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Smart Planning in the Bathroom Creates Designs for Every Generation

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Smart Planning in the Bathroom Creates Designs for Every Generation

By Linda Jennings



There's no doubt that multi-generational design is one of the fastest growing trends in today's housing industry. As more and more people discover the benefits that smart planning affords to those of all age groups and abilities, a rising demand is emerging for products that combine style and safety, beauty and comfort, practicality and versatility.

Multi-generational design need not be a foreign concept. It is, after all, what good design should be. Multi-generational design has applications throughout the house but is particularly important in the bathroom. A well-thought-out bathroom can easily accommodate the needs of young children, older adults and those with disabilities. And while there are many practical considerations that play an important role in the design process, including safety, space constraints, comfort and ease of use, being "sensible" doesn't mean the bathroom has to look utilitarian. Quite the opposite, in fact. Manufacturers of bath products are now finding new ways to infuse style into what was once a strictly institutional area of bathroom design. The results are something style-savvy consumers would want to have in their home, even without the added bonus of multi-generational benefits.

How to Define the Multi-Gen Family

The U.S. Census defines a multi-generational household as one having at least three related people living together who are from three generations. Perhaps the most well-known example is that of the Obama family, when First Lady Michelle Obama's mother moved into the White House to help care for her granddaughters. Many Americans are creating similar living situations in their own homes. According to government figures, the number of multi-generational households increased 40 percent over 10 years, from 3 million in 1990 to 4.2 million in 2000. The number of parents over age 65 moving in with adult children increased by 62 percent between 2000 and 2007.

The reasons behind this growing trend are varied. New immigrants may choose to follow cultural traditions of living with extend-

ed family. Rising housing costs make it more economical for families to share housing expenses. Many seniors opt to live with family members instead of living in a retirement center. And finally, middle-aged adults find themselves in the "sandwich generation" as they live with and care for both their children and their aging parents.

The Phenomenon of Aging in Place

According to a recent study by AARP, 89 percent of Americans over age 50 intend to remain in their own homes for as long as they possibly can, a phenomenon known as "aging in place." People want to know that they will be able to live comfortably and independently in their homes and are looking to make the smart choices now that can make all the difference later.

Multi-generational design is intended to benefit everyone, not just the elderly or physically challenged. It strives to be accessible and comfortable over an extended period of time for every member of the household.

Industry insiders are gearing up to accommodate this trend, which is expected to increase exponentially over the next several decades. The oldest Baby Boomers will celebrate their 65th birthdays in 2011. According to government projections, by 2030 nearly 26 percent of the U.S. population will be age 65 or older, compared with just 17 percent today. This is creating a change in the profile of the typical American family. A survey from AARP reported that the number of multi-generational households has grown from 5 million in 2000 to 6.2 million in 2008. Nearly a quarter of Baby Boomers expect that their parents or in-laws will move in with them – and half of those who anticipate that living arrangement are excited about it. Experts predict that four-generation households



will become more common as more Baby Boomers reach maturity and life expectancy increases.

Meeting the Demand

Growing numbers of builders are unveiling revamped home designs that include "mother-in-law apartments" or small suites with private entrances, bathrooms and

kitchenettes to provide living quarters for extended family members. A recent survey by the National Association of Home Builders found that 62 percent of the architects sampled said they expect a significant uptick in demand for homes with second master suites. People are planning ahead now and looking for homes that will lend themselves to future demands of the multi-generational lifestyle.

Designs That Benefits

Multi-generational design is intended to benefit everyone, not just the elderly or physically challenged. It strives to be accessible and comfortable over an extended period of time for every member of the household. Some tips for multi-gen design in the bathroom include maximizing floor space with pedes-

tal or wall-mounted sinks, choosing non-slip flooring or installing a zero-threshold shower with built-in bench. Another idea is to install a tub with a wide surround or ledge that bathers can sit on and swing their legs around to enter and exit the tub, rather than having to step over and into a traditional tub. Small changes can make a big difference, such as hand-held sprayer attachments and showers with double-wide doors. Strategically placed grab bars can greatly increase the safety of showers and tubs, and many are styled to coordinate with other bathroom hardware for a seamless design plan.

Buy Once, Buy Right

With the current state of the economy, people have begun to think long-term when it comes to their homes. Some people are incorporating multi-generational design features in their new homes right from the very beginning. Other people are deciding to stay where they are and remodel their homes because moving to a new house as needs change is no longer a viable option. The bottom line is that homeowners are carefully considering how their purchasing decisions will affect their future. ●

Linda Jennings is president of Jennings & Company — a public relations, advertising and marketing agency, specializing exclusively in the



decorative plumbing and luxury hardware industry. Over a 20-year tenure, she has worked with the most sig-

nificant editors and journalists in the consumer home market, identifying trends and providing newsworthy products. Based in Sarasota, Fla., her agency represents the most progressive manufacturers in the kitchen and bath industry.

