

Minimalist Design in Spa Retreats

By Carol Lamkins, CMKBD, CID

Today “less is more” trend incorporates modern design with open-space planning and stripped-down, seemingly simple forms. The basis is that form follows your functional needs. The result is that the clean minimalist design for the private retreat suggests the spa getaway that tames the stress levels and rejuvenates the spirit.

Minimalism was developed in the 20th century as an artistic movement whose principles stress using a minimum number of colors, shapes, lines and textures. Designers and architects adopted the style, resulting in homes that were sparse and simple, yet elegant featuring architectural forms, uninterrupted planes, and neutral colors.

The minimalist trend draws inspiration from nature. This approach in home spa design translates to maximum space, minimum fuss and simple luxury. Surfaces are smooth, lines sculptural and sensual, and clutter is eliminated. Walls, floors, ceilings and any other surfaces, whether vertical such as the shower enclosure or cabinet doors or horizontal such as shelving and lavatories and their surrounds or supporting counters, must be clean, crisp and as uninterrupted as possible. Simple home spas often contain gently flowing water, rich wood, and smooth slate. Visual interest can also be added with textures and materials, both man-made (glass, steel, ceramic tile, and composite materials) and natural (wood and all types of stone).

Simple can be enhanced by choosing appropriate materials and minimal accents such as candles, shelving, mirrors, etc. Suggest a theme with a few well-chosen accessories and accents to infuse the warm elegance of a Scandinavian sauna, the Zen simplicity of an Asian bath, or the elemental beauty of an adobe sweat lodge. The few accessories often include organic cotton towels and soft candlelight.



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Colors are calm and neutral, in whites, beiges and grays reminiscent of natural elements such as clouds, sandy beaches and river rocks. While minimalism generally demands a monochromatic color palette, strong or even muted colors can be used on one or several of the room's key planes.

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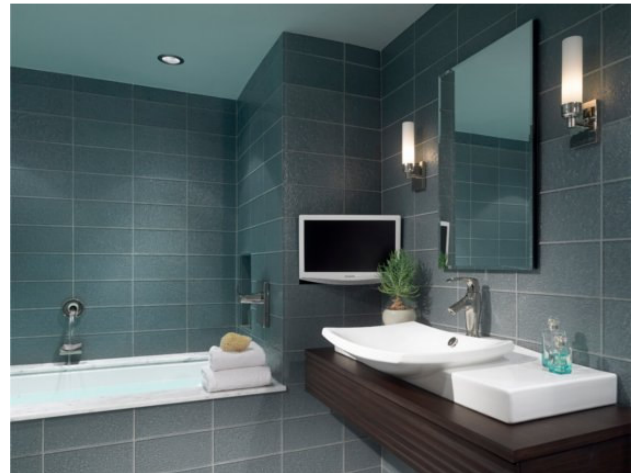
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Minimalism in bathroom fixtures translates into simple architectural forms; geometric shapes; smooth, sculptural lines; and low profiles. Function versus traditional designs is the driving force.



Porcelanosa

The vessel-type lavatories raised above the countertops suggest the past with a simple contemporary flair. Also wall-mounted, space-saving lavatories, take their cue from contemporary Europe and Asia. Popular materials include glass and stainless steel.



Kohler

Fittings are sleek with a minimum of ornamentation. Faucets and handles should be modern in design, straightforward and minimal. Each piece should be the right size to serve its function without distracting from the lines of the fixtures.



Kohler

Streamlined, one-piece toilets reinforce the clean, uncluttered look. No more are product designer limited by traditional design. The unique Kohler Purist® Hatbox™ toilet epitomizes minimalist design. Just above 17 inches high, the tankless toilet is an elliptical cylinder that looks like a tall hatbox. Its Power Lite flushing technology eliminates the need for an exterior tank, and conserves water as well as space.

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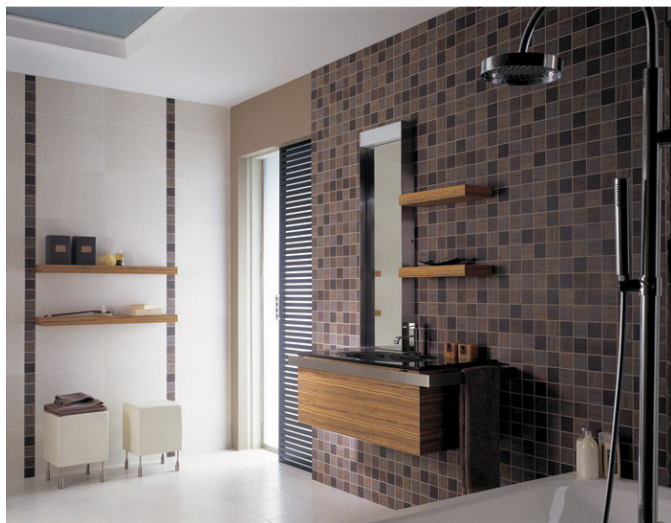
Most of today's whirlpool tubs are ergonomically correct with head and arm rests for maximum comfort. Jets are positioned to create ultimate relaxation. The market is in full swing with jetted showers using body sprays to focus on tight muscles. Tub and shower design is driven by ergonomic factors that result in a pleasurable experience.



American Standard



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Furnishing the spa bathroom incorporates closed cabinets hiding essential supplies for a clutter-free look. Building in storage options, rather than using pieces of furniture, helps open up a tight space. In minimalist style, storage is usually systematic using the most beneficial dimensions for the basic storage unit and grouping it in multiples. From constructing an entire wall of shelving or cabinetry to adding cabinet units under or over the bathroom counter, it is possible to create a clutter-free space. Use touch latches in closed

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storage instead of visible hardware or bar pulls or simple knobs. All pieces of furniture should sport clean details and strong lines, while being made of materials pleasing both to the eye and to the touch. Simple chairs and lounges with clean lines add to the functional aspect of the space.



Kohler



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Other items you might find camouflaged in a spa bathroom are electronic faucets, smart toilets, tanning showers, saunas and spa showers, towel warmers and heated floors or shower rain heads and body sprays.

Using imagination and focusing on the bathroom's space and geometry will result in rewards of a simple, elegant, serene escape – where you can relax and let all your cares melt away.

Resources:

American Standard
Kohler
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