

Ceramic and glass surfaces are durable and easy to maintain.



01 The water feature

Need a makeover for your bathroom? Fresh ideas here!

The bathroom might be the smallest room in the house, but on average, we spent 210 minutes per week in it — that's a stunning 10,920 minutes per year! Since you are spending this much time in there, wouldn't it make sense to make sure that it's well-designed? So how do you start?

QUICK FACELIFT If your bathroom needs sprucing up, a quick facelift should work: Give the walls a fresh coat of paint or create a sense of space by adding a large mirror or two; install hidden or strip lighting, or cantilevered cabinets and storage. Add plants or hang framed pictures for a themed look — a dramatic change for little money and labour.

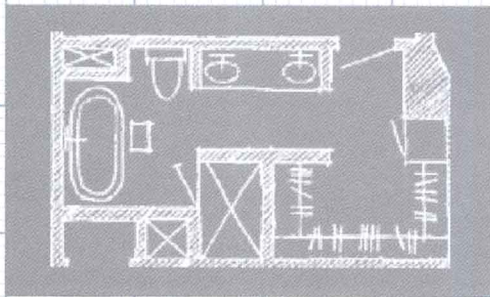
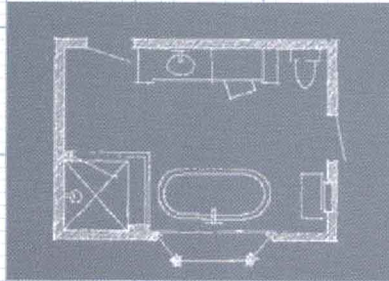
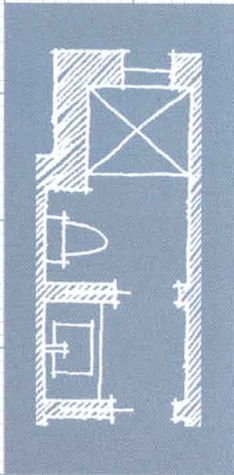
CAREFUL PLANNING Bathroom remodelling, no matter how minimal the

changes, needs careful planning. Simple changes to the existing layout of a small bathroom can make it function and feel like a larger one. Flatowners have moved basins and vanity areas outside conventional bathrooms to conserve space. Although an *en suite* may be a must for many owners, others — especially those who have bought older apartments — may prefer to keep the lavatory and bath areas separate for practical reasons.

ASSESS YOUR NEEDS Is the layout and space awkward in your bathroom? Do you need his-and-hers sinks and counters? Whatever it is, don't rush to re-work floor plans or shop for fixtures and accessories; take your time to plan out your bathroom to satisfy all your needs. The more thorough and specific you are, the more satisfying the results will be.



Art, anyone?



02 Three basic layouts

When deciding where to place your fixtures, think about how they are used and in what order, with regards to your bath routine.

1 ONE-WALL LAYOUT
The one-wall layout is the simplest and most inexpensive. Plumbing costs are minimised if the pipes are due for an overhaul. However, design possibilities are limited with a one-wall layout, and floor space may not be used efficiently. This

layout works best with narrow bathrooms.

2 TWO-WALL LAYOUTS
Two-wall layouts offer more floor area and more storage space can be created around the sink. In a shorter but wider bathroom space, a gallery configuration might work better than an L-shaped one.

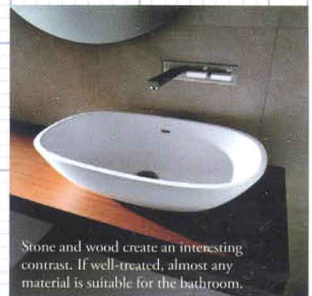
3 THREE-WALL LAYOUTS
This layout offers the most design flexibility, but three-wall layouts, or U-shaped ones, are a luxury that will only work for big bathrooms — it also involves more complex plumbing.

TIP TRICKS TO STICK TO YOUR BUDGET
Wants and needs must always be balanced. Some homeowners believe that updating a bathroom can instantly make a home more marketable. Spend just enough on a cosmetic facelift to boost the value of your home, but indulge yourself a little more when planning for your future home. Here are some tips to stretch your dollar.

