

# NEWSLEAK

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# 2011

MOTHER NATURE: BATHROOM  
TRENDS MOVING TOWARDS  
NATURAL LIGHT


2011 COULD BE A COMEBACK  
YEAR FOR THE LUXURY  
PLUMBING INDUSTRY

DESIGN TRENDS AND  
CONSUMER PREFERENCES  
CONTINUE TO CHANGE

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# 2011

## Brings New and Inspiring Kitchen and Bath Trends

By Linda Jennings

**W**ith the beginning of a new year upon us, now is a good time to think about new sources of design inspiration and the latest trends in the kitchen and bath industry. The rules have changed somewhat from years past when consumers were eager to outfit their homes in the latest “must have” look of the moment.

In today’s economy, savvy homeowners are thinking carefully before spending their dollars and looking for fresh yet smart ideas that will enhance the value, beauty and enjoyment of their homes. As an industry professional, you know that staying abreast of the hottest design trends is crucial in positioning your business to take advantage of rising consumer demand. You also understand the importance of presenting these trends to your customers in a way that highlights their value and longevity. Let’s take a look at the cutting-edge trends that are sure to make 2011 a year to remember.

### Out with the Old; In with the New



Trends come and go as old stand-bys are replaced with exciting new options. In the bathroom, built-in tubs have seen their day. Freestanding tubs are the new standard as consumers re-discover the elegance and comfort of these vintage-inspired tubs. Modern manufacturers create freestanding tubs in a wide variety of sizes and styles, some paying homage to the traditional claw-foot design while others decidedly contemporary. For example, the Toulouse tub by Victoria & Albert was inspired by the French double-ended

bateau baths from the 1860s and offers a classic elegance that can easily accommodate two bathers. The Deauville tub, also by Victoria & Albert, has a more modern sensibility with chunky wooden feet and European flair. Both are crafted from the company's signature volcanic limestone mix that is easy to care for and warm to the touch.

Traditional showers have undergone a metamorphosis with a major movement towards frameless shower enclosures. Metal-framed showers tend to be clunky in design and difficult to clean. Frameless showers look significantly sleeker and offer greater design flexibility. The Giada collection from Novellini comes in a variety of configurations to suit any bathroom space plan, including corner cubicles, freestanding panels, neo-angles or recessed designs. Another trend in shower design is the new classics, reminiscent of fine European hotels and timeless, vintage-inspired design. Sunrise Specialty is aligned with this trend with a complete line of showers, faucets and tub fillers that feature the added safety of temperature control.



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Standard sinks are also on the "out" list for both kitchens and baths. Trendy consumers are taking full advantage of fashion-forward options offered by manufacturers such as Diamond Spas. Its copper, trough skirted sink is surprisingly durable, adds warmth and style to the kitchen and is generously sized to keep up with the largest of modern families. For the bathroom, Diamond Spas offers a contemporary oval sink in sustainable stainless steel with a bowed front that mimics the design of a coordinating tub.

### Glass - A Rising Star



Textured glass is appearing everywhere, from countertops to tabletops, from backsplashes to floor tiles. It offers a fresh, shimmering glimpse into a new wave of sophisticated design possibilities. Heavy granites and dark finishes are being replaced with products that are more transparent and reflective. The trend here is towards light — clear finishes, whites, metallics — all coming together to create a sparkle that is airy and refreshing. Surprisingly durable and

maintenance-free, glass is one of the most in-demand materials for kitchen countertops. ThinkGlass uses eco-friendly 100 percent recyclable glass to create its custom pieces, including an amazing variety of textures and colors that ensures each glass creation is a true work of art.

### Sustainable Stainless



Another timeless trend in 2011 is stainless steel as consumers are looking for sustainable options that will add lasting value to their home.

Lasertron is ahead of this trend with their artist-designed etched stainless steel cabinetry doors. The innovative collection provides a new creative outlet for artists and designers alike, taking art off the wall and blending it into cabinetry for interest and intrigue. Send in a favorite painting or graphic, and the company

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will custom-etch the signature work of art onto any selection of stainless steel cabinetry door fronts. The exciting new series has made its debut featuring the talents of renowned abstract artist Sharon Westbrook, recognized and collected worldwide, featured on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and in *Florida Architecture* magazine.

## Haute Hardware



In 2011, it's all about the details and decorative hardware continues to evolve with collections that add instant style and classic good looks for year to enjoy. Like Atlas Homewares' new Browning and Shelley collections — both named after England's most famous poets. They feature three pieces — a knob and two sizes of pulls and are available in brushed or polished nickel and Venetian bronze.

Ashley Norton has unveiled a new Pocket Door Hardware that is easy-to-operate. Crafted of solid bronze, it is available in dark bronze, light bronze, matte black or white bronze finishes.

Reveal Designs has a new hardware collection honoring the architectural legacy of legendary architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Born out of a partnership between Reveal Designs and the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, the new Taliesin Design™ Hardware Collection fuses wood in metal in bold geometric shapes.

## Seeing Double



Why have just one when you can have two? Consumers are expanding their expectation for double sinks in the master bath to include double vanities, as well as matching freestanding tubs. The idea of two vanities just makes sense — twice the storage, twice the personal space — but the concept of double baths is a new idea that is rapidly gaining ground. Victoria & Albert set the stage with its side-by-side Amalfi bathtubs. Having two tubs in a single bathroom is both luxurious and practical. Not only does it make a striking visual statement and add symmetry to the space, it also creates a private retreat where couples can bathe together in comfort without having to take turns or compromise.

## Be Well



One unhappy trend of our times is our tendency to work harder and longer without concern for our health or stress levels. Fortunately, a growing awareness of wellness is counteracting this with a line of products for the bathroom that creates a spa-like retreat using personalized therapies. From soaking tubs and air baths to aromatherapy and steam showers, consumers are appreciating the technology that allows them to bring rejuvenating treatments into the privacy of their own home. Bain Ultra's Vedana system is the first product of its kind to focus on wellness. It doesn't dispense water in any form, but instead is a care center that provides five unique therapies designed to help people release stress and find their inner calm. More and more companies are joining this exciting trend to re-think the bathroom from a grooming center to a space devoted to peace and wellbeing. ●



**Linda Jennings** is president of Jennings & Company — a public relations, advertising and marketing agency, specializing exclusively in the decorative plumbing and luxury hardware industry. Over a 20-year tenure, she has worked with the most significant editors and journalists in the consumer home market, identifying trends and providing newsworthy products.