

AUSTIN-SAN ANTONIO URBAN

HOME

JUNE/JULY 2011

Designs | Lifestyles | Investments | Improvements

OUTDOOR RETREATS

**URBAN HOME
DREAM HOME DEBUT**

**COASTAL-INSPIRED
DESIGN & LIVING**

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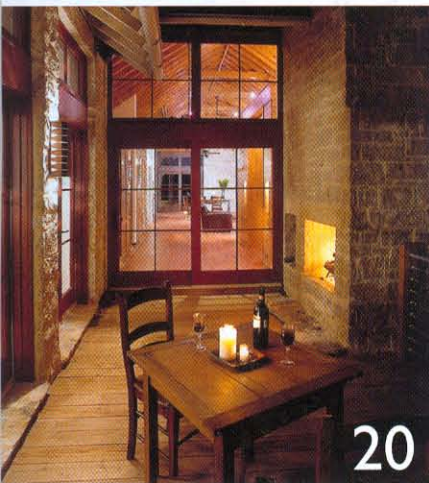
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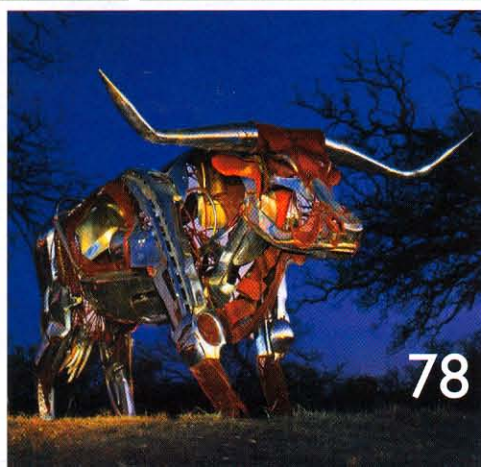
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10. Each Lenova oyster sink, hand cast in the finest bronze, is a work of art in its own right and is a compelling tribute to the intricacies of nature that inspired it. www.lenova.com.



11

11. This pineapple is made by master craftsman, Pedro Hernandez in the village of San Jose de Gracias, Michoacan. Originally designed to store seeds between harvests, these pineapples have become works of fine art as the craft has passed from generation to generation. COSAS, in Boerne, boasts one of the broadest collections of museum quality folk art from every region of Mexico. **COSAS. 830.249.1500, www.cosasonline.com**.



12

12. Loll Designs' US manufactured line of modern outdoor furniture has been recognized far and wide for innovation in green design. This unique line is made entirely of recycled milk jugs. The Chaise lounge and Cabrio lounge chair are produced from 980 and 320 milk jugs respectively! **House+Earth. 512.300.0484, www.houseandearth.com**.



13

13. A grown-up version of the classic beach bucket, these metal buckets hold towels, toys and other summer essentials with flair. Drop in your flip-flops after a sandy day at the beach, or keep your favorite party beverages chilled on ice. No matter how you use them, these fun buckets turn summer organizing into a blast! **The Company Store. www.thecompanystore.com**.



14

14. The Iris Chandelier is from the Four Hands Umbria Collection. This collection is made with solid sheesham wood and finished with rich black and brown hues. **Four Hands Home. 512.225.0334. www.fourhandshome.com**.



15

15. The classic, beach look of a big brim hat is always in style, and the Jessica brings that style to the forefront. **Hats in the Belfry. 888.999.4287, www.hatsinthebelfry.com**.



16

16. The hottest summer trend? Scotch Naturals non-toxic nail polish with a long-lasting, water-based formula. Three Branches Healthy Living is the source for your healthy home and body needs. **Three Branches Healthy Living. www.threebrancheshealth.com**.



18

17. Cotton blossom is infused with notes of drenched air, fresh linen and soft powder to create this remarkably clean, fine fragrance that is perfectly refreshing after a day at the beach. **Bath and Body Works®. www.bathandbodyworks.com**.



