

smarter **BATHROOMS**

*With Andrew Crawshaw,
Alex Heaton & Nick Piacente*



Escape to a beautiful bathroom

Discover the secrets
behind creating the
perfect bathroom

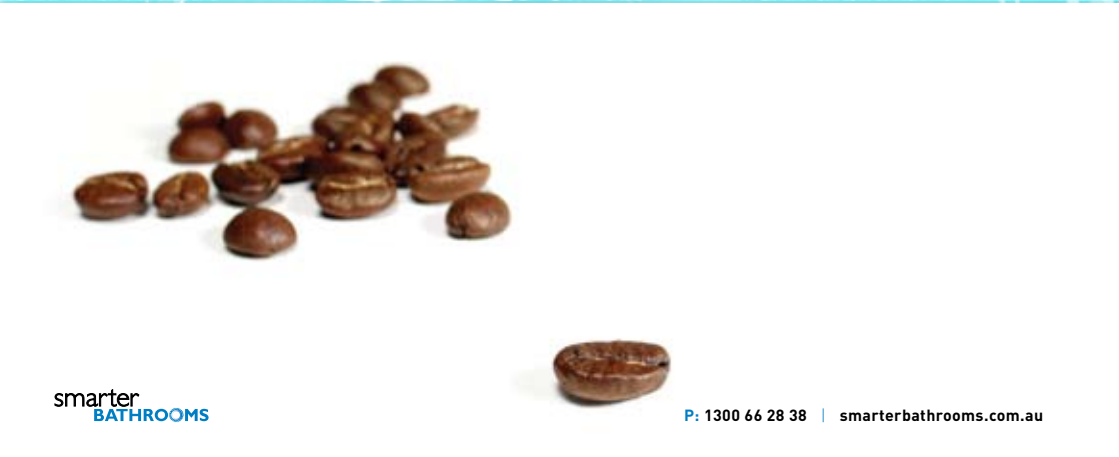


Bathroom Secrets

- 1: The perfect layout
- 2: Colour
- 3: Style
- 4: Water Saving
- 5: Storage Solutions
- 6: Tiles and Tiling – and other options
- 7: Waterproofing Explained
- 8: Choosing the fittings
- 9: Setting a realistic budget.
- 10: Choosing your Builder
- 11: Step by Step, how to do it.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural history of bathing reveals that the process of getting wet, had little to do with getting clean. Even today when the inexorable rise in water consumption by Western societies might seem to indicate an almost neurotic anxiety about personal hygiene other factors are plainly at play.



WHY BATHE?

We bathe for a whole range of reasons: to relax, for invigoration, for pleasure, for comfort, and perhaps simply out of a desire to immerse ourselves in an elemental, natural state, where once again we are weightless, floating and cocooned, in water.

Whatever your reason, this guide will start you down the path of escaping to a beautiful bathroom....

1

The Perfect Layout

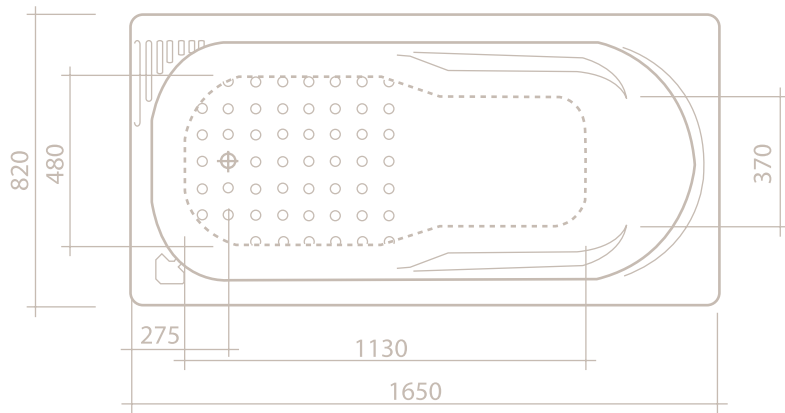
Provided you follow some simple rules, drawing up an accurate scale plan is not hard.

First: make a rough freehand sketch of the area in question, noting the position of existing features, such as windows and doors. Take basic measurements and label the sketch. Make sure you choose one system of measurement and stick to it. Measurements must be accurate so buy a steel tape from your local hardware store.

