Distributors in the 21st century face unprecedented challenges as intertwined changes in society and technology upend traditional ways of doing business. We discuss these challenges with Bill Zielinski of Chicago Tube & Iron, Ernie Costermans of F.W. Webb and A.J. Benton of Smardan Supply, who provide insight into their companies’ plans to turn challenges into opportunities. Page 24.

**Duluth, Ga.** — With its beginnings in 1817 as an earthenware manufacturer in the Black Forest of Baden-Württemberg, later part of southwestern Germany, Duravit marks its 200th anniversary this year. To help celebrate this milestone, Duravit CEO Frank Richter sat down and reflected on the company’s history and what is to come from them in the future.

On the company’s history:
“Early on in the company’s history, Duravit started out as a ceramics specialist, before going on to become a manufacturer of sanitary ware products. In the late 1980s, Duravit worked with Dieter Sieger to present its first designer series for the bathroom, Giamo. Yet Giamo was only the beginning, and the first complete designer bathroom, created with Philippe Starck, revolutionized the sanitary industry when it was launched in 1994. Today, numerous internationally renowned designers are working for Duravit.”

On Duravit’s DNA:
“Our aspiration is to make designer bathrooms come alive. This is guaranteed by highest quality, original design and... (Turn to 200 years... page 88)
DECORATIVE TRENDS

Great Bath Design is Always in Style

Clean lines and art deco influences are key themes.

Trends may come and go, but great design is in perpetual demand. This is especially true in the luxury bath industry where exceptional design is both expected and sought-after. Smart consumers and designers recognize their investment in high quality, well-thought-out products offer the best return in long-term value and enjoyment. They know that “great design” refers to much more than outward aesthetics, and also includes engineering techniques, materials and functionality. Fortunately, the industry is teeming with an amazingly diverse array of products that exemplify the best elements of art deco influence. Many will likely go on to receive awards and accolades at design shows throughout the world. Here’s a look at some of the timeless new products in the bath market that will never go out of style.

The Florin Collection of bath fixtures from Victoria + Albert perfectly captures the essence of art deco design with subtle fan detail on the tap handles. Crafted in England using traditional techniques and the newest materials, the collection includes five distinctive pieces for the basin, bath and shower, making it easy to coordinate the bathroom for a beautifully cohesive look. Now available in Unlacquered Brass. www.vando-baths.com

Victoria + Albert Florin Collection

furnitureguild.com

Cinatonic’s B3004 vessel faucet has a beautifully simple silhouette that gives little indication of the impressive technology hidden from view. The patented iSense system allows for effortless hands-free operation with five infrared sensors that control more than 13 functions, from temperature to water flow as well as three user-defined presets. With an intermittent water flow and automatic shutoff feature, the B3004 is a smart choice for up to 70 percent in water savings as well as an elegant addition to any bathroom or powder room. www.cinatonic.com

Cinatonic B3004 vessel faucet

BainUltra’s new Nokori Oval 6737 is an oval-shaped iteration of a geometric line of freestanding baths that represents the epitome of contemporary elegance. The exterior of the tub is notable for its absence of ornamentation, while the interior has been smartly designed to accommodate two

BainUltra Nokori Oval 6737
bathers in total comfort. Measuring 67 inches by 37 inches by 24 inches, the tub holds an impressive 66 gallons of water for an immersive soak. Crafted exclusively of durable white acrylic, the tub has a seamless appearance and a beautiful made-to-last finish in a choice of glossy or UltraVelour; a new matte finish exclusive to BainUltra. www.bainultra.com

Atlas Homewares now offers fabulous new finish options on some of its most sought-after bath accessory collections. French Gold is the latest “it girl” of the color world, and it is taking center stage with a sophisticated shine. Also new is the elegant Polished Nickel finish with a gleam and shine that is understated, but dramatic. Both new finishes are now available on the Wall-inspired Axel Collection: the refined vintage style of the Gratitude Collection, the simple yet geometric Parker Collection, and the Solange where rounded angles and exposed bolts create a modern edge. All are offered in previously available Polished Chrome and Brushed Nickel as well, and come in a variety of formats, including hooks, towel bars and racks, hand towel holders and paper towel holders. www.atlashomewares.com

