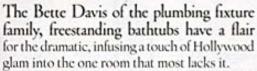




The freestanding tub is one of the best ways to create a focal point in your bath.

Written by Carla Jordan



"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.



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