1 Pick materials from ready-available stocks instead of buying from speciality orders. In the case of tiles, European-designed ones may cost more than twice that of regional or locally-produced ones.

2 Think again if you can afford or want to splurge on luxury items like a whirlpool tub, an Italian marble vanity top, or high-end deluxe shower hardware. Shop for more affordable alternatives and look out for end-of-season clearances or warehouse sales.

3 If possible, design your plans around standard-sized fixtures such as toilets, shower stalls and tubs. The money you save from not customising these items can be better used elsewhere.



Stone and wood create an interesting contrast. If well-treated, almost any material is suitable for the bathroom.

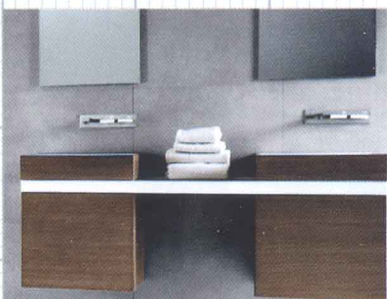
Unconventional vanity designs from Falper can inspire unusual ideas.



VANITY UNIT The vanity is the centrepiece of the bathroom and it should be big in both form and function. It commonly includes a mirror or cabinet above the sink or basin, space around the sink, and storage solutions beneath. Choose a built-in or modular vanity unit. Get a store-ready system or work out with your contractor or ID what wetworks or carpentry items to customise and build.

03 The vanity zone

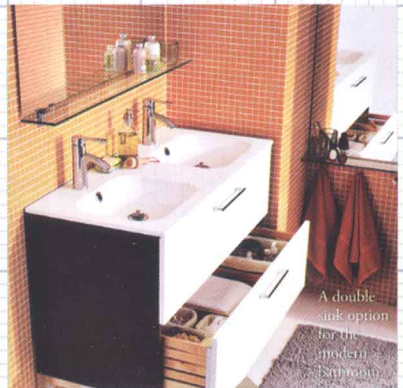
Bathroom vanities not only house the sink and offer storage, they also set the mood and embody the spirit of your design scheme or décor.



His-and-hers wall-hung Falper sinks are big space savers.

SURFACE The surface treatment should be strong and smooth. Tiles are cheaper than solid surface tops or even granite or marble. Customised and built-in options can also include one-piece constructions with curved backsplashes and a pre-moulded bowl. If you can afford them, continuous surfaces will ease cleaning and prevent dirt accumulating in the grooves. A large customised sink allows you to handwash or soak laundry in it, too.

MATERIAL What materials you choose for your vanity system should depend on your washing habits and how distinct your wet and dry areas of the bathroom are. If you wash the bathroom at least twice a week, a wall-to-wall brick-and-tile vanity top may be ideal. Avoid wood if your bathroom is hardly dry. Your contractor can help create a cement-frame vanity with wooden doors. These doors can be easily replaced when damaged.



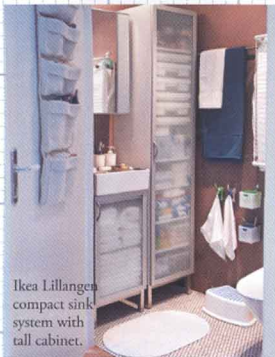
A double-sink option for the modern bathroom.

PRICING More affordable options include store-ready modular systems. They are inexpensive but give you less options in terms of materials. Instead of marble, hardwood or enamel-glazed sinks, you may have to settle for particleboard, foil and a basic ceramic sink. One important thing to check would be the length and height of the vanity. Make sure you measure your space carefully and remember to take note if the height is too low for adults or too high for kids.

The DuPont Corian Illumination series features translucent surfaces in candy colours.

Expert Advice

STORAGE TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A CLUTTER-FREE VANITY ZONE



Ikea Lillangen compact sink system with tall cabinet.

1 Throw away what you don't need, especially sample bottles, sachets and toiletries you have not used for a year or more.

2 If you like how your wall-hung or pedestal sink looks, you can choose to keep your toiletry items in standalone wall-mounted shelves or tall floor-standing units placed strategically near the basin.

