
Now Trending

Use of wood, veneer along with stones for wall claddings, mirror clad walls, tinted mirrors, etched mirrors defining new form of old materials is adding interest. Illuminated surfaces like gemstones, or acrylics or cutworks in metal or acrylics or stones enhance the beauty and add richness to the whole scheme are trending. Rajesh Mehra, Director and Promoter, Jaquar Group added, "a huge transformation has been noticed in the areas of bathing spaces in the current time, from just being a merely functional space they have now moved to being more of an experience zone. The trends these days emphasizes on personalizing the space and adding amenities that are more spa like. Extra-large showers offering a stress-busting, rejuvenating downpour while the powerful flow of heavy drops serves to recharge the tired nerves are in. Faucets have also evolved over the years and come in different finishes. Apart from the traditional stainless-steel finish, they come in different color variants like matt black, gold and copper to complement the entire bathroom."

Material Matters

From the user's perspective, wood brings comfort in terms of relief from coldness as well as a slip resistant and a comparatively softer surface as compared to a tile or stone and is now being used. Suchit Beria, Principal Architect, Atman Architects explained, "marble and wooden texture dominates the list of the elements in a bathroom. The marble in various forms adds to the classic as well as a contemporary element of the bathroom with the perfect play of light. Guest bathrooms require all the accessories like a towel rack, accessories stand, potpourri to add the essence of it. Nowadays the use of glass has seeped through to bring about the transparency between the spaces." Colour shades like grey, nude and neutral colors are on rise as they give a touch of luxury and intimacy in the bathrooms and provide a sense of calmness. "Ergonomic and minimal designs are chosen more by the users to make a compact bathroom feel larger than it actually is. Soft metal tones like brass, brushed gold, rose gold are also in demand as they add warmth to the bathroom scheme. Many users like a dash of organic elegance in their bathrooms for which many natural materials like stone, wood, etc. are available in the market," opined Gaurav Malhotra, Managing Director, Hansgrohe India Pvt. Ltd.

Tech Edge

D-foggers that help in letting go the fog from the glass and mirrors created while taking warm water shower or bath and intelligent WC's that come with specialized and integrated features like seat and water temperature control, adjustable spray shape, position, water pressure, pulsate and oscillate functions are in. Towel warmers, motorised height adjustable EC, electronic smart glass that switches between clear glass and frosted glass with just a push of button, shower trays that have long showers with heavy rainfall effect without any waterlogging and chronotherapy or wellness shower experience are new age elements that use technology. Jaquar has a revolutionary, new self-cleaning shower that solves the problem of unsatisfying water spray and unhealthy germs on the shower head. GRAFF's Aqua-sense shower program offers a wide selection of solutions for every need. The Aqua-sense multifunction system, for example, offers several additional and "comfortable" functions if compared with a normal showerhead. The RGB LED chromotherapy, for example, changes color to the whole ambient, shaping diffused chromatic lines to produce a soothing effect of the bathroom environment. The system is controlled by a touch-screen with simple and intuitive interface controlling water functions, color changes, music and videos. Music can be easily uploaded by connecting an i-Pod to a wall-mounted USB port, while the speakers are ceiling-installed. The system is well equipped with hand-shower and adjustable side body-sprays. From watching videos and listening to music to enjoying color therapy, the Aqua-Sense shower system provides a multimedia experience through the use of touchpad technology," says Emanuela Tavolini, Director of Sales Europe, Graff.

Design Mantra

Hoteliers over a period of time have been investing a lot of time and energy to ensure that they provide the best and "easy to use" facilities in the bathrooms. Easy to use facilities is extremely important as according to an executive housekeeper, no guest wants to start his day with a lesson on how to use various faucets, spouts and bidet fittings. While sharing the brief to the architect who is planning and designing a hotel's guest bathroom, hoteliers look for functionality in terms of proper lay outing, right circulation space, spacing between fixtures and fittings, segregation of wet and dry areas and the like. Along with this, the design experience and aesthetics must invoke a sense of visual delight. "From an aesthetic perspective, we usually keep few points like design should be beautiful and elegant keeping in mind the budget and as client requirements coupled with being practical. Aesthetics is totally the personal choice of client and architect but functionality is the main thing required is designing as design without functionality is a waste," said Sumita Mehra, Co-Founder, Space Symphony. Bhawani Singh Shekhawat, Executive Housekeeper, The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi explained, "the bathroom traditionally stands between the corridor and the bedroom acting as a sound barrier and insulator for the sleep area. This also allows access from the corridor to the services so that maintenance issues can be sorted without the engineers having to access the bedroom directly. In addition, in some countries there is now a requirement that the toilet be in a separate enclosure to the rest of the bathroom and this is likely to become a de facto standard all across the globe. It is well said that managing design is a discipline as important and functionally necessary as the accounting process. We should emphasize the need to understand the likely guest profile of the target audience for hotel."

Cost Considerations

Unlike in a room a bathroom is an area where there is very little room to eliminate items etc. as there is barely any scope to compromise on the type of elements and fixtures required. However, having said that, today the number of equipment suppliers in the market is vast and the primary way to save costs is to negotiate amongst vendors to get the best possible deal for the same fixtures. "Hotels do generally pay great importance to aesthetics and would like to add an element of style to the bathroom but there are ways to meet these demands while curbing costs. What is more important for the guest is easy use of fixtures, good temperature control in faucets, comfort of space in toilets, hence changes that can help with aesthetics while keeping costs in check would be to use simple and cost effective lighting techniques in the toilet such as backlit mirrors etc. or changing the shape of the toilet itself which can save space and money, such as the ibis hotel's curved bathrooms which are compact, but very practical and efficient in utility," avered Kapur. Value engineering is a key to cost control. Gerard O'Regan, Operations Manager – Modular Division, KEF Infra added, "it is essential that architects have in mind the elements like natural lighting, natural building materials, green walls and green roofs, electronic water faucets, water recycling, sewerage treatments plants, rain water harvesting, solar systems etc. to keep costs under control. As far as costing is concerned, it is the owner's responsibility and none of the brands actually work on it. The brand pitch-in with material selection along with the interior designer and guide them. For example, if the interior designer is proposing wall-paper, we may change it to either printed vinyl, paint or even with paneling."

New Vistas

Customers ask more and more for materials that are attractive and elegant like natural elements but with high performances in terms of resistance and durability over time. For this reason GRAFF developed Sleekstone[®], a new patented, composite material that combines dolomitic stone with a unique resin, to create a solid surface product. One trend which is really standing out is the use of Corian which has a malleable quality that helps it mould in any shape one wants. Corian can be used as a counter top or the basin or the cupboard. "We have introduced wood tiles with a special backing for the purpose of wet area usage. Made with Solid teak from sustainable plantation forest, these easy to lay and remove tiles can be used in bathrooms for making them more warm, appealing and comfortable. The use of a wood floor in the shower area provides a warm and slip resistant flooring surface that is easy to clean and maintain. The teak tiles can be oiled in various colour shades to go with the specific bathroom décor," said Satinder Chawla, Managing Director, Span Floors.