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A Family Celebration

J. Lorber, a family-owned and operated business with an independent spirit, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Many things have changed over the last century, but one thing at J. Lorber that has not is "service the old fashioned way." Three generations take part in the celebration. From left to right is Steven Lorber, Michael Lorber, and seated is Ed Lorber. Story starts on page 46.

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Ferguson Expands its Reach

Ferguson announces four acquisitions that will grow its commercial and residential business in Louisiana, Kentucky and California: Appliance Distributors, Brock-McVey, The Lighting Design Center and Wright Plumbing Supply

Appliance Distributors is a Baton Rouge-based appliance showroom serving homeowners, contractors, builders and kitchen designers in south Louisiana and eastern Mississippi. The company will provide a brick and mortar

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Finding that One Perfect Piece

The secret to a memorable design space is accenting simple décor with something fabulous.

Today's home design trends are all about simplification — clean lines, open spaces, absence of clutter. Leaders in the kitchen and bath industry play into this trend with an array of new products that embrace minimalism and push beyond to offer personalization and well-being options. Top designers have a knack for creating a simplified design, then adding a pop of color or drama to make the space truly exceptional and a reflection of the homeowner's personality. Pulling this off is dependent on having a well-thought-out design plan and innovative products offering substantial wow factor.

Current trends lean toward a monotone design palette with the addition of one fabulous fixture that makes the space memorable. The atmosphere of the room can be changed by adding just the right product perfectly positioned within a simple setting. What sets this trend apart are products featuring exquisite detailing grounded in fine craftsmanship for a look guaranteed to make a lasting impression. Imagine custom-colored vanities, concealed showers, stylish hardware and sculptural tubs filled with multiple wellness therapies. Here's a closer look at some newly discovered products to add that magical touch.

Lenova makes a powerful design statement with its new TKO Touch

Busy cooks will love Lenova's TKO Touch Kitchen Faucet for its easy operation that allows water to flow with a simple tap on the body of the faucet. This design helps keep the single-lever handle clean and promotes a more sanitary kitchen environment. Photo credit: Lenova



Kitchen Faucet. Its elegant yet contemporary profile is sleek and sophisticated with an arched neck and a pull-down sprayer. Busy cooks will love its easy operation that allows water to flow with a simple tap on the body of the faucet. This design helps keep the single-lever handle clean and promotes a more sanitary kitchen environment.

Constructed of high-quality, lead-free brass, this faucet includes smart options such as automatic shut-off and integrated sensors with LED lights to indicate water temperature. The TKO is available in brushed nickel or polished chrome and is coated with a state-of-the-art PVD finish to withstand years of use while still looking new.

The Furniture Guild lets customers get creative with color when it comes to beautiful bathroom vanities. Envision a pop of cobalt blue in an all-white bath or a sunny yellow to help brighten a dark space. In addition to its variety of finish options (including wood, textures, high gloss, automotive and matte), it offers custom colors to match any hue in the rainbow — on every vanity they make.

Choose from traditional designs with intricate carvings, transitional styles that blend modern and clas-



The Furniture Guild Josie lets customers get creative with color when it comes to beautiful bathroom vanities. It offers custom colors to match any hue in the rainbow - on every vanity they make. Photo credit: The Furniture Guild

sic influences, or sleek modern units with bold lines and sculptural flair. The Furniture Guild can match colors for customers who want to complement an existing décor or create a new shade as subtle or vibrant as desired.

Create a dramatic focal point in the kitchen with the stunning Fiamma Fireclay sink by Ruvati. Handcrafted in Italy using traditional techniques, this sink embodies an elevated version of modern farmhouse style with an apron-front design and generous proportions to accommodate the demands of a busy kitchen. Ruvati offers a design



The Fiamma Fireclay sink by Ruvati, handcrafted in Italy, has an apron-front design and generous proportions. A reversible option allows the choice of a smooth flat finish or a decorative fluted motif. Photo credit: Ruvati



MTI Baths delivers five spa-inspired types of hydrotherapy experience on its more than 200 different tub models, allowing customers to tailor their bath to suit their style and therapy needs. Photo credit: MTI Baths



BY LINDA JENNINGS
Kitchen & bath specialist

A range of colors provides further opportunity to make a design statement, with options including Horizon Gray and Glossy Black, as well as a new distressed finish in white or soft blue that adds a pleasing aged look for a true farmhouse feel. The Fiamma sink is crafted from naturally white clay fired at over 2,900° F in a proprietary process that fuses the clay to an enamel surface resistant to chips, cracks and scratches.