3 Organise your vanity space. Get clear acrylic trays or even plastic cutlery trays to hold toothbrushes and cotton balls or a caddy for bottles of lotions, creams and styling supplies.

4 Store toilet-related items nearer to the toilet, if possible. Add a small cupboard or small rattan chest or basket to hold toilet paper and other supplies. You don't have to store everything under the bathroom sink.

His and hers

Compact modular double basins are great for his-and-her usage. There are also double-storage solutions for under each sink — we like Ikea's range of these.



The Tandem sink-and-wastepaper/laundry basket retails at \$2,600 at Bathworld Pty Ltd, 532 Balestier Road, Tel 6352-2202.



His-and-hers organic-shaped sink and vanity combo.

DESIGNER SINK AND BASKET

Award-winning designer Paolo Ulian has designed a Tandem sink-and-wastepaper/laundry basket for Azzurra Ceramica. This includes a lacquered white polyurethane removable wastepaper basket with two handles, which is big enough to double as a laundry basket.

04 Standing out

Wall, floor and ceiling finishes can make or break a bathroom décor scheme. But durability and ease of maintenance come first.



GFA Matouche brings to mind the sensual feel and warm beauty of leather.

FLOORING IT

Besides conventional tiles, you can use treated wood, glass and maybe even concrete or MODERN TILES that look like leather.

PEBBLE WASH flooring is also another good choice to put in the bathroom. Installed, they look like a floor made of beach pebbles or small river rocks. Since it allows water to pool without damage and it can be hosed down, there is no worry about dust accumulating on the uneven surface. It is also an affordable anti-skid flooring.

SHOWER BASICS

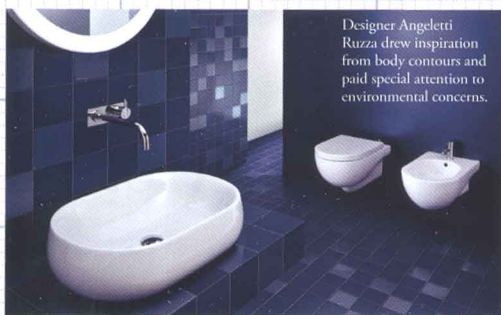
Form and function is equal when choosing shower heads. The style of shower handset can make or break the overall feel of your bathroom and it should offer the versatility of being either handheld or mounted in a cradle.

Why choose a fixed shower head? Because it looks great with its neat, clean finish, and the comforting simulation of gentle rainfall onto yourself can be a real luxury. For a really practical concession to a stylish look, complement this system with a supplementary head on an adjustable riser.

For a "full assault" shower, get the works with directional shower bodyjets from the sides, as well as above. Nozzles can be arranged at various heights and angles, making it much easier to rinse, soap and shampoo.



TIP! **TUB TIP** Get in and try your tub before you buy it, as you would a bed or mattress. Keep in mind that while two tubs can have the same external measurements, they may not be the same shape and size on the inside.



Designer Angeletti Ruzza drew inspiration from body contours and paid special attention to environmental concerns.

GO GREEN IN THE BATHROOM

By making a few quick changes, you can do your part to save water and save on your utility bill (depending on how your water is heated).

- 1 Use low-flow showerheads or other water-saving models and get a shower timer to remind yourself not to dawdle too long. The Hans Grohe range of EcoSmart hand showers features a flow rate of approximately 6l/min (Crometta 85) and 9l/min (Croma 100 and Raindance S150).
- 2 Install low-volume or dual-flush toilets.
- 3 If you take a bath, do not fill the tub up any higher than necessary to cover yourself. Save the water for washing the bathroom floor or watering your plants.
- 4 Use an instant water heater instead of one with a storage tank. But if you have to, a storage water heater with a capacity of 23 to 27 litres should be sufficient for a family of four to six.
- 5 When purchasing new sanitary wares, look out for the PUB's water-efficiency labels.

Free smells

Dab your favourite scent on a cold light bulb. As the bulb heats up, the fragrance will diffuse into the bathroom.