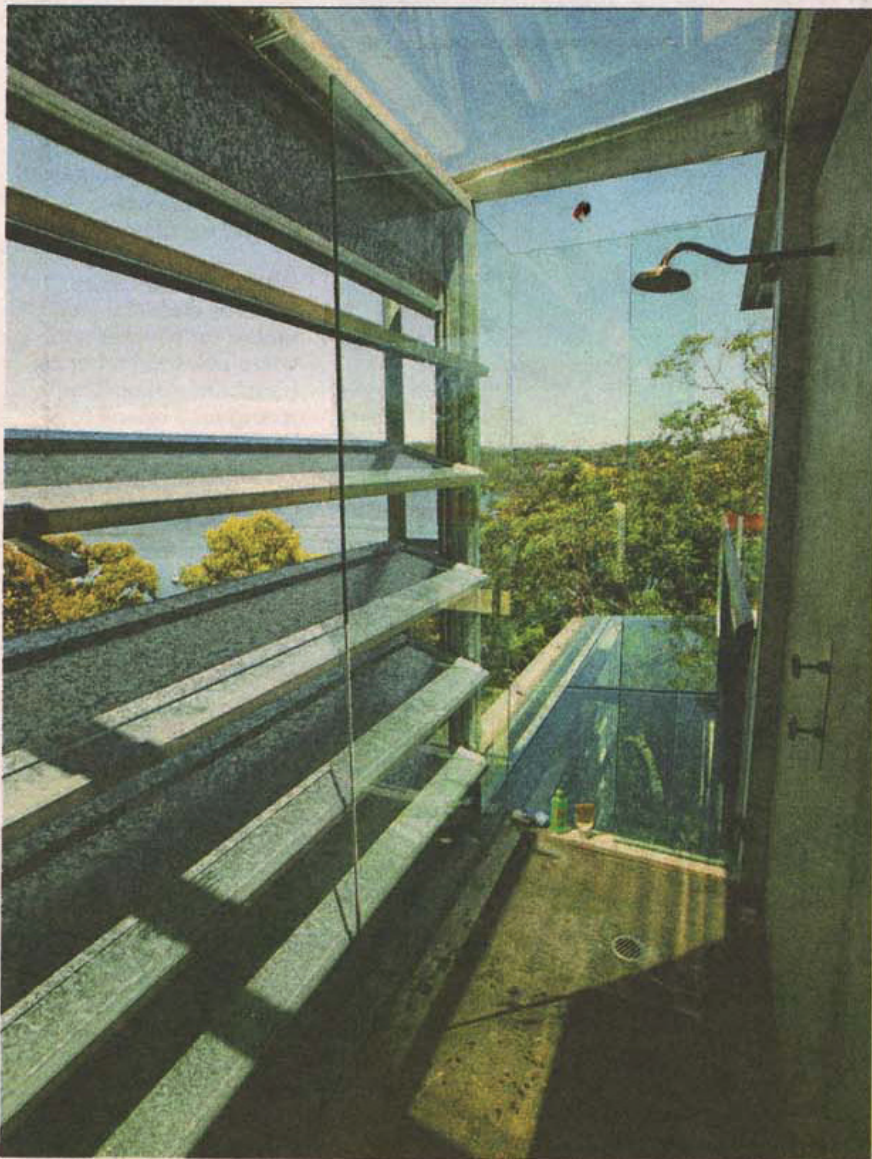


## bathrooms



Photos: Michael Bradfield, Marco Del Grande, Jennifer Soo

# The plug lovelies

The dingiest room has become the most luxurious in the house.

Like toddlers waiting to be wrapped in a soft, warm towel, we can't be pampered enough. First, it was sunken designer baths. And, of course, these called for Roman mosaics and bubble jets and a double shower. Our need for luxury in an age when the economy boomed meant the bathroom was elevated from the dingiest room in the house to the day spa.

Still we want more: a connection with what's outside, a space for contemplation. "It's one of the few places where you can spend time to yourself, thinking and processing the day that's gone, so it can be an escape," says architect Rory Toomey.

The bathroom circa 2005 includes variations on slatted-timber doors, picture windows and walls of glass louvres facing under-used courtyards and garden corners. Like an eastern bath house, the space is tranquil, the aspect all important.

For his own house, Avalon architect Richard Cole lined a huge, family bathroom with white laminated glass. Just under the ceiling, a row of clerestory windows provides glimpses of the surrounding bush. On top of a floor made of removable jarrah panels sits a simple, white claw-foot bath; a soft yet minimal combination.

At his Springwater House in the northern beaches, architect Peter Stutchbury created a bedroom ensuite jutting into the air. The look is not luxe. Like much of the house, the walls were made from galvanised-iron louvres adapted from chicken sheds.

The indoor-outdoor relationship was also integral

to the bathrooms Toomey designed for his parents' Blue Mountains retreat. "It was fairly uncluttered and there are not too many elements because there are nice views. A lot of thought was given to the size and the position of the windows in relation to the different fixtures," he says. "If you could have a view from the toilet, that's what I was trying to achieve."

Again, the look is not luxurious but clean all the same. And it is not expensive. He believes that "money spent on expensive imported fittings could always be better spent on bigger windows or other luxuries which might improve the ambience".

The bathroom fittings are standard Caroma or Fowler from a hardware supplier, as were the light fittings, which cost \$20 each. The cheap-and-cheerful red and orange mosaic bathroom floor tiles were made in China, \$20 a metre.

### **RUNNING HOT** **Spa systems**

Hydrotherapy systems are getting more streamlined for the domestic market. Multijet has developed custom-built home-spa systems that let you decide where jets will be positioned according to your needs. The nozzles themselves sit almost flat against the surface of the tub, so you won't have to worry about accepting slight imprints in your back for the benefits you receive. Again, it's not cheap. Prices from \$2,893. Inquiries, 9516 2633.



## bathrooms



### Freestanding baths

Traditional claw-foot freestanding baths are still as popular as they were in the time of Mr Darcy as they open up the space in the bathroom. Modern designs with sleek lines and comfort-designed contours include the Philippe Starck range for Duravit, which starts at a princely \$11,615.

### Eco-friendly showerheads

It is not surprising that a trend towards showerheads that conserve water rather than contribute to the shortage is growing.

### Sanitaryware

Basins, fittings, toilets: simple? Not at all. Sanitaryware doesn't just have to perform its given function, it has to look like a supermodel. Basins are flat, cisterns are invisible. In keeping with the

minimalism, mixers are more popular than separate hot and cold taps. For your freestanding bath, you can even get a freestanding bath mixer.

### Invisible accessories

You may be accustomed to having your toilet brush and toilet-roll holder displayed for all to see, but they are no things of beauty. Storage modules can be recessed into your wall. Instead of a conga-line of bathroom accessories, you see flat, glass panels.

### Tiles

Mosaics and little dice-size squares of tiles are so 2000 BC. This year's big winners are large, rectified tiles. The less grout the better. And before you ask for gloss, be warned that matt is modish and finishes must now lend themselves to a more natural look.

Alicia Wood



Clean lines ... clockwise from top left, Richard Cole's bathroom with jarrah flooring; red and orange tiles in Rory Toomey's parents' mountain retreat; Palomba basin; Philippe Starck-designed tub. Opposite page: Peter Stutchbury-designed shower.