

FORM + FUNCTION

Transform your guest
bathrooms with these
up-to-the-minute
design details.

By Mark Wolinsky, president of WETSTYLE



Design concepts and strategies within the hospitality realm are continually evolving to meet both the changing needs and desires of guests. These concepts can be viewed in a broad strokes manner, evaluating interiors, exteriors, and included amenities, and they can also be understood in a more finite, specific method. In this light, attention can and should be granted to the changing role of the bathroom in hospitality design. Shifting from a necessity to a design focal point in recent years, guest bathrooms and the products included in their purview have moved from sharing a traditional style to that of eye-catching contemporary aesthetics. Included in this shift are bathroom vanities and storage units, which have become central elements in these spaces, exuding a style that often dictates the design for the remainder of the space.

At WETSTYLE, this has been a significant focus of our latest launches, including the Deco and C2 Collections—both centered around

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decorative vanities. These collections share a contemporary aesthetic that celebrates styles of the past in a more modern way. To better explain, Deco is inspired by the Art Deco period, but demonstrates a clean, sleek facade that matches with today's modern preferences. Renowned for their silhouettes, but more critically recognized for their integration of distinctive details, both collections are representative of the larger push for carefully curated finish options

and customizable elements across the marketplace.

Real wood finishes are particularly prevalent and will continue to be, as Scandinavian design, as well as those that celebrate nature's finest, remain favorites of those seeking a clean look in the bath. Variations of oak have become increasingly popular as a result, with lighter shades of the material preferred and finishes often in gray tones. Second to the ever-popular white glazes and paints used in the bath, gray has come into its own, providing an alternative with a bit more warmth to its saturation. Lacquers used on vanities have integrated the gray hue with ardor, with hoteliers viewing it as a color that is light, easy on the eye, and shows less wear and tear than traditional white. Durability is connected to gray's popularity, as is the launch of materials engineered to withstand heavy use.

Noticeable across bath products, but especially with ceramic elements,



AN UPDATED APPROACH TO BATHROOM DESIGN

Hotel guest bathroom design has gone beyond the standard shower, sink, toilet, and storage space. Today's guests want to be transported to a spa-like space that includes the creature comforts of home with a one-of-a-kind boutique aesthetic. Whether they're staying at a 1,000-room hotel or a 50-room boutique property, leisure and business travelers want the same unique, intimate feeling that they would find in their own residence. Here are some tips on how to design a bathroom for your guests that not only meets their demands, but also exceeds them.

THE FIRST STEP: I usually want to know more about the demographic of the hotel's target customer. I want to know which functions are important to them as well as what ideas and visions they see for your property. It is very important to know your audience. I have worked on projects all over the world; some require toilets to face a certain direction due to religious practices, and some require additional fixtures due to culture.

STORAGE OPTIONS: Guests want functional bathrooms with efficient storage options. They also expect a convenient location for their personal belongings, along with outlets and mirrors as well as efficient lighting.

SETTING THE TONE: You don't want the bathroom to feel like a departure from the guest room. I keep the same color palette in the bathroom, but only use neutral shades.

MATERIAL SELECTION: I find it important not to have too much going on in the bathroom. You always want a "wow" factor in the space, so whether it's an accent mosaic on the vanity wall or shower, you should limit it to one. The key is to always have great lighting in the bathroom. A bathroom with great lighting and high-end, timeless materials will stand the test of time.

MUST-HAVE SUPPLIERS: Depending on the project's budget, I like Dornbracht, Grohe, and Kohler for plumbing fixtures. For stones and materials, I recommend Ann Sacks, Arizona Tile, Artistic Tile, and Stone Source.

AN UNDERLOOKED ELEMENT: Providing simple, yet beautiful, vanity detailing and using the latest stones and materials is a sure way to achieve an understated elegance.

WHAT HOTELIERS EXPECT: It's important to know all of the amenities that they will be providing in the space, so that the design accommodates everything properly.

THE NEXT TREND: Hoteliers want more technology incorporated into the bathrooms, such as touch-pad controls for high-end tubs and mirrors with hidden TVs. Placement and user-friendly technology is very important.

Lisa Patton, associate design director, Wilson Associates' Dallas studio

manufacturers have been tirelessly working in tandem with hoteliers and operators to create products that are made to last. WETSTYLE's WETMAR BiO is an example of this. The material, used to create bathtubs and sinks, is made from an organic solid surface crafted from a natural stone composite sourced with a blend of vegetable resin (soy and corn) and mineral stone. The resulting material underscores its earthy origins, offering a highly durable surface that provides chemical, stain, and slip resistant properties that enhance hotel bathrooms—and make the operator's life a bit easier by saving on maintenance costs. Engineered materials of this sort are also beneficial in their easy-to-repair capabilities. In opposition to traditional ceramic, bio-engineered materials can be

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repaired easily, with chips and scratches fixed in timelier, more cost-effective methods.

The silhouettes of each piece have taken form more and more as transitional pieces, with both integrated and vessel styles still top of mind in the hospitality market. Integrated sinks have proven their popularity in matters of durability and aesthetic, working with vanity units for a cohesive framework in the bath. Alongside these frequently selected styles, those with custom capabilities have risen to the top. Needed for the varied sizing of guest baths, especially those located in renovated or repurposed buildings, custom sizing is in demand.

Across the board, the hospitality marketplace yearns for custom offerings, from sizing to finishes. Custom products allow for hoteliers to work with a variety of space requirements, and give guests a unique, one-of-a-kind experience. As the need to





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differentiate themselves from competition across the hospitality market increases, so does the desire for customizable pieces; these elements, be they small or large, are the differentiators between brands. WETSTYLE has long been enmeshed in the world of customization, crafting furnishings for its hospitality customers that match their aesthetic, sizing requirements, and brand-guest goals. These requests have only increased in recent years, as hoteliers have seen the benefits yielded for guests and operators in installing custom pieces.

Custom-built free-standing models for vanities and bathtubs have been particularly in vogue for luxury hoteliers, who have dedicated space for larger-scale bathroom

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suites designed for relaxation and spa-like ambiance. Sculptural bathtubs are especially relevant in this tangent, emerging as the select choice for hoteliers ingraining themselves in the ongoing wellness trends. Bathtubs of this design are symbolic of relaxation and spa-like luxury, and offer a unique facet within suites. Their free-standing silhouettes and the architectural detail they provide blend seamlessly with the newly trending hotel spaces that merge bathrooms with bedrooms for a more open, mixed retreat. Providing an asset, as opposed to an interruption, sculptural bathtubs are being used more and more to enhance spaces. A symbol of a get away or relaxed, easy-going lifestyle, sculptural bathtubs are a timeless design detail that remains a hotel favorite. **HT**