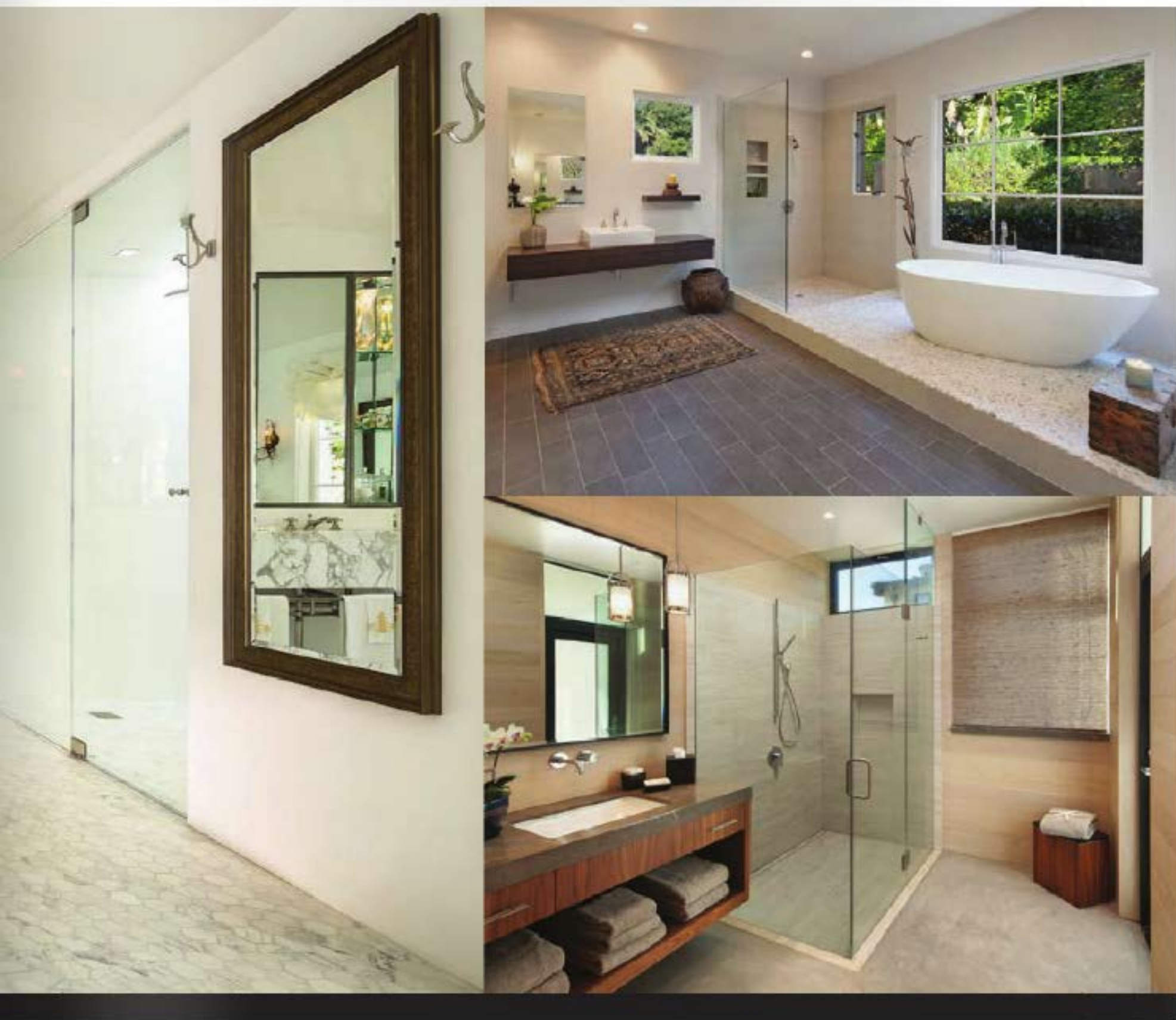


Trends for the
TUB ROOM
2016 and beyond

BY BRYAN HENSON • PHOTOS BY JIM BARTSCH



Two major national studies in 2015 that revealed 40% of home renovations included updating a bathroom. At Allen Construction, an even greater percentage of our remodels also include bathroom updates. We find that most homeowners want their bathrooms to look current and add value to their homes, but also want to avoid selecting options that will become the “pink sinks and tubs” of the 21st Century. Here are some timeless and trending options we would recommend considering as you think about refreshing your bathroom design:

SPA-INSPIRED SETTING

No longer just a utilitarian space, today’s bathrooms are sanctuaries in which to relax. We like to start with a fresh color palette of whites; crisp, light finishes; and natural light—think tranquil and serene. Higher ceilings and more generous space floorplans make it a space you want

to retreat. Heated towel bars, floor warming systems, heated mirrors that don’t fog over, and audio system add to the haven-like ambiance. Statement mirrors in lieu of medicine cabinets provide an opportunity to amp-up style that can be changed inexpensively as trends change.

TILE & STONE

One of the primary design challenges we see is to give our clients a modern look, with low risk of becoming dated in the future. Natural stones in muted, classic colors have withstood for hundreds of years and will never go out of style. Even though we recommend going neutral on the hard finishes, you can add vibrant pops of color with soft goods like towels, flowers, accessories. These items can be easily and inexpensively switched out to keep up with color trends.

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LIGHTING

Lighting in the bathroom should be fun and personal...especially since it can always be changed later pretty easily. Natural light is ALWAYS the best light in a bathroom. Whenever possible, East light (morning light) is best. Skylights are another good option. Code requires LEDs, so make sure to select warm or full spectrum LED bulb or lamp.

WHEN IN DROUGHT...

Companies like Sloan and Saniflow offer simple under-counter units that pump the recycled water to flush the toilet. These units can save up to 6000 gallons a year. Shower and sink lines can be diverted to water lawns and other decorative landscape. Since these types of systems are usually passive (requires no power, operates with gravity) they can be relatively cheap to install, especially during new construction or remodeling. An on-demand water heater in combination with either a recirculating loop or solar hot water heater can significantly reduce the water wasted while you are waiting for it to get hot. A recirculating loop circulates water until it is hot at the fixture, at which point you can turn

it on. A simple solar water tank like a SolPal provides instant start up hot water until the heater kicks in.

Significant changes in technology means that "low flow" no longer means sacrificing a high flow feel. Most new fixtures fit the low flow

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requirements. However, if they don't come standard as low flow, there are flow regulators that can be applied to most fixtures that save water without feeling wimpy.

FREE STANDING TUBS

Free standing tubs that create a centerpiece in the bathroom are an ongoing upscale item. One shift we have seen is that many clients are omitting tubs from master bath, as long as there is at least one tub somewhere else in the house.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Curbless showers should be considered a necessity if you'd like to stay in your home well into your golden years. Be sure to also put in structural backing for future grab bar support.

UPSCALE UPGRADES

Just like a professional-grade kitchen, a spectacular bathroom is expected in a multi-million dollar residence. Our most discriminating clientele request Roman tubs, infrared saunas, separate his and her bathrooms, and wet rooms (also known as open showers).

As you start to fantasize about your dream bathroom, be sure to keep in mind that the cost of a bathroom remodel can vary significantly based on flooring, tub, shower, fixture, and tile selections. We recommend creating a "dream look" binder, then get both a builder and architect involved as early as possible in order to help you keep your budget in check while you design a space that feels like you splurged.

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