MTI Baths can turn an ordinary bathroom retreat into a wellness retreat with its line of freestanding tubs and hydrotherapy options. It delivers five spa-inspired types of hydrotherapy experience — the traditional soaking bath, the whirlpool bath, the air bath, the gen-

PLUMBING & SHOWROOMS



Icera's redesigned ultra-high-efficiency Palermo II 1.0 toilet has a skirted design for a clean look and no visible plumbing. It features the EcoQUATTRO flushing system and a comfortable chair-height bowl. Photo credit: Icera

Icera brings a minimalist vibe to the bathroom with its redesigned Palermo II 1.0 toilet. Using just one gallon of water per flush, this ultra-high-efficiency toilet helps conserve water while looking super-stylish. Its modern exterior has a skirted design for a clean look and no visible plumbing. The chair-height bowl is compact and elongated for comfort, while its EcoQUATTRO flushing system maximizes its performance using gravity-assisted flushes.

tly flowing Stream Bath, and a combination of an air bath and whirlpool. MTI offers more than 200 different tub models, allowing customers to tailor their bath to suit their style and therapy needs.

One of its latest therapy innovations is Microbubbles, which saturates the water with dissolved oxygen and uses tiny bubbles to exfoliate and moisturize the skin. Its popular thermal therapy uses Radiance to heat the tub structure from within and provide heat to the neck, shoulders and back. Other popular options include the Stereo H2O audio system that allows music to travel through bath water; a chromatherapy option using LED lighting and an aromatherapy system that releases scented air bubbles through the water.

The Palermo is crafted of vitreous china and is available in a white or balsa glaze with a choice of five beautiful metal finishes on the tank lever hardware. This model includes a Silent-Close quick-release seat cover and has been factory flush-tested to ensure optimum performance.

Introduce a sense of fun and whimsy to a simple aesthetic with the Oskar Collection from Atlas Homewares. This eclectic line features circular knobs with a chic grooved border and long pulls with round bases to create a versatile look. Oskar is a perfect choice for a sleek vanity in a contemporary bathroom, but it is equally at home in a vintage-inspired space with period furnishings.

Crafted from the highest quality metals with meticulous attention

The Oskar Collection from Atlas Homewares features circular knobs with a chic grooved border and long pulls with round bases to create a versatile look. Photo credit: Atlas Homewares



to detail, the Oskar Collection is available in a range of sizes from 3 3/4 inches up to an impressive 12 inches. There are six finish options to choose from: warm brass, slate, polished chrome, matte black, brushed nickel and polished nickel.

Victoria + Albert has a new collection of concealed shower sets that not only hide pipework neatly behind shower walls but also offer a mix-and-match fluidity, allowing consumers to choose elements amongst four design styles. From modern to traditional to Art Deco, each set is beautiful on its own and pairs seamlessly with the other collections to create a clean, cohesive look.

The sets include a bath spout, handheld shower, fixed showerhead and a two-way diverter with concealed valve and are available in four finishes. Known for its luxurious freestanding tubs, Victoria + Albert added the concealed shower sets to its lineup in response to consumer interest and the rising popularity of a minimalist look in the bathroom.

After perusing all the examples

showcased here, it's easy to see adding sophistication and wellness is a trend that's here to stay. People like to make a statement without spending a fortune. As leaders in the kitchen and bath trade have discovered, the key is thoughtfully designed products that offer something extra. It's about taking the luxuries and making them work for the betterment of the customers' lives.

I invite you to check out the products shown here on the following websites:

- Atlas Homewares
www.atlastothetrade.com
- The Furniture Guild
www.thefurnitureguild.com
- Icera
www.iceracusa.com
- Lenova
www.lenovasinks.com
- MTI Baths
www.mtibaths.com
- Ruvati
www.ruvati.com
- Victoria + Albert
www.vandabaths.com



Victoria + Albert has a new collection of concealed shower sets that not only hide pipework neatly behind shower walls but also offer four mix-and-match design styles. Photo credit: Victoria + Albert

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 linda@jenningsandcompany.com.

A Success Story 30 Years in the Making *MTI Baths celebrates a milestone anniversary.*

BY LINDA JENNINGS

In 1988, a gallon of gasoline cost 91 cents. George Michael was at the top of the music charts, and George H.W. Bush presided in the White House. And in Sugar Hill, Ga., a machinist with an entrepreneurial heart named J.C. Henry started a company with the goal of creating the best whirlpool tubs on the market. His determination led to the development of innovative technology still in use today and gave rise to the success story that is MTI Baths. In August, MTI Baths proudly celebrated its 30th anniversary.

