

## Time to relax

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**As our lives get ever-more stressful, the wellness trend in bathroom design is evolving to encompass increasingly luxurious products. CID takes a look at what's on offer**

One of the biggest developments in bathroom design over recent years is its transformation from a purely utilitarian space into a centre of wellness – a personal haven.



"We live in an increasingly stressful world with every moment of our days filled with activity," explained Robert Pearce, managing director, Jacuzzi Middle East. "People feel the need for a quiet space where they can regroup and relax, away from the noise and haste of everyday life. The bathroom is frequently the only place where we can be completely alone and quiet."

As daily life becomes ever-more fraught, bathroom designers are responding with increasingly luxurious, high-end products. "We believe that wellness is a trend that will become increasingly more important to people as they re-evaluate their lives and priorities. People are focusing more on their personal lives and family wellbeing and less on long working hours and stress-filled days," said Pearce.

Alessandro Pagliarani, export area manager for Teuco, agreed. "The importance of 'wellness moments' is increasing, and will continue to increase. We all live very busy and stressful lives, so we need time to dedicate to ourselves, in an intimate context.

"The bathroom is the ideal room to relax in and to take care of our body and our mind. It's up to bathroom companies to carry on giving wellness new aesthetic meanings and suggestions, and creating emotionally involving wellness areas," he continued.

### High technology

Technological advances in bathroom design mean that those 'wellness moments' can now be experienced at the touch of a button.

As the original innovator of hydrotherapy for the home, the Jacuzzi brand continues to be at the forefront of 'wellness' product design, offering everything from whirlpool baths, cascade and rain showers to steam showers and body jets.

These products do not just feel like heaven to lie in, they are good for your body too – hydromassage can alleviate the muscle tightness produced by stress and anxiety, relieve muscle soreness by facilitating the removal of lactic acid, open the blood vessels to improve circulation, help the muscles around arthritic joints relax, and promote the flow of endorphins. "A technically correct hydromassage is very different from simply blowing bubbles into water," Pearce explained. "Jacuzzi-designed and -patented jets create a 50/50 mix of air and water that is powerful yet comfortable, to relieve aching muscles and release tension."

The company's latest innovation, the Aquasystem, has four customised forms of water massage: silent, breath, renew and dream, which have been designed to make minimal noise so as not to disturb the senses.

As well as hydrotherapy, numerous other features have been added on to a simple bath tub to make the bathing experience the ultimate indulgence. Skyline from Jacuzzi, for example, is the first line of home spas in the world with a constant-level water, thanks to its automatic compensation system. The pool allows the opportunity to enjoy the luxury of sinking into a spa with the

water at overflow level.

The spa has numerous other technical features, including an 'insound' audio system. With speakers hidden under the spa's grate, the audio system is managed from an LCD control panel.

Users can select the music of their choice, decide on which of the five jets they feel like using and set them at their chosen intensity and position. On top of that, there are 14 aromatherapy blowers, which give an 'air aroma' of favourite perfumed essences.

### **High design**

Similarly, Teuco is going all out to create bathroom products that offer the ultimate in luxurious bathing. In the 1980s, the company was the first to develop a hammam inside a shower cabin.

It has now come up with its own hydromassage system, which is unique in being the first completely silent whirlpool to enter the market. Hydrosilence has eliminated all artificial noises, meaning that when you sink into the tub, all you can hear is a murmuring swish of water, and no whirling of the jets. "The concept of wellness for us is strictly related to the sensorial and emotional water experience," said Pagliarani.

"We want to use our innovative and flexible technologies to liberate the beauty of water, and to join the beneficial effects of water massage to the pleasure of beautiful and stylish design objects," he added.

"We want to create an intimate setting for wellbeing within the home, where true luxury is synonymous with the simplicity and naturalness of emotions, without any artifice. Our technology is present, yet invisible, and allows us to enjoy the beauty and sensations afforded by water."

To this end, many of Teuco's wellness designs focus on featuring the highest level of technological advances, completely hidden away within stylish designs. An example is the Sorgente bathtub: it features highly advanced technologies, including Hydrosilence, and recirculation, heating and filtration solutions, all completely integrated within the bathroom setting.

"People don't want to be forced to choose between wellness and design, so the the bathroom sector has to offer wellness, hiding technologic elements and exalting materials and designs," explained Pagliarani.

### **Wellness evolution**

One might have thought that the onset of the global recession would signal some leaner, meaner times for the bathroom, with the downturn perhaps being reflected in less indulgent bathing products and a return to the more utilitarian-style spaces of the past.

But not so, say bathroom companies. Demand for luxurious bathing products is stronger than ever.

"While people are cutting back on luxuries such as branded clothes and bags, they are still choosing to invest in luxury bathroom products as they ultimately add to the value of a property," said Pearce from Jacuzzi. "There will always be a certain segment of society that has the freedom to purchase high-end goods and at this top end of the market we have not seen a decline."

The desire to escape from daily life and indulge in wellness experiences is such that people are still prepared to spend that little bit extra on an indulgent space in which to pamper themselves, Pagliarani added.

"Consumption has dramatically stopped all over the world, but people haven't stopped dreaming.

"Luxury is not a very expensive or inaccessible product; luxury is there to make you feel better, it's there to allow yourself a little moment of pleasure. And to have a bathroom that delivers wellness functions and design day by day is increasingly becoming a strong desire of a large part of the public.

"It's the favourite kind of 'luxury' that people aspire to treat themselves to," Pagliarani concluded.

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