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DESIGN FOCUS

A HAVEN WITHIN THE HOME

There has never been a better time to turn a bathroom into a sanctuary – these products and projects show how to get started

WORDS BY KARINE MONIÉ

Along with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic came new ways of life. By obligation and by choice, people are spending more time at home to cook, entertain, learn and work. In such a changing and stressful environment, one thing has become essential: finding how to rest and recharge. And what better place to do so than in your home's most private space? Bathrooms should be optimised and reflect a true sense of peace in a stylish atmosphere dedicated to wellness. This requires imagination and creativity, but also a high dose of design and innovation. Several brands and designers understand this well, and are leading the way with new concepts that are here to stay.





Medameda tap by Zuchetti.

Photography by Delfino Sisto Legnani.

The best of tech

It can seem that technology is at the opposite end of the spectrum to nature. The two are sometimes, however, much more complementary than they seem, and innovation is increasingly more synonymous with sustainability. Newly launched for Milan Design City 2021 in the renovated Antonio Lupi showroom, the freestanding 024 sink – made of recycled, leftover pieces of Carrara marble or Nero Marquina, glued together by resin in a contrasting colour – is a good example. New developments in bathroom design are also coming, along with sophisticated products – such as the *Apollo* showerhead designed by Brian Sironi for Antonio Lupi that brings together water and light.

New products by the Zucchetti and Kos brands earned four Red Dot Awards for Product Design 2021 in the bathroom category: the *Helm* and *Medameda* tap series designed respectively by David Lopez Quincoces and Alberto and Francesco Meda; the *Beam* collection designed by Visibility – which includes a washbasin made of Biobased Cristalplant® that was named ‘Red Dot: Best of the Best’ for being the most innovative product; and the *Rise* collection by creative duo Zaven.



024 sink from Antonio Lupi.



Apollo by Brian Sironi for Antonio Lupi.

Equally innovative, and combining water, steam, lighting and aroma, is the Kohler *Stillness* bath – part of the brand’s smart home products that will be available at the end of 2021 – which offers an invitation to pause and indulge one’s body and mind.

Embracing today’s reality is the new informative and inspirational digital platform Grohe X, which enables visitors to the hub to create their own experience and look for the perfect state-of-the-art product innovations, to imagine what their dream bathroom could look like before making it a reality.

Wabi-sabi inspiration

The Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi is the art of finding beauty in nature's imperfections. Design-wise it can be translated into Zen spaces with natural materials and textures, which will softly develop patina over time. The architects from US-based Thomas Melhorn have echoed this approach in their latest project, a house built on the dunes of the Atlantic Ocean in Florida. "All great vacation homes have these moments that reside in the memory, drawing us back time and time again," says co-founder Christian Thomas. "It is these feelings, smells and tastes that return unexpectedly from time to time and bring a soft smile to our faces. This particular home was intended to conjure just these feelings. It was important to us to catalogue the history of the house by employing finishes that were naturally occurring and would age gracefully, leaving the marks of previous generations. We wanted to allow space for the materials to develop their own voice and aesthetic over the life of the house."

In the bathroom, this aesthetic was achieved by fuming the oak flooring, which alters the colour of the

wood. The walls were clad in locally sourced cypress boards that have been treated with a lime wash, and a soft wax was applied to the hand-burnished plaster ceiling. "These materials come together in concert to create a feeling of a timeless house on the ocean," says Thomas. Giving priority to everything that is natural – from textures to colours – is a way to reconnect us with our surroundings in a subtle way.



Bathroom in Florida home designed by Thomas Melhorn.

Photo by Nicole Franzen

Dare to be bold

“In the bustle of grey everyday life in big cities, you could go into your bathroom and feel like you are on the seashore or in the jungle, surrounded by the aroma of freshness,” Dmitry Reutov, founder of Reutov Design says of the fantasy-like New York apartment he designed. “That is why I used bright shades of natural greens combined with cement in natural dyes and gradient-painted concrete. There is no white, in order to create a complete immersion into another world. When entering, it doesn’t seem to be a bathroom, but there is this immediate desire to come here again and again, to feel the unity between nature and design.”

Giving energy and happiness through colour in bathrooms is something that interior designer Noé Prades has also mastered. In the Barcelona home he created for an artistic couple, a pink bathroom – with Bathco sinks, Nuura lighting and Noé Prades Studio mirrors – is one of the stars of the show. With curved shapes expressing femininity, the bespoke tiles accentuate the light and the daring hue on the walls and floors.

Visually powerful, vibrant colours are a way to set the tone for a space; they have the ability to fully transform it. These two projects

showcase how to create balance through the use of contrasting yet complementary materials, and demonstrate how small spaces like bathrooms are ideal for taking risks with colour. Young and talented designers from different parts of the world are proving it: A new trend is born, and it’s encouraging people to go bold. ■



Bathroom in Barcelona home designed by Noé Prades.