17

18. Our Go Fish Tote is not only a great summer catch (or gift), it's also the perfect size to tote around town or bring to the beach. The smoked, woven-grass bag is lined with a drawstring closure and is trimmed with ribbons, hand-painted ceramic decorations, tassels and a MacKenzie-Childs brass logo plate. The bags are woven by Master Balinese weavers using Ata grass, a vine indigenous to the foothills of volcanoes on the Indonesian Island of Bali. **MacKenzie-Childs. 888.665.1999, www.mackenzie-childs.com**.

OUTDOOR ■ TRENDS

BATHING ALFRESCO

By JENNIFER BITZKIE

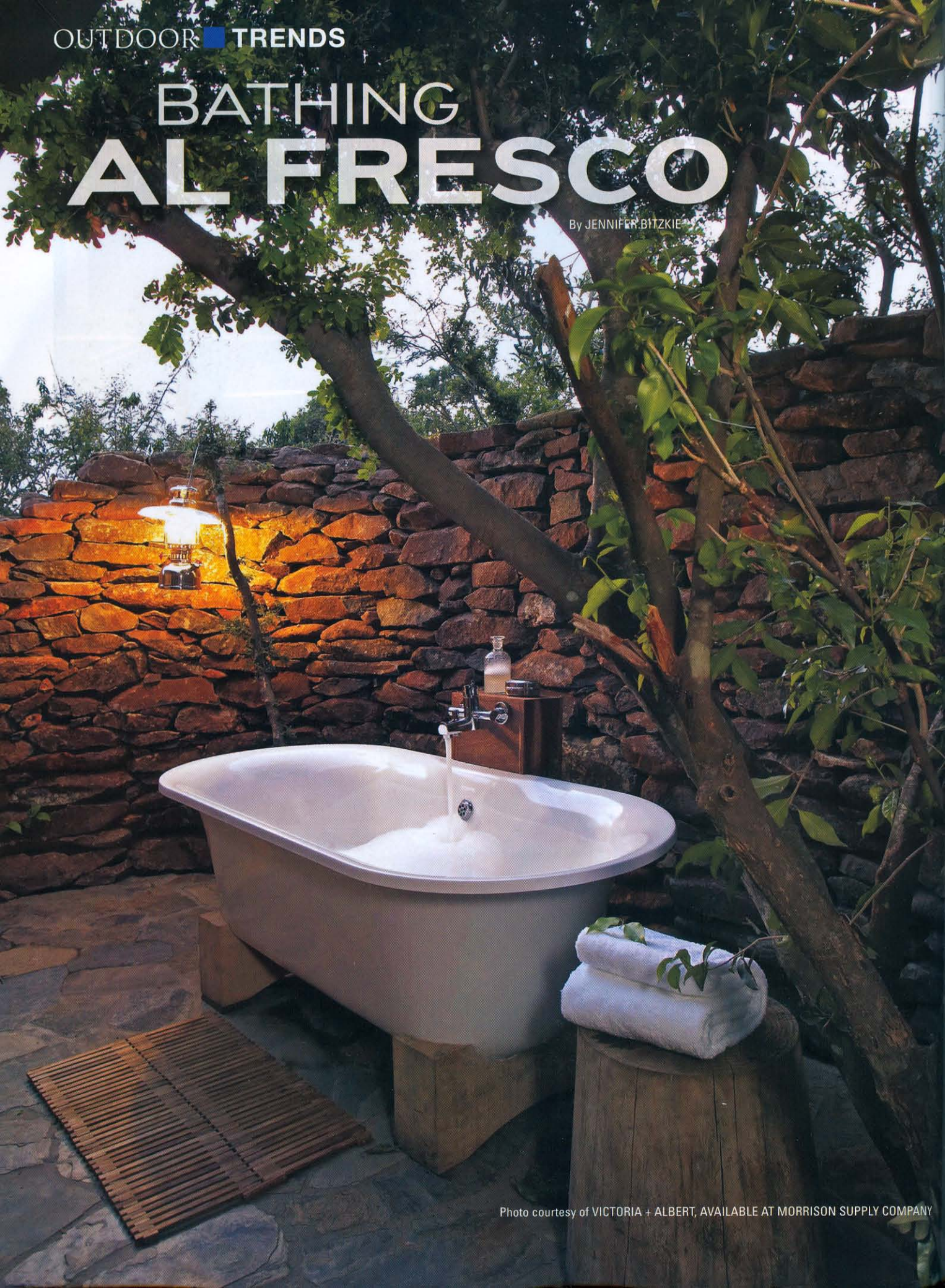


Photo courtesy of VICTORIA + ALBERT, AVAILABLE AT MORRISON SUPPLY COMPANY

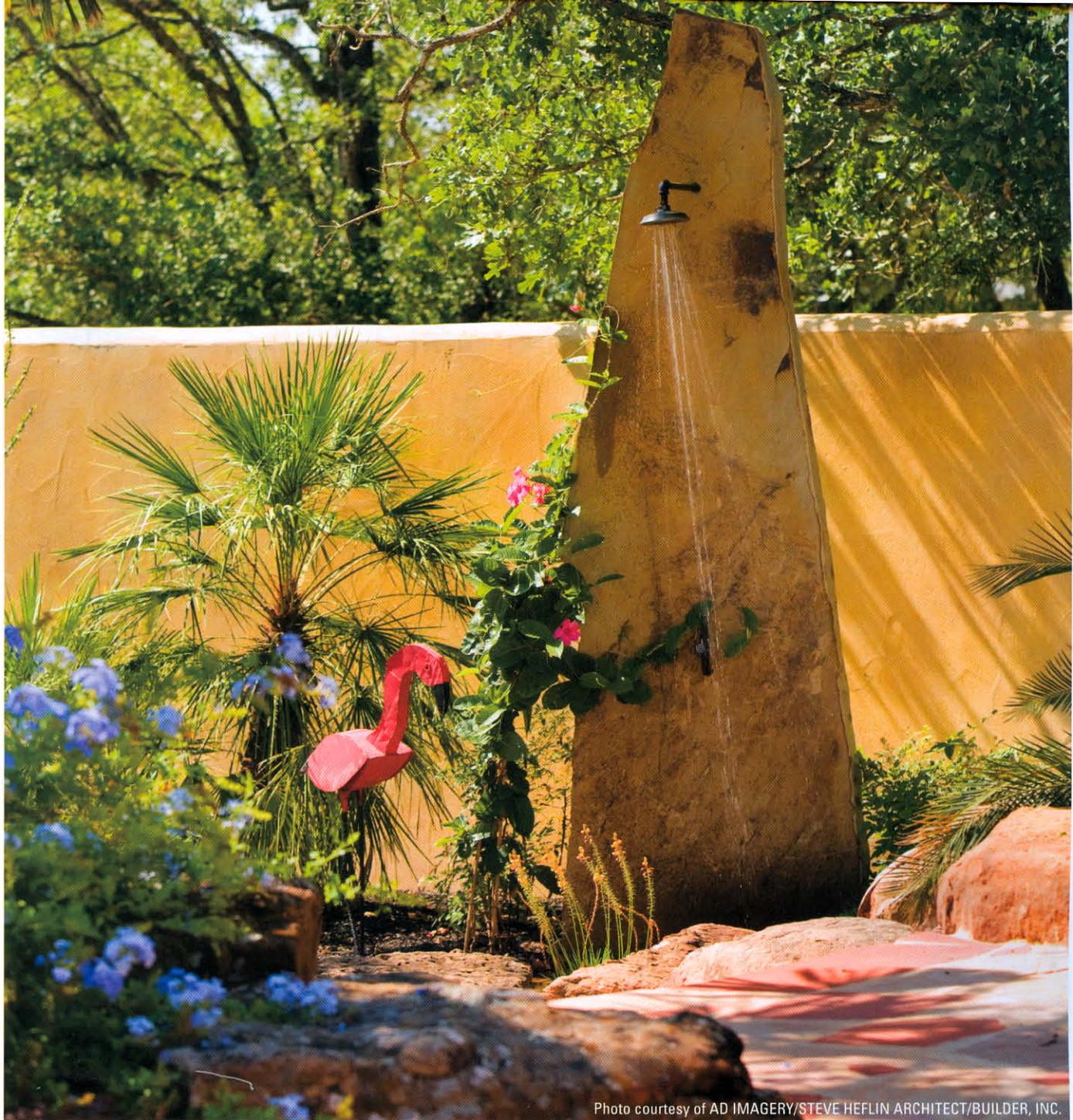


Photo courtesy of AD IMAGERY/STEVE HEFLIN ARCHITECT/BUILDER, INC.