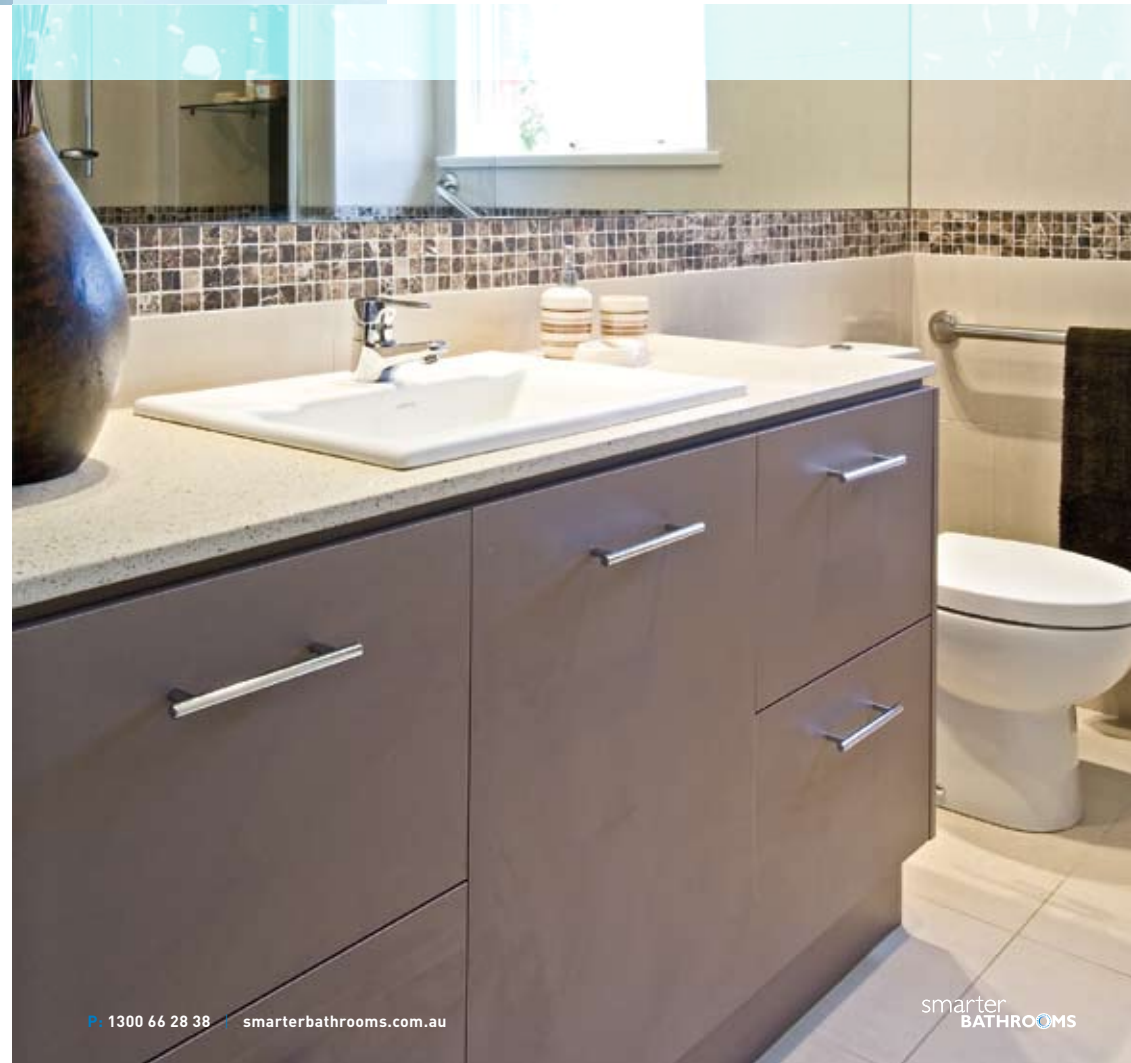
Second: Transfer the information to graph paper, using a scale rule and a sharp pencil. Include the position of power points, light fixtures and fans. Don't forget to indicate which way the door opens. If you are updating an existing bathroom and intend to keep everything in the same place

(by far the cheapest option) you should draw in all the fixtures like sinks baths showers etc. If you are creating a new layout, one way of visualising new layout is to make paper cutouts of the fixtures and try different layout options on your scale plan. There are some websites too with design tools on them which are quite useful.

As bathrooms are usually small spaces, the bathroom layout is usually a compromise of some description. You have to make a decision early on in the process what is important to you. A large shower, lots of storage space, lots of room on the floor or a luxurious deep bath which you can stretch out in. If the answer to these questions is all of the above, you will present some challenges for your bathroom designer!



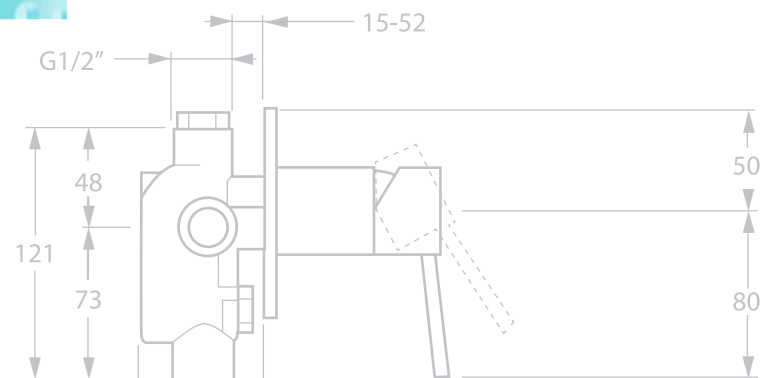
Even if you intend to seek professional advice from a bathroom renovator, an interior designer or an architect, it is a good idea to draw up an initial floor plan yourself. This will give you an idea of how much you can fit into the area and also double as a briefing guide when seeking further help.



