

Showers that get compliments

BY CHANDRA ORR
Copley News Service

With the latest shower treatments, homeowners can transform their bathrooms into spas and get some well-needed home maintenance at the same time.

"Kitchens and bathrooms are probably the two most important rooms when it comes to resale — and they're the most used — so redoing the bathtub/shower is a sound investment. You don't have to go whole hog to do it well," said interior designer Sharon Hanby-Robie, author of "Beautiful Places, Spiritual Spaces" (Northfield, \$12.99).

Some homeowners may want to do away with their bathtubs altogether.

"Rarely do people use their bathtubs anymore," Hanby-Robie said. "Mostly they're for showering."

"Many companies have come out with a new 60-inch, super-sized shower," she said. "You don't have to replumb the drain. You can just pull out the tub and add the shower system."

Around \$2,500, which includes new faucets and tiled walls, the preplumbed super showers are fairly inexpensive compared to a complete bathroom remodel, said Hanby-Robie.

"It's really reasonable," she said, "But again, you don't want to do it yourself."

Those looking for a truly sensational shower experience should look into steam options, the latest craze in home bathrooms.

Homeowners with a slightly bigger budget can opt for steam generators, additional shower heads, body sprayers — even built-in seating, said Hanby-Robie.

"You can get as extreme as you want," she said. "Some of the new showers come



CNS Photo courtesy of Moen

The new shower head like Moen's Revolution, which comes in a variety of finishes and colors, features jets of water that spin, twist and twirl.

with a built-in steam generator with a bubble top so the shower is completely enclosed. The steam options turn the shower into a steam room — and your standard tub space now becomes a spa."

Homeowners with simpler concerns shouldn't be afraid to tackle a little bathroom DIY. Plenty of older bathtubs have built-in shower doors.

"They're a pain to clean and hard to get in and out of," said Hanby-Robie.

Removing the shower doors to make room for curtains is a simple task.

"Just get your screwdriver and razor blade out and start going," she said.

Finally, don't underestimate the power of a new shower head to transform the bathing experience.

"The single, standard shower head is kind of boring and dull. There are other simple things that are luxu-

rious and fun," she said.

New preplumbed systems, like the Delta Monitor 1800, feature water jets plus a shower head that all work from a single valve, according to Hanby-Robie.

"With one valve, you're getting a shower head and two spa jets coming at you," she said. Such systems generally cost from \$350 to \$800, affordable to the average homeowner.

"It's a simple away of creating some luxury without going to all that expense. Plus, you can do it — it doesn't require a plumber."

For even smaller budgets, Hanby-Robie recommends the Revolution shower head by Moen.

"It's spinning and twisting and twirling water," she said. "That's a shower head you can install yourself — and at about \$50 that's a big luxury that we're giving ourselves."

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