

# Bathroom remodeling projects reflect consumers' move to contemporary styles

By Jill Sell

Some of the most unusual and beautiful copper bathroom sinks available today are designed by artist Alejandra Thompson, who founded Thompson Traders with her daughter. Especially lovely are Thompson's koi fish basins and her fish vessels. Copper is naturally antibacterial and made to last the lifetime of a home.

You may not be ready for fish in the bathroom. But the National Association of Home Builders urges homeowners, home sellers and buyers to improve the function and appearance of their baths during May, National Home Remodeling Month.

You might want to think contemporary. The preference for spa bathrooms and zen-like retreats has created a major shift in the National

Kitchen and Bath Association's (NKBA) 2014 Kitchen and Bath Design Trends Survey. Just a few years ago, traditional styling accounted for three-fourths of bathrooms designed by NKBA members. Now that number has dropped to 68 percent.

Also expected to take a popularity dunking this year: black fixtures, both jetted and whirlpool tubs, as well as standard tubs with shower surrounds. Instead, homeowners want free-standing tubs, no-threshold showers, steam showers, shower lighting and benches or seats in shower stalls. Eighty-four percent of the designer respondents specified comfort height toilets. Eighty-one percent supplied comfort height vanities in 2013 and that demand is expected to rise.

Gray, the third most popular bathroom color scheme in 2013 is the fastest growing color in baths this year. Beige and bone color schemes with white fixtures and polished chrome faucets led the way in 2013 and are

holding strong. Homeowners also want ceramic or porcelain floor tiles, quartz vanity tops, undermount sinks, linen storage cabinets and wall-hung floating vanities.

Technology is not invading our most private room as much as some expected. Only 20 percent of designers included programmable controls for showers in 2013, and not much growth is expected this year.

Don't forget the kids when remodeling a true family bathroom. Wash that Baby! is touted as the world's first baby seat designed for the shower. The fully assembled seat is secured to the shower wall with three metal screws. The lightweight aluminum frame holds infants up to 60-pound toddlers, while steel support cables withstand hundreds of pounds of pressure. The seat fabric is made with quick drying antibacterial fabric. Safety belts hold the baby securely and comfortably in the seat while in the shower with a parent. No more awkward plastic tubs.

Bathroom remodeling projects ranged from less than \$5,000 to more

than \$30,000 in 2013, according to the NKBA.



Artist Alejandra Thompson designs unusual and beautiful copper sinks that can be part of an upscale bathroom remodeling project.



The Wessex from Victoria + Albert is a traditional, free-standing Edwardian style tub that homeowners are again embracing. The tub is made of naturally insulating materials to keep water warmer longer and is a manageable size to fit many bathrooms.

| Photo Credit Victoria + Albert

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