"Historically, so much time and thought has been put into kitchens. But the reality is, if you spend more than a half an hour in the bathroom, you've probably received 10 emails, three text messages and there are four reasons why the kids need to come in and ask you questions," says Sid Levin, Revolution Design and Build, in Wayzata, MN. "In the instantaneous world we live in, scheduling and daily planning happen the minute you wake up. People are really living in their bathrooms. Many days begin as soon as people wake up, rather than when they move into the kitchen for their first cup of coffee."

And it seems homeowners are willing to invest in these spaces to incorporate products and features that improve functionality and help them unwind.

"Some of our clients are spending as much on master suites as they are on kitchens," says Don DiNovi, Ulrich, Inc., in Ridgewood, NJ. "They want a retreat. I hear that all the time. I just spoke with clients who told me they wanted a spa in their home. They want to enjoy that luxury every day."

While creating that spa-like environment has become a well-established trend, how that style is implemented highlights several emerging trends in products and materials. These include everything from the desire for large, luxurious showers with multiple water sources and beautiful natural stone tile, to the growing demand for customized storage solutions and attractive Universal Design features. This month, *KBDN* looks at some of the hottest master bath trends.

**Designer:** Tatiana Machado-Rosas, Allied ASID, CKD, CAPS, CGB; Jackson Design & Remodeling; San Diego, CA

**Trend:** Softer colors, especially blues, grays and off whites

"We're seeing softer colors in both contemporary and traditional bathrooms, combined with natural materials and distressed wood," says Machado-Rosas. "These colors are often complemented with dark brown hues, especially in contemporary settings."

**Trend:** Natural stone tile (for floors, walls and countertops) and mosaic tiles used to create interesting patterns

"People are more open to the use of natural stone, such as marble and onyx," she relates. "Marble, especially, is making a comeback. It gives an elegance to both modern and traditional spaces, and it can be used in vintage decors. Natural stone mosaic tiles used in combination with glass mosaic tiles is also very hot right now. Fabricators are doing some very interesting patterns, and adding depth. They are changing the shape of the tile and are going beyond the typical 1"x1" squares to create designs with a special touch. People seem more willing to be a little more dramatic, to use products that have a lot of depth and texture. And, they are moving those mosaics outside of the shower...creating accent walls, liners and niches."

**Trend:** Creating functional yet stylish and attractive spaces that reflect a client's taste and lifestyle

"Our clients want spaces where they can express themselves and relax," she says. "They want special places where they can pamper themselves. For example, in cabinetry, they want something that is functional, but part of the design. It's the same with lighting...functional, but beautiful. Lighting is like jewelry. It's the final touch to tie in everything."

**Trending products:** Multiple showerheads, benches, body sprays/jets and quiet fans.