As a general rule, these are the steps we like to take towards making the space as efficient as possible:

- 1: Put the bath on the short wall. This is the best use of space
- 2: Use the corners. Shower, vanity, toilet bath etc.
- 3: Position the toilet so that it is obscured from direct view when standing at the door
- 4: Hang the door against a wall rather than into the middle of the room.
- 5: Altering the window is costly and may require town planning if you are in a well built up area so avoid it if possible. If you must change the window, let in as much light as possible or make a statement with the new window.
- 6: Design for a minimum shower size of 900 x 900
- 7: Consider a bath. Many people wish to keep a bath for resale value. My question is do you need a bath your self. If the answer is no, then how long do you intend to stay. If the answer is more than 10 years, then ditch the bath as the bathroom may well be looking a little tired by then, and not having the bath will be a problem the new owners will sort out. It's a long time to be putting up with a waste of space.
- 8: Consider storage for cosmetics and towels. Vanity cabinets are good for towels, and cosmetics can be stored in mirrored cabinets away from little fingers.
- 9: Allow for heating and ventilation. In Victoria, you really need heating in the summer at times especially early in the morning. A heating vent in the bathroom should be retained as it dries the bathroom out in the colder months, but is will not be enough. You can choose from heat lamps, panel heaters and blow heaters.
- 10: The toilet in the room or separate. We renovate a bathroom every day. I am asked by half the people to divide up the room and make the toilet separate, and the other half to open it up. It's a personal preference. There is a trend towards more open living, with rooms becoming larger. This will eventually make its way into the bathroom.
- 11: Think about who will be using the room, and what their requirements are for the space.
- 12: If there is a high traffic time, a double vanity may be called for
- 13: Place fittings at appropriate heights for the users. For example if the room is used by children as well as adults, you might want to consider a rail shower that the height can be varied on to suit a multitude of users. The vanity height should be designed to suit the user. 900mm has become the standard height for the benchtop.
- 14: Don't over do it. Bathrooms are a small space. One or two features are generally enough.

Remember a bathroom is a very personal space, so any design must be well thought through, and the needs of all the users considered. Help from a professional designer will help avoiding annoying mistakes and missing clever ideas at the design stage. Time spent thinking about the project early on can save a huge amount of time money and tears later in the project.



2

Colour

In the bathroom you have the ability to change the look and feel of the room with colour. In the main this will mean choosing the paint for the walls and the tiles.

Here are some great tips from the color experts:

Nature conditions us to expect...

- The darkest value at our feet
- The medium value at eye level
- The lightest value above us

In choosing tiles this means that darker tiles on the floor and lighter tiles on the walls will work well. There will no doubt be some areas which are not tiled and require some painting. The only way to accurately select suitable paint colours is to test swatches on the walls to be painted. Beware of choosing from a small area of colour. Most of the paint companies will provide test pots or large brush outs of the colours they supply. Ask your designer to help you get hold of these.

The way a colour reacts is dependent largely on light, which can change a colour drastically, either animating it by warming it up or by softening it with a subtle bluish cast to cool it down. Colour is also affected by other surfaces in the room it reflects off.

Considerations in choosing colour:

Avoid monotony. Treat the eye and psyche to at least moderate variety. Visual stimulus or relief is vital.

To create interest and contrast consider the following:

- Warm and cool colours
- Light and dark
- Bright and dull
- Smooth and textured

You can do this with feature tiles in a bathroom. Areas or strips of colour or texture add vitality and warmth to the space, breaking up what could otherwise be solid blocks of colour. Use the feature tiles to draw the eye to features of the bathroom like the vanity.

In most successful colour schemes, one colour is dominant, one is subordinate, and one is for accent or trim.

Wall tiles are usually the subordinate colour with the floor being dominant and the feature tile being the accent.

Avoid clashes. Your eye and gut will know! If you grit your teeth or get a knot in your stomach, don't use it!



BEWARE!

Colour is a chameleon, it...

- Changes depending on adjacent colour
- Reflects onto adjacent colour
- White or beige will take on the tint of adjacent colour
- Differing adjacent colours will appear more intense

Generally...

- Cool colours and tints will make a space appear larger
- Warm colours and shades will make a space appear smaller (and sometimes smaller is desirable)
- Cool colours and tints make an object appear smaller and lighter in weight
- Warm colours and shades make an object appear larger and heavier in weight
- Contrasting colours contract space

- Similar colours or values expand space
- Perception of time and temperature differs depending on colour
- Time seems to pass more quickly in warm spaces
- Time seems to pass more slowly in cool spaces
- Temperature is perceived as hotter in warm spaces
- Temperature is perceived as colder in cool spaces
- Warm colours and earth tones encourage and maintain body warmth and physical action
- Cool colours are conducive to mental activities, project and research
- Cool colours can have a dampening effect on the level or quality of conversation

So what does all this mean for your bathroom? Well that all depends on what you plan the space to be for.....