We've all seen how beautiful a house can be when elements of nature are incorporated within the interior of the home. Many of today's homeowners are turning that concept around and bringing the indoors outside. Outdoor showers and baths are increasingly becoming more and more popular, especially in rural settings.

More often than not, these outdoor showers are used in conjunction with lake houses, swimming pools, and hot tubs as a means by which users can rinse off prior to and after swimming. This is an effective way of keeping pools and Jacuzzis clean and debris free. These showers allow for users to rinse free of all chlorine and chemicals as well. A simple, free-standing shower can also be used to rinse off toys, gardening tools and the occasional muddy pet. "Anybody with kids and an outdoor pool will reap

the benefits of having an outdoor shower," claims Dan Byler of Morrison Supply Company. Prior to designing and building an outdoor shower area, there are several considerations that have to be made. "Remodels are harder than new construction projects because you might not have the plumbing or drains in place. Depending on the style desired, contemporary to transitional to traditional, the customer needs to select which style will best compliment their home," says Byler.

A more creative and aesthetic approach would be to have your shower built into a wall to create a more private bathing area. According to Byler, "This is a great feature that most people don't even think of when building a house. Once they experience the convenience of it, and realize this cool feature is the differentiating point of their backyard entertainment center, they see the value."



Photo courtesy of CG&S DESIGN-BUILD

With over 25 years of experience in the construction business, architect and builder, Steve Heflin, of Heflin Homes, says outdoor showers are an extra amenity that some couples like having right off of their master suite. "It's actually kind of neat to be able to look up at the sky and God while outside taking a shower." No matter the season, living in Texas allows for practically year-round use of an outdoor shower. "I personally think winter is the best time to shower outside...when it is cold out and you are beneath a nice hot shower...it can be very invigorating," reveals Heflin.

When constructing these uniquely serene bathing areas, Heflin always relies on non combustible material. "I prefer masonry

and tile for the hard surfaces. They are easier to clean and they keep bacteria from growing." To create more privacy, Heflin likes to incorporate the use of walls made from rocks or stucco. "Tiles, pebbles, flagstone, drains...all of these need to be non-porous materials," states Heflin. Stewart Davis, Senior Architect and Design Director for CG&S Design-Build of Austin, also suggests the use of such materials as Ipe or teak screens.

As far as the fixtures that work best for outdoor use are concerned, Heflin suggests more of the Old World bronze colors. "These don't show the dirt and they won't fade." "Although more expensive, there are a few outdoor branded faucets that work

ENHANCE YOUR OUTDOOR BATHING EXPERIENCE

- Buy earth-friendly soaps and shampoos that won't harm vegetation or clog drains
- Provide pampering products such as sea sponges, and after-sun lotions or gels for a spa-like experience
- Place a decorative container of towels in the sun to warm them
- Repurpose decorative metal hooks and flea market finds for use as towel racks
- Incorporate fragrant vines and flowers in the landscape around the shower
- Include a waterproof MP3 or CD Player in the area

