

Accessories
Under \$50 p. 30

bath makeovers

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Every Budget

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**Space-Making
Tips for Tiny Baths**

Update
a vintage tub

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haute tubs

The freestanding tub is one of the best ways to create a focal point in your bath.

Written by Carla Jordan



The Bette Davis of the plumbing fixture family, freestanding bathtubs have a flair for the dramatic, infusing a touch of Hollywood glam into the one room that most lacks it.

"Today's bath is a temple to the body and a place of refuge, so the days of the small, utilitarian bath with a nondescript, commodity tub are gone," says Larry Laslo, a New York designer.

Just as bathrooms have gained stature in the design hierarchy, so have freestanding tubs, regarded as the focal point from which the room design flows. Here are some of the reasons why they're hot.

Finish Factor

Carved from stone, or wrapped in stainless steel, copper, or porcelain, today's tubs have a decidedly modern sensibility.

Sculptural Looks

"Freestanding tubs...are a hot trend and are regarded as functional sculpture," notes Alan Hilsabeck, Jr., a certified bath designer (CBD) and member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA).

Mega Bells and Whistles

Often perched atop ultracontemporary metal or wood bases rather than traditional claw feet, these tubs also sport raised head rests, rolled arm rests, lighting, and hydro-massage control systems.

Splurge Worthy

Pricier than a standard built-in, freestanding tubs typically start at \$1,500 and can go as high as \$60,000 depending on style, finish, and features. Average price is \$3,000-\$4,000.

Shopping Tips:

Before you shop, measure the space where the tub will be placed. Freestanding tubs look best installed away from walls; allow at least 12 inches for the tub to "float" in the room. Corny as it sounds, sit in the tub to see if it's a comfy fit.

MODERN MOVES

The Como Tub (\$2,125) features crisp lines with an arched base. Order it online; it will be delivered to your curb. Clawfoot Supply, 877/682-4192; www.clawfootsupply.com



DOUBLE TAKE

Versatile design allows you to relax at either end of the Dual Bath (\$1,300). Change the look by switching the skirt for claw feet. Sunrise Specialty, 800/444-4280; www.sunrisespecialty.com



EASY ACCESS

Hang a couple of towels along the full-length chrome or brushed-nickel towel bar on the Capri Tub (\$2,895). Clawfoot Supply, 877/682-4192; www.clawfootsupply.com



LITTLE LUXURIES

The oval-shape Antigua (\$3,349) offers an optional pampering massage for a therapeutic, relaxing spa experience. MTI Whirlpools, 800/783-8827; www.mtiwhirlpools.com



IRON ADD-ON

The Victoria soaking tub (\$2,910) puts a twist on a classic look with its distinctive forged-iron claw feet and oak trim. Neptune, 888/366-7058; www.bainsneptune.com