3

Style

Today the bathroom is no longer an afterthought, clinically fitted out and inhospitably decorated. It is a room in its own right. A great bathroom sells a home.

All bathrooms are by definition where we go to get clean, but they serve many other purposes as well. For many of us there is no better place to think: those Eureka! Moments occur with pleasing frequency in the bath or shower. Other cannot think of bathing without a book, some see the bathroom as the personal rite of well being that takes in exercise as well as more passive therapeutic treatments.

Here are several design approaches which you may choose to mix and match.

Family Bathroom:

The essence of the family bathroom is that is a shared space and more often than not multigenerational. This means that the users will have different physical requirements and abilities that will need to be built for. When a bathroom is shared there will be times of the day when there are bottlenecks.

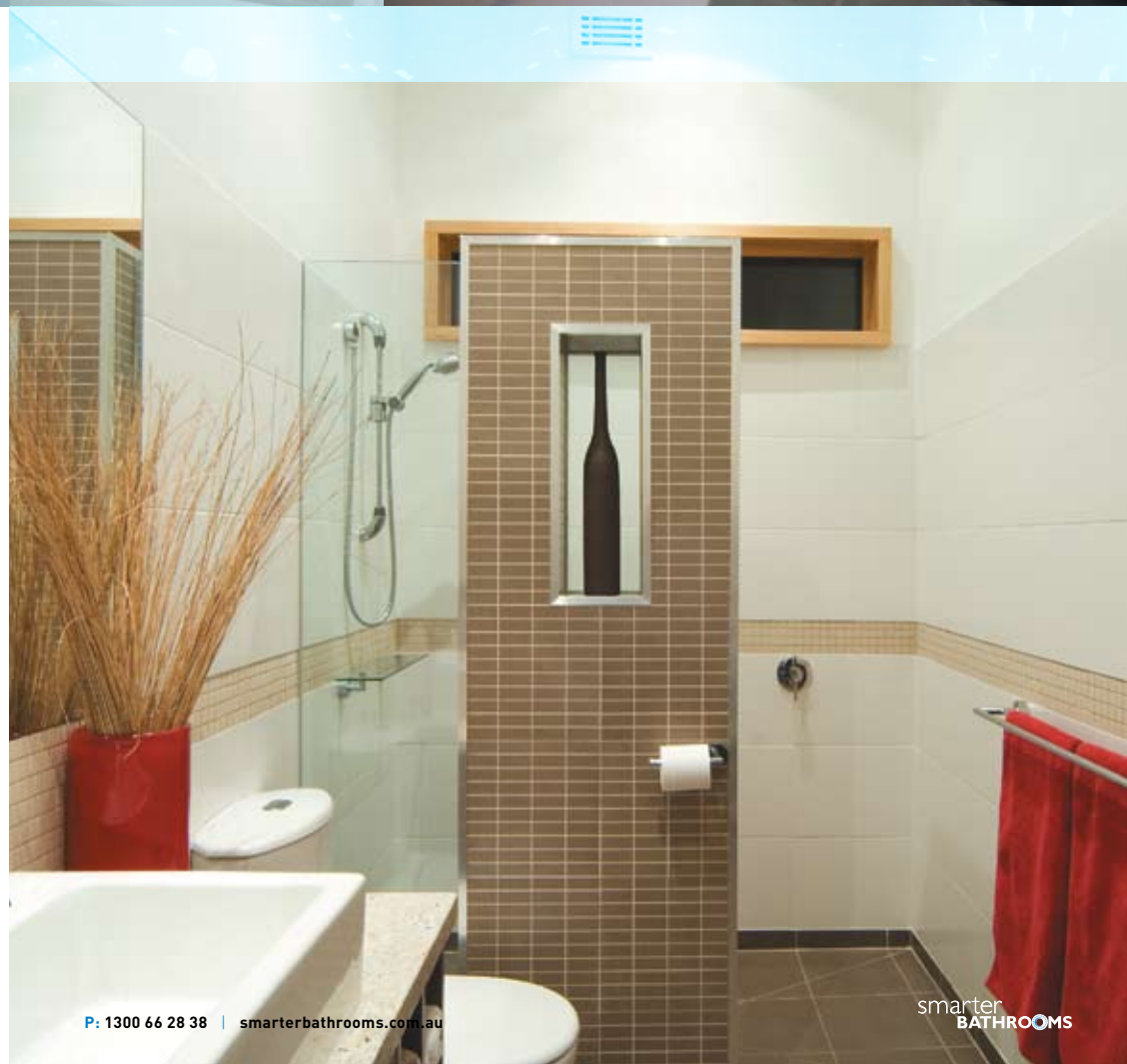
Doubling the facilities can help ease the strain. Double sinks and perhaps a shower plus a bath. Keep in mind that the room will need to change as the family grows up. The toddler who you have to coax into the bath will soon be the teenager you are lecturing about water restrictions.

