

Product Trend Report

The Parisian 2 from **MTI Baths** is a freestanding tub that reflects the nostalgic design of the late 1800s, with an interior that is ergonomically sensitive with softly curved backrests. Parisian is available as a soaking tub as well as an airbath, and can also be ordered with a number of options such as MTI's Radiance heating system or chromatherapy. The tub is handcrafted in high-gloss Lucite cast acrylic and is available in White.

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Porch spas are a possibility with pre-engineered cedar porch panels from **Vixen Hill**, that can enclose the porch for year-round spa use. Designs can be done online at VixenHill.com to retrofit or build a new spa porch. Decorative inserts can be included for extra curb appeal.

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Tubs, on the other hand, often need to fit into smaller areas. Wittkop says the 5'-space is still standard.

Reyes, however, is seeing a small trend toward more compact tubs. "People are trying to find ways to creatively use spaces in order to get hydrotherapeutic units in areas that wouldn't normally fit. They're working with bathrooms with smaller footprints sometimes," he adds.

SPECIAL FEATURES

One of the main benefits of jetted tubs, spas, steam and saunas is the relaxation they promote. It stands to reason, then, that adding features to enhance the tranquil experience by appealing to all of the senses is a steady trend. The addition of chromatherapy, aromatherapy and sound systems in particular hasn't waned. In fact, manufacturers are seeing these add-ons more often.

"For a complete spa experience in the comfort of your home, merging scent, light and sound will create a total body sensory experience," says Orellana.

Hass adds that while chromatherapy and aromatherapy continue to be popular additions to a steam shower, the latest trend is adding sound systems. "Amerec offers a sound system that includes waterproof speakers and docking station that features an FM tuner and ports to connect an iPod, iPhone or other MP3 device so bathers can enjoy their favorite music while relaxing in the steam shower," he says. "Saunas are also available with entertainment systems, including a television."

Orellana agrees. "Without a doubt, music is a must in a steam shower," she says. "The most popular request is for Bluetooth compatible controls that can be operated from within the steam shower, where users can enjoy their favorite playlists."

Beyond the sensory experience, an important feature that SanSpa Five Star offers is single-lever fast flow valves, says Wittkop. This allows the user to fill the tub more quickly. For users sitting in a tub waiting for it to fill, this is quite appealing.

Heat is an essential element of hydrotherapy, and Kornowa says MTI Baths has a couple of features that speak to this need, including a product that uses radiant heat to warm up the interior backrest of acrylic tubs, and inline water heating systems that re-circulate water through a heater and a pump to keep the tub at a consistent 102 degrees throughout the soak.

As the number of options continues to increase for hydrotherapy products, navigating the choices can be tricky. Fore says Jacuzzi is working on developing Web-based tools to allow builders, showroom salespeople and designers to walk their clients through the sometimes complicated process of choosing from the abundance of features available. "Our goal is to keep adding to the innovations we offer, but make it ever more simple to understand and select them," he says.

TAKING CONTROL

Control design is shifting for steam and sauna, morphing into familiar-looking high-tech options. Designers and consumers want the look and feel of the technology they are becoming ever more comfortable with in their daily lives, including touch screens and the ability to connect to other devices.

"We're seeing more interest in people wanting to connect their steam bath and sauna to a whole-house smart system so they can control functions with their computer," says Haas. "We expect demand for this to accelerate in the near future."



Aquatic's DriftBath hydrotherapy system for select Serenity Series tubs features dozens of water-only ports located in the backrest and foot areas of the bathing well. The combined effect of the many individual streams creates a gentle wall of water that flows in one direction. The pump and motor are integrated into a single unit that captures the heat energy it generates and infuses it into the water, eliminating the need for a separate, in-line heater to maintain the bath's warmth. Circle No. 168 on Product Card



The Freestanding Module from **CG Air Systemes** is completely assembled with blower, electronic control, pipings, manifold, keypad and/or remote control. The module allows for the installation of an air massage system without having to redesign the existing freestanding bathtub. Circle No. 169 on Product Card



Purificare US presents the Jacuzzi-Frame shower cubicle concept that includes everything needed for a wellness experience. Designed by Mario Ferrarini, Frame includes a steam bath, vertical shiatsu hydro massage, cervical and lumbar hydro massage, energizing cascade, the raindrop effect of the central showerhead, multicolored shower with pre-set color cycles and aromatherapy effects. Circle No. 170 on Product Card



The iPod Locker from **Finnleo Sauna & Steam** is a waterproof docking station for an iPod/iPhone and includes an auxiliary input for other MP3 players. When used with an iPod or iPhone, the remote control allows a bather to control the volume, song selection, mode and other functions from across the sauna room. Circle No. 171 on Product Card



Graff's Aqua-Sense shower system is available in several configurations for a more personalized at-home spa experience. The Electronic System with Ceiling-Mounted Showerhead creates an intense central rainfall, and features an RGB LED color-changing effect controlled by a touch screen, and a USB port and speakers for portable music player connection. Circle No. 172 on Product Card



All **ThermaSol** Serenity Light & Music Systems are now Bluetooth-enabled, making the steam shower experience easier to control. Bluetooth technology allows users to wirelessly control audio in their steam shower from anywhere in the bathroom. With the use of a waterproof case, mobile devices can be brought directly into the steam shower. Circle No. 173 on Product Card