

2012 bathrooms will be pretty and natural

By Jill Sell

Victoria + Albert Baths' mermaid model is a testament to the beauty of the 2012 bath designs. The company's high-end bathtubs are made from finely-ground volcanic limestone mixed with resin. The hand-finished tubs are made in one piece and are easy to clean.

Gorgeous bathrooms have sold homes and are one of two rooms that gives homeowners the highest value for their remodeling dollar. Updated, quality bathroom fixtures are sound investments. But don't go way overboard if you not planning to spend a substantial amount of time living in your home. If the rest of your house is modest, it's doubtful that a luxury spa will bring a lot more money to a sale.

Barcelona, one of the Victoria + Albert's newest collections, includes a rimless, double-ended designed tub, which is big enough for two people. The contemporary bath measures 70 1/4 inches long. A coordinating vessel basin is also available.

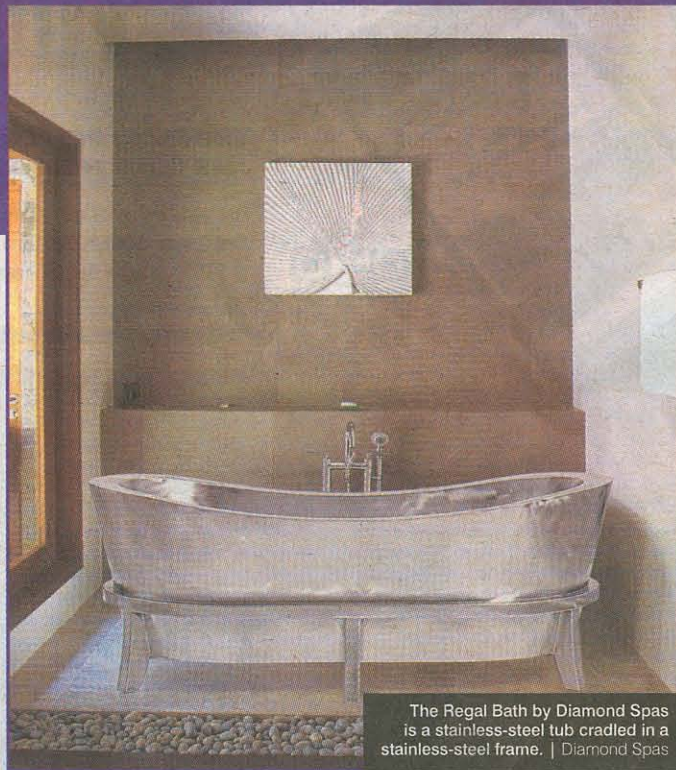
The new Regal Bath from Diamond Spas is definitely for homeowners who appreciate good design and green practices. The sophisticated, modern double-walled tub fits comfortably into a supportive, open bottom frame with legs. The result is very different and very nicely done. The bowed top ledge tub, legs and frame are all made from sustainable 16-gauge stainless steel. The

metal is lightweight, durable and corrosion resistant.

Because of stainless steel's qualities, which work well in the bathroom, other innovative bathroom products have emerged. The Casanova can hardly be called "just" a bathroom cabinet. The piece, by the Furniture Guild, is made with rift cut oak and a choice of 30 different finishes, an aluminum base and a travertine top with sink. The drawer system is stainless steel. The Casanova also has a linen hamper, dryer/curling iron holder and an internal power option.

Bathroom trends for 2012 continue to show natural materials, particularly stone. Entire walls of stone reflect the back-to-nature look. Some sinks look like riverbeds and others like hollowed-out logs.

Colors, too, reflect the natural world with creams, ivories and pale greens being dominant. But silver and gold, in the form of wallpaper and accessories, also make a surprise entrance. The colors, which offer the look of wealth and prestige, are an interesting contrast to rough stone walls and dark slate-like tile. It's almost as if homeowners are saying, "The outdoors is fine, but don't take away all my luxury."



The Regal Bath by Diamond Spas is a stainless-steel tub cradled in a stainless-steel frame. | Diamond Spas

An accent color is always a pop to an otherwise neutrally-colored room. If you feel your minimalist bathroom just needs an injection of energy, designers are also featuring black, red, orange, and pink this season.

Jill Sell is a freelance writer specializing in real estate, home and garden. Sell can be reached at jillsell@en.com.

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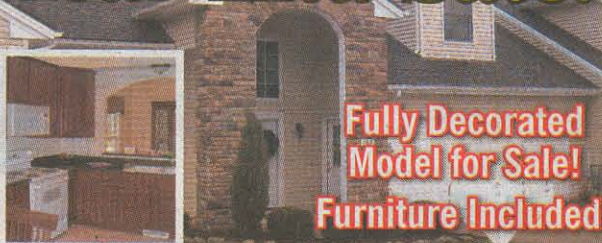
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