From its humble beginnings to today's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, MTI Baths has had an unerring focus on excellence that

has influenced everything it does — from design innovation to craftsmanship to customer service.

• **Quality and Craftsmanship.**

With a reputation for meticulous craftsmanship, the MTI brand was built on the highest standards of excellence. Each tub is made to order and handcrafted in the United States. Its production facility is filled with skilled people with extraordinary talents. Although each tub is manufactured only after the order is placed, MTI still has the shortest lead times in the industry.

"What sets us apart is high design but also the high quality of our product," says Russell Adams, president and chief design officer. "We want to build products that will last for years to come." MTI offers a product line with hundreds of tubs in every shape

and style as well as shower bases, sinks, counter-sinks, vanity sinks and genuine teak accessories.

• **The Importance of Design.** MTI tubs are works of art, designed to be both comfortable and beautiful. The design process is a lengthy one that includes much planning and teamwork. "The one big change I've seen in our industry has been the change from plumbers making every single decision to decisions being design-based," CEO Kathy Adams explains.

The company has successfully collaborated over the years with leading artists, sculptors and designers to create extraordinary products. MTI has won more than its share of the industry's most prestigious honors during the past three decades, including numerous Good Design and ICONIC awards, and

top accolades from International Design Excellence Awards, Kitchen & Bath Business, Interior Design Magazine, European Product Design Awards and many others.

• **Emphasis on Wellness.** Wellness viewed holistically is of great interest and importance for many people today. Products must be beautiful and therapies state-of-the-art, but all must be therapeutic in their function. While the desire for holistic wellness is a popular trend today, it has been MTI's motivation and purpose for decades.

Over the years MTI developed a full complement of hydro and sensory therapies to provide customers with a broad selection of choices to help them in their pursuit of holistic wellness. The company's offerings include the traditional soaking bath, the Stream Bath for the ultimate soaker, the deep-tissue massage of the whirlpool bath, the relaxing air bath, or a combination of air and whirlpool therapies. MTI continues to imagine and deliver therapy options to enhance wellness and create a luxurious spa-inspired bathing experience.

• **Sharing the MTI Experience.**

MTI takes pride in the quality of its product line and knows that the

best way for people to truly appreciate what it offers is to experience it first-hand. Toward that end, it opened the Woodward Mill House in 2012 as a hospitality center to host designers, reps, distributors and media, and allow them to immerse themselves in some of the company's most popular products. Located in Sugar Hill, near the pro-

duction facility and showroom, the facility includes five luxurious suites, each outfitted with MTI bathtubs as well as shower bases, sinks, counter-sinks and vanity sinks.

The house has been an effective sales tool. "People sell what they're comfortable with and what they think is best for their customers," Adams says. "So, we bring them to this house to spend the night, to experience our products and be able to better communicate it to their customers."

• **Superior Service.** Customer service is a shared passion among MTI employees. Their goal is to make every single customer feel important, regardless of the size of the account. All calls to their service center are answered by real people



MTI Baths CEO Kathy Adams notes that the industry has switched from the plumber making product decisions to selections now being more design-based.

who are happy to answer questions or help with any potential issues, both before and after the sale. They translate their customer-focused orientation to vendors and suppliers, too, wanting every entity's transactions with the company to be as smooth and hassle-free as possible.

• **Employee-Centric Culture.** When J.C. Henry retired in 2002, he offered the company to his employees. Today, MTI is an employee-owned business, a rare feat in the corporate world. It has nearly 115 employee-owners who have a personal and financial stake in the company's continued success. "Employee ownership allows people to understand that when they make a contribution of working hard and doing their best, it benefits them as well as the company," Adams notes. "We try to listen carefully. We listen, of course, to our customers, and we listen to our vendors but, most importantly, we listen to our employees."

MTI, repeatedly recognized as a top workplace by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, employs many families and has numerous employees who have been with the manufacturer for more than 10 years. The company is dedicated to "the 3 Rs of MTI" — respect, responsibility and resourcefulness — and carefully curates a corporate culture that rewards creativity, flexibility and passion.

MTI can trace its roots to the early days of the whirlpool tub. In 2003, MTI became the first tub manufacturer to offer a lifetime warranty, still the most comprehensive in the industry. Over the decades, the company has obtained multiple



new patents, earned well over 100 awards for new products, design excellence and product innovations, and has been featured countless times on popular TV programs. ●

Each MTI tub is made to order and handcrafted in the United States. Although each tub is manufactured only after the order is placed, the manufacturer still has the shortest lead times in the industry.

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