Designed to sit flush on the wall, QuickDrain introduces WallDrain, this ingenious design creates a sleek and unobtrusive look where the shower drain is almost invisible. As the first American-made wall drain of its kind, it features a 316L stainless steel body with the company’s patented Sure Flow System that leaves no standing water in the drain body, and is the easiest way to achieve a true curbless shower. WallDrain provides total water evacuation, eliminating hard water deposits, odor and debris in the drain. www.quickdrainusa.com

Black is the ultimate neutral—it goes with everything and always looks fabulous. Nostalgic Warehouse is putting this versatile color on center stage with its Black Porcelain Knobs. With a glossy shine and dark-as-midnight hue, these stunning knobs are dramatic on their own, and even more so when paired with a beautifully finished rosette or backplate. The Black Porcelain Knobs are kiln-fired and mounted on a solid-forged brass backplate for exceptional durability. With 12 different plate and rosette options to choose from, customers have the opportunity to create a custom look to suit their design style. Options include long backplates with vintage-inspired scrolls or Art Deco engravings; traditional rosettes with intricate rope detailing; and short backplates with bold, geometric shapes. Further customization is available by choosing one of eight lovely finishes, including Antique Brass, Antique Pewter, Bright Chrome, Oil-Rubbed Bronze, Polished Brass, Satin Nickel, Timeless Bronze and Unlacquered Brass. www.nostalgicwarehouse.com

Sometimes a lack of space leads to creative space-saving solutions: the Bewdley towel warmer by The Sterlingham Co. Ltd. is a perfect example. This compact-yet-stylish rack has been cleverly engineered to fit neatly in tight spaces where it serves the practical-yet-luxurious function of providing freshly warmed towels. It’s just right for strategic placement on a narrow wall next to a shower or bath. The standard size has a wall mount diameter of 88 inches and tubes with a 32-inch diameter, but as with all Sterlingham towel warmers the dimensions can be customized to suit each customer’s needs. Standard finish options are polished brass, polished chrome, polished or matte nickel, antique gold, copper and bronze. Featuring Sterlingham’s patented low-energy design, the Bewdley’s exceptional quality and elegance makes it a
DECORATIVE TRENDS

beautifully practical accent in any décor. www.sterlingham.co.uk
With a legacy of creating extraordinary bath products for
company's continuing commitment to quality, service and customization. An updated logo, new brochure, and website designs were
created to inspire loyal customers while engaging a new generation of buyers looking for the highest standards when selecting luxury bath products. www.mtibaths.com
Victoria + Albert chose the perfect location to showcase art

MTI bath rebranding

nearly 30 years, MTI bath has announced a rebranding that reflects the company's position in the luxury market. The new brand progression appeals to customers with an appreciation for high design, as well as showcasing the
deco influences in bath design with their Road Show Event at the Lab Miami, located in the Wynwood Arts District. This former warehouse district has reinvented itself as the art and design mecca of South Florida home interior design studios, art galleries, shops,

Victoria + Alberts Road Show Event at the Lab Miami, located in the Wynwood Arts District, showcased art deco influences in bath design.

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eclectic bars and one of the largest open-air street-art installations in the world. Victoria + Albert brought their latest introductions along with an evening of snacks, cocktails and fun directly to some of the most influential design-ers and showrooms in the area. Headlining the products on display was the new Eldon bath, designed by leading British Architecture and Interior Design Studio, Conran + Partners. The contemporary back-to-wall design is endowed with the curvaceous lines of a freestanding bath but utilizes the smaller footprint of a built in tub.

www.vanlabaths.com

Considering all the examples listed here, it's obvious that innovation and a commitment to quality bring integral values in the luxury bath industry. Customers benefit from these values and reward those companies and manufacturers with impressive brand loyalty. As industry members continue to seek new inspiration and improved methodologies, we look forward to seeing what heights of design standards they will reach in the months and years to come.

Linda Jennings is President of Jennings & Company, a public relations agency specializing in the decorative plumbing and luxury hardware industry. For more than 20 years, she has worked with significant editors and journalists in the consumer home market, identifying trends and providing newsworthy products. Jennings can be reached at lindajenningsandcompany.com.