Jennings is a member of the DPHA.

MTI Whirlpools Leads the Way with Innovative Shower Designs

As the idea of multi-generational design gains acceptance among consumers, an increasing number of manufacturers are addressing this trend with inventive new product lines. MTI Whirlpools, a member of DPHA, is a leader in this area. The company offers an extensive assortment of stylish showers and tubs that can easily accommodate the needs of an extended family or the physically challenged.



MTI currently offers more than 50 shower bases in different sizes, shapes and materials, including seven different seated configurations. Many feature a low-profile, multiple-threshold design for versatile installation and easy entrance. When a zero-threshold entrance is required, the shower trays may be recessed into the floor for even greater ease of access. Clean, modern lines create a sleek look, while optional extras like teak shower trays create a spa-like environment. A coordinating teak seat provides secure seating when needed and folds away for easy storage.



Complementing MTI's extensive assortment of shower bases are frameless shower enclosures with a headerless design. When spacious access to the shower is a consideration, MTI enclosures can assist. For example, one enclosure offered mates with a 48" x 48" dual threshold shower base. Two doors that meet at one corner open a full 180 degree each to provide a spacious French-door-like entrance to the shower, offering both beauty and practicality. MTI's largest base of 72" x 42" can be equipped with one or more sides of glass enclosure for a wonderful feeling of open spaciousness. A large pivoting door provides access. Or, if space is a consideration, select a wider access two-sided enclosure from MTI's Teutonic Series,

which features sliding glass doors that glide effortlessly with rollers along an overhead stainless steel rail to provide easy, wide entrance to the shower.

News

Hastings Tile & Bath Signs Exclusive Distribution Agreement with Sonia® Bath Products

Hastings Tile & Bath recently announced that they've entered into an exclusive agreement to distribute the Sonia line of bath products in North America and the Caribbean. Hastings will maintain the Sonia distribution and customer support facility in Sunrise, Fla. Many of Sonia's existing sales representatives will remain in place integrating the Hastings product line into their agencies and actively calling on their dealer base and this transition will be seamless without interruption of product shipments and customer service.

Raffel Consulting Group Offers Sales Seminar for Showroom Staff

Ron Raffel recently announced a new program for showroom staff to help increase sales. It is a course in basic plumbing. To sell products effectively, one must know its applications. Knowledge is the key that can set a showroom apart. The class includes terminology, simple plumbing systems, water heaters and more.

Raffel is a 45-year industry veteran. He has been a plumbing wholesaler, operated his own showrooms, national sales manager for and industry manufacturer and held a plumbing license and now is a manufacturer's representative. He has practical knowledge and experience that can benefit any plumbing showroom sales person. He is also a Charter member of Decorative Plumbing Hardware Association (DPHA).

For more information, e-mail Ron@RaffelSales.com.

GRAFF® Debuts New Look and Functionality for its Global Web Site

GRAFF recently redesigned its Web site in keeping with its mission to provide the most innovative products and services for its clientele worldwide. Known for its novel designs and precise

manufacturing, GRAFF has spent the last eight months redesigning its Web site to coincide with a number of upcoming product launches.

Visually stunning and ripe with product and contextual images meant to stir the imagination, GRAFF's new Web site picks up where many others stop. Where some Web sites are static, GRAFF's new site is interactive. Where some Web sites are difficult to navigate, GRAFF's Web site is intuitive and rich with important information about its entire line of products.

For more information, visit www.graff-faucets.com.

Products

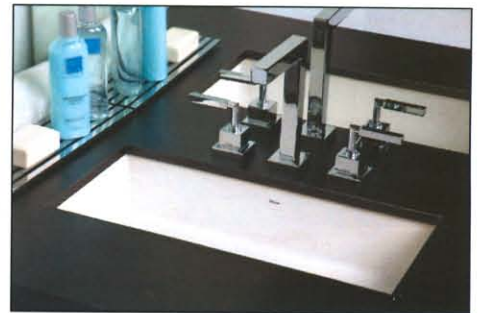
Rohl Releases A3410 Country Pull-Out Kitchen Faucet



New for 2010 is ROHL's Country Pull-Out Kitchen Faucet, featuring a nylon braided hose for quiet operation. The exclusive ROHL Pull-Out Collection of faucets combines functionally distinctive pull-out faucet technology with elegant design and superb craftsmanship. Each faucet is engineered with a technically superior ceramic disc cartridge and features smooth operation. All models feature double check valve for safety. Most importantly, the elegant design lets you enjoy convenience without sacrificing aesthetic appeal.

