



A SOFT TOUCH

Bathrooms in period and country houses need to marry function and design, while complementing the fabric of the building. The aim is to walk in to a room that happens to contain a bath. As this is a guest room, we laid carpet to add a sense of warmth and luxury, further enhanced with the full-length curtains, which hang from a nineteenth-century Gothic painted pelmet. The 'room' qualities continue through with the pictures and the shelves holding china.

Mark Gillette



BATHED IN BEAUTY

Although one of the most functional rooms of the home, the bathroom should also be a beautiful space that is inviting, indulgent and fit for a sumptuous soak and a spot of pampering

Jacqueline Duncan, principal of Inchbald School of Design, suggests the bathroom should "be the kind of space that offers comfort and pleasure, rather than a technical look that challenges one's less-than-perfect naked body." Often, the practical aspects of the room are prioritised so that it runs the risk of

becoming a sleek, minimalist space that is out of sorts with the rest of the home. However, the same decorative ideas that are used in other rooms can also be employed in the bathroom. Here, interior designers offer insights on how to create a heavenly retreat using soft furnishings, pattern, colour and comforting touches.



FEMININE FLOURISH

Sleek, glossy surfaces and plenty of mirrors help create an illusion of space; however, it can look a little hard. A light colour scheme creates a calm, elegant haven in which to pamper and indulge. Soften the scheme further with decorative lighting, pretty, feminine accessories, displays of family photographs and lovely fresh flowers.

Emily Todhunter



ELEGANT STORAGE

Storage is essential in any bathroom, but the furniture should be designed to fit the period of the home and personality of the client. Both fitted or free-standing vanity cabinets, with top-mounted or integrated basins, allow for a clutter-free zone. Mirrors above reflect the light and add space to smaller rooms.

Sarah Cunningham, Hayburn



TEXTURAL ELEMENTS

This bathroom uses a range of fabulous textures, such as marble, iridescent tiles and oversized travertine floor tiles to define the different areas, united by a tranquil colour palette. Glamour has been added with a crystal chandelier, a sweet wash bowl and chunky glass shelving.

Brenda Gibson

COLOUR INSPIRATION

The colours of the bath inspired me to use tones and materials that would reflect an earthy and natural feel. The walls have been painted in a terracotta colour to create a cave-like effect, whilst the African slate adds depth and texture. The artwork brings the whole design to life and draws extra focus to the bath, ensuring it remains the hero of the room.

Joe Burns ▶





CLEVER CONCEALMENT

This room was originally a bedroom, thus has lovely proportions and a fireplace (not seen), which has become a focal point. Whilst it is lovely to have a fireplace in the bathroom, current regulations do not allow for gas fires so it either needs to be a real open fire or just a decorative feature. The built-in shower is actually a steam shower, so in order to conceal the mechanism for this the area above was boxed out to allow for the storage of the works, which can be accessed from the dressing room next door. This in turn meant replicating the original cornice to follow the line of the new wall in order to make the room feel harmonious. The shower door and stylistic engraving on the doors were specially commissioned, as was the marble bath which, because of its weight, meant the floor had to be reinforced.

The walls are actually hand stencilled rather than wallpaper, which is a more practical solution when you have a damp environment.

Henrietta Spencer-Churchill



CLASSICAL NOTES

For a traditional feel, treat the bathroom as the main room and keep wet areas, such as showers and bidets, away from your bathroom vanity space in an area off your main bathroom. Start the look with a free-standing Victorian roll-top bath; this could be an original antique or a modern copy. Then select classically styled taps and enhance the look with traditional fittings such as towel rails – Black Country or Drummonds are good suppliers. An insider trick we often use is to source antique furniture to create a vanity unit with a basin for a striking and original look. Use an antique chest of drawers or cupboard unit, top with marble and use an under-fit basin. The key to creating a traditional, decorative look is to soften the whole room with textiles. We have used an antique rug on the floor and then put a bathmat over the top. Choose fabric blinds and curtains in floral prints, or decorative linens create a lovely period look. Finally, furnish with an antique piece or tub chair for a relaxed and soft effect.

Joanna Wood ■

INTRODUCING THE DESIGNERS



Joanna Wood

International interior designer Joanna Wood founded her company, Joanna Trading, 20 years ago. She and her team are recognised for their range of contemporary and traditional interiors.

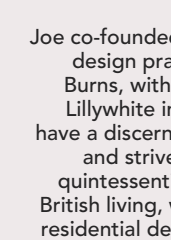
Henrietta Spencer-Churchill

Henrietta founded interior design company Woodstock Designs in 1981. In 1986 she also formed Spencer-Churchill Designs, to produce fabrics and wallpapers and this year is also set to launch furniture and lighting collections.



Emily Todhunter

Emily founded her own company in 1988 and was joined by Kate Earle in 1998, to create Todhunter Earle Interiors. The Emily Todhunter Collection includes accessories, fabrics and wallpapers designed by Emily, Kate and their team.



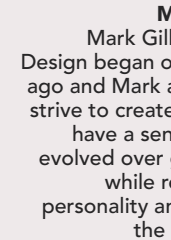
Joe Burns

Joe co-founded his interior design practice, Oliver Burns, with wife Sharon Lillywhite in 2004. They have a discerning clientele and strive to redefine quintessential, luxurious British living, with opulent residential developments.



Brenda Gibson

Brenda has a keen interest in the architectural side of design and founded the Complete Interior Co in 1998. Brenda often lectures at the KLC School of Design and she is currently serving on the membership committee at the BILD.



Mark Gillette

Mark Gillette Interior Design began over 20 years ago and Mark and his team strive to create homes that have a sense of having evolved over generations, while reflecting the personality and desires of the homeowner.



Hayburn & Co

Sarah Cunningham is a designer for Hayburn & Co, which for over 40 years has produced architectural joinery for the finest homes. Its beautiful products range from fitted furniture and kitchens to doors, windows, skirting and architrave.