Shared bathrooms work well in generous spaces. Keep in mind a large bathroom is functional and so is a small children's bedroom. It may be worth sacrificing some of the kid's real estate to make the bathroom more functional.

It's a good idea to keep the bathroom close to the bedrooms to minimise night time mishaps in early years, and later on for comfort of the users.

While you might have cutting edge chic in mind, you might be better advised to concentrate on good waterproofing, ease of cleaning, and maximising storage.

Resist the temptation to theme the bathroom in a child centric way that is not easy to change in a few years when your little one has grown out of it.





Minimalism:

Enough said.

Classic Contemporary:

This style is becoming more and more popular. Many of us have period homes and have realised that the trend of renovating your bathroom to become mock Victorian or Edwardian is sheer folly. It is a throw back to the 80's where we were all into mock heritage. Those days are dying out now, and a beautiful period home can be complimented much better by a classic contemporary bathroom.

Contemporary style fixtures and fittings are kept to a minimum with simple clean lines.

This is set off by a colour scheme which employs neutral tones which are easy on the eye, continuous floor and wall and will not date as fashions change. The aim is to make the room feel light, spacious and airy.

Fussy gaps and spaces are kept to a minimum, so cleaning is a simple business, and tiled walk through shower areas are common to keep the flow of the tiled floor through into the shower. Similarly, frameless glass is employed to open up the room.

New lights are installed or a feature window filling the space with light.

A little spice can be added to the room by changing the towels and decorations. The tiles and rest of the colour scheme will carry most variations here from cool turquoise to hot red. Just depends on your mood.

Small Bathroom:

While bathroom sizes are increasing, most of us are still dealing with the reality of something that falls way short of the ideal. Do not fret though as small can definitely be functional and beautiful. Spend time thinking about your needs and preferences as whatever you do will no doubt be a compromise. Showers are more space saving than bathtubs and extras such as double sinks will have to be saved for the next bathroom.

Here a small space gain can make all the difference. Look at the way the door hangs, can it be changed to a slider, or to open a different way. Use the wall cavities for storage, like recesses in the shower to hold bottles and recessed mirrored cabinets. Do you have the opportunity to move or fill in windows to maximise space. There are several deep soaker baths that are shorter but deeper than normal. If you wish to keep the bath, consider these as an option.

Wall hung fittings are a good idea to give the impression of space. Custom made cabinetry can be used to hide toilet cisterns and make maximum use of space between walls.

As a general rule small spaces seem bigger when decoration is kept simple and co-ordinated. Keep to a single colour, or a tonal scheme that is very close. Extend tiling to cover all of the walls rather than break up the surface unnecessarily.

Mirrors are of course a good way of increasing space.

Be careful where materials meet. In a small bathroom they should be as neat and inconspicuous as possible.

Reduce clutter and have all the odds and ends stored away.



4

Water Saving

30% of the water used in the house is consumed in the bathroom. This means the bathroom is a great place to start renovations if you want to save water.

Water saving taps and mixers

Mixers are better water savers as you don't need to waste water getting the temperature correct. It is easy to fit flow restrictors to taps to limit the flow. Some taps now come as flow restrictors allowing only 9 litres per minute to flow. To fit water saving taps during your bathroom renovation costs almost nothing.

Hot water priming pump

This intelligent device removes all the cold water in the pipe when you turn on the hot tap, recycling it into the cold water pipe until it reaches a certain temperature. It then shuts off waiting for you to turn on the hot tap. The result.....Instant Hot Water.....clever stuff. Our bathroom renovator can fit a sensor or a hand switch so it doesn't run all the time to gain further efficiency.

Rain Water Tanks

Fit a rain water tank with a mains water top up to flush your toilet, run your washing machine and water your garden to get real efficiency. You can get a \$300 rebate from the government for this, and get a payback of approximately 7 years.



5

Storage Solutions

The bathroom is not generally required to house all manner of objects that differ greatly in size like a kitchen. The challenge with the bathroom is more to organise storage to be at arms reach from the user when required.

The vogue for Zen style minimalism means less is more, with storage seamlessly incorporated in built in cupboards or units. Clutter of any kind can undermine a sense of relaxation, but some people may find a bathroom entirely devoid of any focus a little austere.

I like to assess what you might need in a bathroom on a daily basis, and build the storage around that. Store everything else in another space in the house. Store only what is required for activities within the bathroom.

The other thing to help determine storage requirements is to divide the items into what has to be concealed and that which you do not mind having on display.

Medicine cabinets should be regularly purged for expired products or half finished potions. I like to store medicines up high in a wall mounted cabinet as a safety precaution to keep them away from any young prying fingers who do not know better.