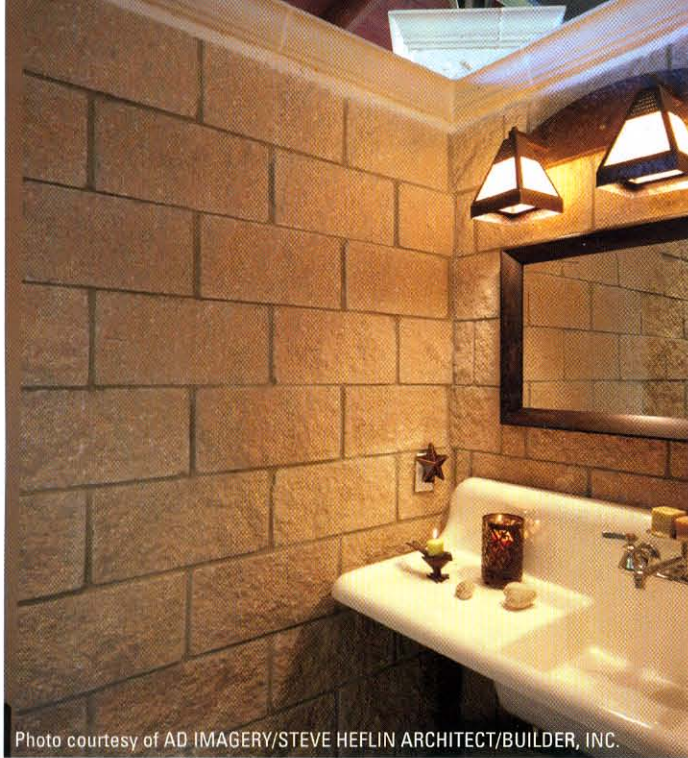


Photo courtesy of AD IMAGERY/STEVE HEFLIN ARCHITECT/BUILDER, INC.

well; usually in a chrome finish” offers Byler. Byler also suggests metered fixtures that automatically shut off after a certain length of time. “These are great if your neighbor’s kids have access to your backyard,” claims Byler. If you are concerned about freezing temperatures Byler recommends commercial “frost free” fixtures. Both Heflin and Byler have noticed that most clients prefer the larger rain-can shower heads. “AquaBrass makes a great one,” Byler claims.

The maintenance involved with outdoor showers is no more or less than an indoor shower. “You can power wash it and/or use the same cleaning products you would clean with indoors,” says Byler. However, Davis suggests draining the water in the supply lines when freezing weather is anticipated.

The plumbing requirements for outdoor showers vary depending on whether yours is strictly a swimming pool shower or more of an everyday bathing area. “Swimming pool showers usually just need cold water. Others need hot and cold water with a mixing valve. An isolation valve is needed to cut off water to the system and a low hose bibb or tub spout allows you to drain the pipes,” Davis expressed. Davis also goes on to explain that, “The drain is an interesting aspect (if there is one), as you don’t want storm water to mix with the sanitary sewer system. Different code requirements apply in different jurisdictions. Sometimes we have to cover the outdoor showers to prevent rain from getting into this drain. Where allowed, we can run the drain to the yard as grey water irrigation.”

When it comes to the cost of putting in an outdoor shower or bath, the range is wide and the sky is literally the limit. You can use an already existing wall of your house or garage and attach a shower head and a couple of faucets for \$150-\$250. On the other hand, you can spend upwards of \$15k on creating a beautifully rustic, private sanctuary.

“Chromatherapy is huge both indoors and outdoors,” says Byler. “It adds LED lights inside and can be very romantic, energetic and relaxing, based on the light color selected.” Whether you incorporate the use of candle-lit lanterns, tiki torches, or

lights strung throughout the trees, there is a certain romantic element prevalent with outdoor bathing areas. “A really cool layout is to have a master bath open to a private garden with an outdoor shower. In fair weather, you can open the indoors to the outdoors and feel natural and free,” suggests Davis.

The benefits of spending time outdoors are now spilling over into private backyard bathing havens. The bathing experience, in an environment that effortlessly incorporates the elements of sky, earth, water and nature, is one of the fastest growing design trends. A beautiful example of such a haven can be seen in the Victoria + Albert’s Ella bathtub. Ella is crafted from ENGLISH-CRAFT®, a finely ground volcanic limestone mixed with resin. Coupled with unfinished custom wood cradles, this bathtub is at once transformed into an outdoor spa that is both inviting and inspiring.

In an effort to both simplify and exhilarate one’s bathing experience, there is no better way to begin and end each day than by becoming a charter member in your very own personal club. The tranquil and spa-like ambiance surrounding you in your outdoor shower could be the most beneficial ingredient to maintaining your personal health and wellbeing. As summer nears it may be just the right time to come clean and consider turning your bathing ritual inside out. ❖

RESOURCES

Morrison Supply Company

www.Morsco.com

512.928.1110

CG&S Design-Build

www.cgsdb.com

512.444.1580

Steve Heflin Architect/Builder, Inc.

www.steveheflinhomes.com

210.492.7944