For more information, visit www.rohlhome.com.

Create a Modern Bath Sanctuary with a Dynamic Duo From Deca



The new Rectangular Undermount Lavatory Sink and Quadratta Faucet combination from Deca creates a breathtaking presentation of modern beauty. The streamlined style of the vanity sink and the edgy modernism of the faucet combine to create a bath statement that is center stage. The Rectangular Sink with overflow is constructed of fine fire clay, which grants the perfect shape and quality finishing demanded of sophisticated consumers. The basin measures 23-1/4" x 9-1/16" x 6-5/16" deep.

For more information, visit www.deca-us.com.

New Ravello Double-ended Tub Offers Natural Elements And Luxurious Design



The new Ravello Double-ended Tub from Victoria & Albert combines the clean lines of a modern aesthetic with the graceful curves of a classic silhouette. It creates a dramatic focal point for the most luxurious of bathroom suites. The contemporary double-ended design uses soft curves and bold profiles to create a vessel that is remarkable in its sophisticated simplicity. Like all Victoria & Albert designs, the Ravello Tub offers an inherent sense of organic

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beauty thanks to its ENGLISHCAST™ composition of finely ground volcanic limestone. As the stone-rich alternative to both cast iron and acrylic it is cast in one seamless piece that won't creak or flex. This unique construction is hand finished on the inside to provide a glossy white solid surface that is both highly durable and easy to clean. Measuring a generous 68-5/8" long, 30-1/8" wide and 23-5/8" high, the Ravello holds an impressive 82 gallons of water, yet has a footprint that is considerably smaller than an equivalent volume spa bath, due to the space-efficient one piece casting. The bath is 16-5/8" deep to allow for a most luxurious soak.

For more information about Victoria & Albert's New Ravello Collection, visit vandabaths.com

The MTI Petra Double Sink — Where Elegance Meets Edge



Echoing the strong, clean lines and sharp, contemporary geometric angles of the Petra Tub, MTI Whirlpools introduces the new Petra Double Sink. This trough-style luxury sink combines minimalist design with the beauty of solid-surface construction desired by today's discriminating homeowners. Tough enough to stand up to the rigors of everyday use, MTI's new solid-surface products look and feel like natural stone. Because the surface is non-porous, it is naturally resistant to stains. Routine cleaning is as simple as wiping with a damp cloth and common non-abrasive household cleaners, making it easy to maintain a sparkling look after each use. Products in the Boutique Collection are made in the United States and are constructed using MTI's Engineered Solid-

Surface (ESS) material, a mixture of ground natural minerals and binding agents that are liquefied, poured and then hardened. Approximately 60 percent of the material is organic, including minerals mined from the earth and dirt. The result is molded stone. This collection presents a rich resource for those looking for bath products in alternative, natural materials. The Petra Double LV Sink measures 47.5" x 14" x 5.125." It features one-piece construction and is available in white and biscuit in either matte or gloss finish.

For more information, visit mtiwhirlpools.com.

Introducing Multifunction Handheld Showers by California Faucets



California Faucets recently introduced its new collection of stylish multifunction handheld showers. With several decorative finishes and designs, the collection reveals extraordinary versatility, especially when teamed with California Faucets' broad assortment of customizable style options in bath faucets and fixtures. The handheld showers complement a wide range of decors from traditional to ultra-contemporary styles. The contemporary collection features dynamic curves and minimalist lines that enhance the most modern of spaces. The traditional style, with its more graceful arches, fits into a bounty of spaces, from vintage to transitional.

For more information, visit or visit www.calfaucets.com.

OMNIA Expands its Line of Modern Levers



OMNIA's newest additions to its line of modern levers are the perfect choice for anyone who appreciates modern design. By featuring more movement than the existing models, these eight new designs offer a softer, more fluid look to the contemporary scheme. Manufactured using the same state-of-the-art-production- and finishing-processes that OMNIA is known for, these new offerings marry cutting edge technology with forward-thinking design. All eight designs are available with either a modern round rose with a 2 9/16" diameter or a 2 9/16" square rose, both of which will cover a 2 1/8" hole. Affordably priced, all are available in four fashionable finishes: Polished Chrome, Satin Chrome, Oil-rubbed Bronze and Satin Nickel.

For more information, visit www.omniindustries.com.