If you have teenage girls, allow lots of room for beautification products. Keep tabs on this by ruthless culling at intervals as this like medicines have a limited shelf life. Extras can be kept in the offenders bedroom if necessary.

It's reasonable to keep a few cleaning products in the bathroom, as these may be needed. It's handy to have them there rather than dash off to another spot to retrieve them when required.

Custom made, built in storage makes good sense in the bathroom. It's a good way of concealing things like plumbing pipes, undersides of sinks and other things you do not want on show. By custom making the cabinetry, you can maximise your use of space, and not leave any gaps that are awkward to clean.

The most common place for storage is under the sink. There are many styles of vanity units which house the sink. Wall hung, floating, floor mounted to name a few. Try to get as many drawers in the units as possible as these carry the maximum amount of materials and make them easy to access. Assess what you want to store in the drawers to choose their depth. Many potions and lotion bottles will be able to be stored standing up, maximising space. Keep in mind you will need some sort of a void under the sink to house the plumbing though. Floor mounted vanities have the most storage.

Built in cisterns can be hidden in false walls which can then double as cavity cupboards. This can give the impression of making the room larger due to the lack of clutter.

Other options for storage include glass shelves, alcoves in the walls (which can be lit to create a feature) tall shallow cupboards which can fit into awkward corners, mirrored cabinets, or revolving mirrored cabinets.

6

Tiles and Tiling

Big and bold or small and subtle, anything goes when tiling these days.

When it comes to updating a bathroom and laundry, the choice of floor surface must take into account aesthetics, durability, ease of cleaning, safety and waterproofing.

While tiling your wet areas has practical motivations, it can also be done in style. The conservative choice was always for neutral square ceramic tiles in standard sizes, perhaps with a few border or feature tiles. This narrow focus has changed, with consumers becoming more adventurous and choosing anything from big bold tiles to tiny mosaics, or interesting materials such as glass, ceramic or natural stone.

The choice of material and size is all about an impression of space. Larger tiles have less grout lines and make your surface look bigger.

For example a bathroom with a low-ceiling can be countered with a narrow strip of feature tiles running vertically up a wall to give an appearance of a taller ceiling. Another important consideration when choosing tiles is safety. Study the safety ratings of tiles that are glazed with different finishes to make it less likely to slip over on water spilled onto the tiles.

Ceramic Tiles:

Ceramic tiles have been used for years in bathrooms and are easily up to the task. They are a ceramic biscuit or base with a glazed surface. They are usually the cheaper alternative and start around \$20 per square metre for reasonable tiles.

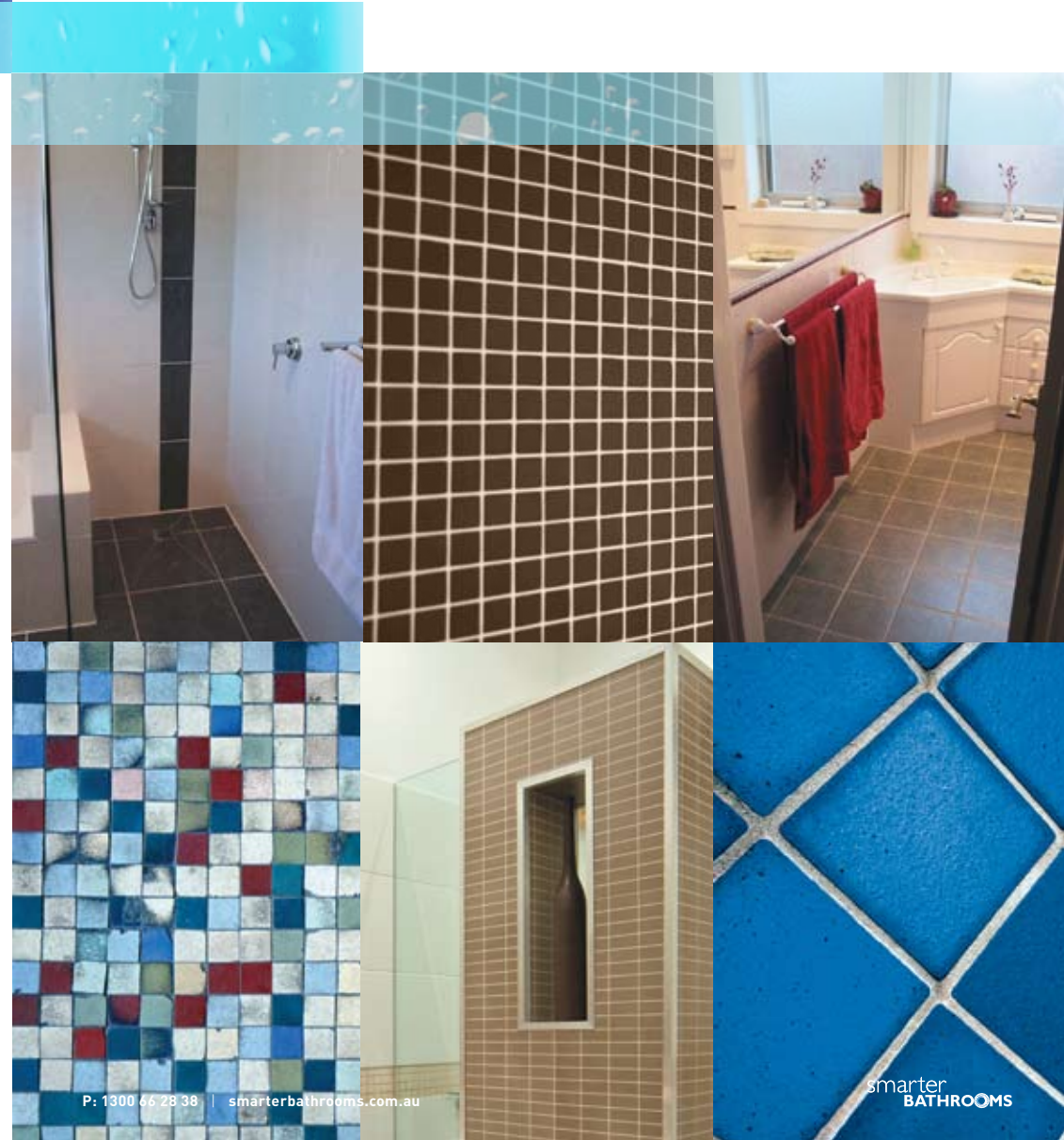
Porcelain Tiles:

