

PRESS RELEASE

Soaking yourself happy

As the bathroom has evolved from a purely utilitarian space, into a space that facilitates everyday wellness, the bathtub remains a pivotal feature in this space. Blanche Burger from Bathroom Bizarre offers some advice for those looking to invest in a new bathtub.

30 June 2016, Johannesburg: Just like the bathroom, the bathtub has progressed from being a purely functional installation, into becoming something that is not only visually appealing, but also allows you to soak away all your troubles in the comfort of your own home.

Says Blanche Burger from leading sanitaryware, tile and flooring supplier, Bathroom Bizarre: “These days, when it comes to choosing a bath, the possibilities are endless – options include spa baths, classic ball-and-claw tubs, freestanding, corner, drop-in, three-wall alcove, and under-mount baths. Buying a bath is no longer a simple decision, and because a bath can be a permanent and expensive purchase, it is very important to do a little research before making your purchase decision.”

Different types of baths

Baths these days come in all different shapes and sizes. Blanche notes: “The type of bath you choose should not just be a decision made purely on aesthetics, but also on how you will use the tub. It is essential to consider the practical things as well - will small kids or elderly members of the family be using it, what kind of space do you have in your bathroom, and do you like to take long, leisurely baths? The answers to all these questions will impact the type of bath you choose.” Here are the main different types of baths available to you:

- **The standard bathtub:** Standard baths are the simplest types of baths available. The most common size is around 1800mm in length x 800mm wide x 430mm deep. They are a great option for the more budget conscious, they boast a more compact design that makes them suitable for smaller bathrooms, and they work well as a bath-shower combination.
- **The corner bathtub:** Installed in a corner of the bathroom – they are an excellent space-saving addition to any bathroom. Some have a built-in seating area, which can be very convenient. Bear in mind however, that not all corner baths can accommodate a shower as well.
- **The freestanding bathtub:** Freestanding baths are all the rage at the moment – standing as a focal feature in any bathroom they grace, their sculptural design makes for an impactful feature in any bathroom. You can choose from footed, skirted or decked freestanding baths.
- **The ball-and-claw bathtub:** Classical in its appeal, and feminine in shape, the ball-and-claw bath will never go out of fashion. These baths were named after the ornate feet that support the tub. Dating back to the Victorian times, ball-and-claw baths were originally made from enamel

cast iron, however, today there are lighter, more affordable versions also being made from acrylic.

- **The deep-soaking bathtub:** This is the ideal choice for those who love taking long, leisurely soaks in the bath – these baths are wider, deeper and longer than the conventional bath. They epitomise the romance and luxury associated with bathing.
- **The spa bath:** For those looking to replicate a spa-like retreat in their own homes, then a spa bath is a must-have inclusion. These baths use jets to soothe muscles and massage the body with thousands of tiny bubbles. Bear in mind that many types of baths can be specially fitted with jets if so required.

Bath materials

Today, baths are made from a number of different materials, explains Blanche: “In addition to coming in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, baths are also available in a number of different materials. Although baths can be made from an endless variety of exotic materials, such as wood and concrete for example, the five main materials currently on the market include fibreglass, acrylic, cast polymer, solid surface and enamelled cast iron.”

- **Fibreglass:** Fibreglass baths are manufactured from a fibreglass backing material that is finished with a layer of polyester gel coat. Wood or metal reinforcement is often added for added strength. Generally speaking, they are some of the most affordable baths currently on the market, and they are very lightweight. However, they do not retain heat very well.
- **Acrylic:** Made from acrylic sheets that have been heated, formed into a mould and reinforced with fibreglass, after which wood or metal reinforcement is usually added for strength. Acrylic baths are resistant to abrasion and fading, they tend to hold heat well, especially if they are insulated, however, they may scratch.
- **Cast polymer:** Cast polymer is an umbrella term referring to the production of "synthetic" cast products. It is often made from either cultured marble, cultured onyx, cultured granite, however, more recently additional materials such as engineered stone and other polyester and acrylic resin based materials have been used as well. This material mimics the look of natural stone, while offering the flexibility of synthetic materials, and it retains heat exceptionally well.
- **Enamelled cast iron:** All old fashioned baths were made using enamelled cast iron – it comprises cast iron that has been moulded into a bathtub shape and finished with an enamel coating. It is generally thicker than any other materials, and incredibly durable and hardwearing. Although it retains heat very well, it is very heavy and priced at the upper end of the price spectrum.
- **Solid surface:** Solid surface is a man-made material usually composed of a combination of marble dust, bauxite, acrylic, epoxy or polyester resins and pigments. Although it is an expensive material, there are a lot of benefits, including the fact that it is available in a wide variety of colours,

it is stain-resistant, the colour and texture remain intact despite wear and tear, and it retains heat very well.

Blanche concludes: “Although a shower is the fastest way of getting clean, there is nothing quite like taking a long leisurely soak in a hot bath. They are soothing, relaxing and offer an almost meditative reprieve from the stresses and strains of the outside world. Every home should have at least one bath so that those who live there can benefit from the many rewarding benefits that they offer.”

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Released on behalf of Bathroom Bizarre (www.bathroom.co.za) by The Line (www.theline.co.za).