Porcelain is the next step up with harder wearing qualities than the ceramic brother. Most people who purchase porcelain do so for the look rather than the hardness though. The square edges and the stone and marble look alikes are so convincing these days. Be wary though as there are many types of porcelain around. Glazed and full bodies are the main types, with the glazed porcelain only having a small coating of glaze on the top of the tile, like icing. The full bodied tile colour is even right through. This means if there is a scratch or a chip, it is less noticeable. Porcelain starts at \$40 per square metre for Chinese glazed, and steps up through Chinese full bodied to Italian and Spanish tiles. The Chinese tiles can be very good, and more and more has been imported into the country over the past few years. The Italians will always have the design and style edge though.

Exotics: Glass, Stone, Marble

Be careful is all I can say here. If you decide to renovate using any of the above options, the cost of the tiles is increasing as well as the cost to lay the tiles. Do not scrimp on the tiles or the price you pay to lay them.

It is a specialised skill laying stone and marble and the guys who do it well charge for it. Keep in mind, that this is the last thing that happens in the bathroom, and if it has to come out, you basically have to start from scratch again. Make sure you are entirely happy with the work of the stonemason before he begins. Don't take his word for it. Make sure you get to see some of his finished material.



Waterproofing Explained

I was once told: “If you want your bathroom to last... just don’t use it.” Rather flippant advice, but it does point out the major difference between the bathroom and other rooms. There is water and steam present, which plays havoc with the longevity of the bathroom.

These days we do a lot to increase the life of the bathroom by choosing fittings and fixtures that are specifically designed for the bathroom environment.

Waterproofing is an integral part of the renovation, just as important as the beautiful new tap ware and tiles. Without it, you will be lucky if the new room lasts more the 2-3 years and as well as that may do damage to the rest of your house.

Waterproofing is a flexible membrane layer that is applied on the plasterboard or render for the walls and on the cement sheet or the concrete on the floor below the tiles. The joints where the walls meet the floor and other areas that may move are bandaged or siliconed to allow for movement.

Tiled walk through showers that are at present so fashionable require extra care as they are currently the largest area of building insurance claims. If you do embark on constructing one of these in your design, make sure your renovator is completely sure of what he is doing, and can explain clearly how he intends to construct and waterproof the area.

A good renovator will waterproof to Australian Standards and beyond and some even employ professional waterproofing companies who guarantee their work for up to 10 years.

Setting a Realistic Budget

This is an important consideration. Bathrooms are an important part of the home, and a good bathroom renovation can make the difference to a living space. Careful planning of your bathroom renovation can add value to your house that will never be lost.

Keep in mind that the renovation, no matter what you do in the bathroom will be an investment. Whatever you do should be consistent with the value of your house. You should add to the resale value of the house without over capitalizing. Bathrooms and Kitchens sell houses, and whatever you spend, as a general rule of thumb, if you do a tasteful renovation, you should at least double your money in house value.

Bathroom renovations fall into two categories:

Remodelling

Utilising the existing layout and renewing the fittings, fixtures and tiling. This can be completed for as little as \$15,000 if you are very careful with the products you use. Most renovations like this end up costing around \$17,000 if you are careful with the fittings you specify.

Changing the Layout

The bathroom has become a more important piece of the home, and a well thought out layout can really add to the value of your home as well as being better to use. Often as your needs change the existing layout of your bathroom will not fit your lifestyle any longer.

Changing the layout is easily achieved during the bathroom renovation process but usually costs a bit more due to the extra complexity. These bathroom renovations usually start from \$17,000. Solid brick homes, or homes with slab floors tend to cost a little more as there is more work involved for the bathroom renovator regarding electrics, plastering and plumbing.

9

Choosing the Fittings

Choosing the fixtures, fittings and tiles for your bathroom can be quite daunting. Work with someone who has relevant bathroom renovation experience so they can guide you in your choices. If you are lucky, you will find a company who can advise you on the whole job, tiles, tapware, baths and right through to the shower screen. This will save you time running from one place to another.

Things to consider when choosing fittings: Is this a family room that will require hard working, low maintenance fixtures that can withstand the wear and tear that only a family can deal out, or is it a sleeker architectural look you are after.

Toilets, Baths Vanities & Basins

Where to start when choosing a toilet for your bathroom renovation? Choose one that you like the look of that fits your budget. These days all are dual flush and some will be "Smart Flush" and use even less water than standard dual flush toilets. I usually recommend a close coupled suite as they are good value for money, easy to clean, and pleasing on the eye. You should be able to find one of these for under \$500.

Baths generally fit into two categories. Acrylic and Pressed metal. Some people feel that the metal baths are superior as they are not plastic. Keep in mind that they are easy to chip, and if you are putting a shower over it, can be very slippery. For the family bath I usually recommend an acrylic bath as they are more forgiving in the family bathroom, and less likely to wear and cause injury.

Basins have become something of a fashion item recently, with vanities becoming more freestanding. I often get asked if counter top vessels are a passing fad. Of course they are, but if you like them, then why not?

The choices are endless but in general Vessels, Recessed, Semi Recessed, and under counter. Semi Recessed basins are best when you are in a confined space, as the bench takes up less space. Talk to your bathroom renovator about which is the best for your situation.

Showers

Try to come up with a bathroom layout that will allow you to have at least a 900 x 900mm shower base. This is quite workable. Showers with walk through tiled bases are becoming more common. These look great, but of course are difficult to construct and waterproof. Make sure if you choose this type of shower base that your bathroom renovator is well qualified and prepared to give you a guarantee on the waterproofing. If you are like me and prefer to be safe than sorry, you can't go past a polymarble shower base for practicality and watertightness in your bathroom renovation.

Shower screens are also a consideration. They come in three major categories. Framed, Semi Frameless and Frameless. They are priced in that order and roughly cost, \$400, \$1200, and then upwards of \$2000 for the frameless. We tend to recommend semi frameless as a base, as they are a more modern look and are cleaned much more easily than the framed screens. Frameless is obviously the pinnacle, but sometimes can be a little cost prohibitive.



10

Choosing Your Builder

Here's a quick checklist to go through when choosing your renovator.

- 1: Is the renovator a Registered Building Practitioner?
- 2: Does the renovator have the correct registration to build a bathroom?
- 3: Does the contract include warranty and insurance details?
- 4: Do you understand if the price can be varied and how?
- 5: Is there a start date on the contract and an estimated finish date?
- 6: What is the specialty of the builder? Bathrooms or something else....

Registered Builders and Qualified tradespeople.

The only time a builder does not have to be qualified or registered is for work valued below \$5000. Call 1300 36 03 20 to check if your builder is registered. All Plumbers and Gasfitters and Drainers must be registered with the Plumbing Industry Commission All Electricians must be licensed by the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector. They should carry cards to verify this while on site. Tilers, painters and plasterers do not require registration.

Check your builder's references from previous work

Any renovator who has a good track record will be happy to provide references.

Find out how long your builder has been in business

Scope of the bathroom renovation.

Make sure that the quote and contract clearly cover the work that is to be carried out. If you have any questions at all then ask for them to be clarified.

The Renovator you select should specialize in bathrooms. The skills to renovate in this area of the house are very specialized and take many years to develop. A fine eye for detail and expert finishing is what is required to create the perfect bathroom. Many builders are great at the structure but lack the attention to detail that makes the difference.



11

Step By Step



- 1: Sketch out the existing layout to scale
- 2: Plan the new layout
- 3: Consider who is using the bathroom and take their needs into consideration
- 4: Finalise the layout
- 5: Consider Storage, heating and electrical requirements
- 6: Choose a style to design to
- 7: Choose fittings and fixtures that work within the above parameters
- 8: Choose your tiles
- 9: Choose your vanity colour, and design
- 10: Choose your renovator
- 11: Escape to a Beautiful Bathroom.

smarter BATHROOMS

Call now for your FREE
consultation: **1300 66 28 38**

Or view our online gallery at:
smarterbathrooms.com.au

Showroom / Office

77 Salmon St
Port Melbourne
VIC 3207



REGISTERED
Building Practitioner

