

BATHING BEAUTIES

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When form elegantly melds with function it's a design success worthy of celebration, and nowhere in the home is this joyous marriage more welcome than the bath.

Far from the utilitarian, sterile spaces of days gone by; today's bathrooms are given the attention to design and luxury once reserved for far more public areas of the home.

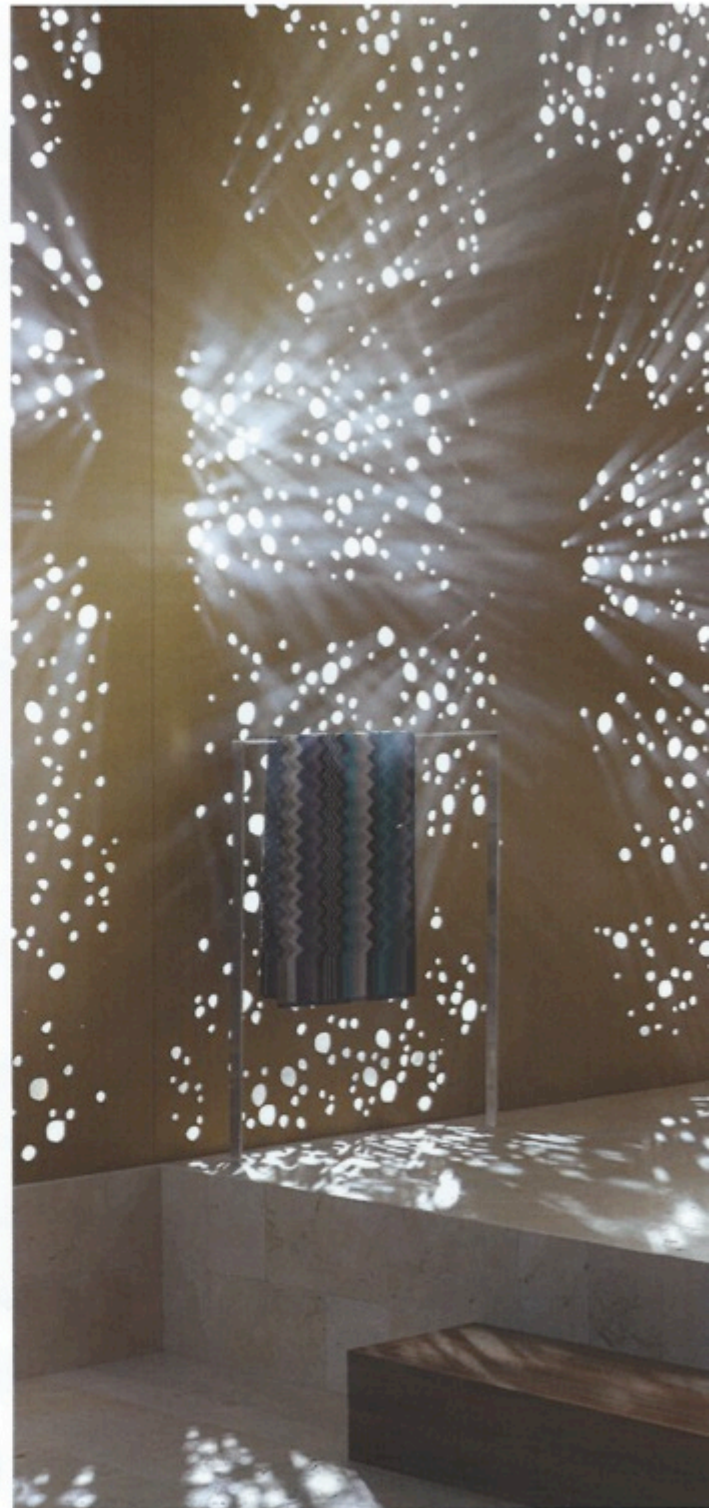
Designers are dreaming up residential baths boasting upscale finishes that give even the most exclusive spas a run for their money. With design plans that call for exotic woods, artisanal tiles, sumptuous textiles and luxurious fixtures; jaw dropping bathrooms are quickly becoming the expectation rather than the exception in high end construction.

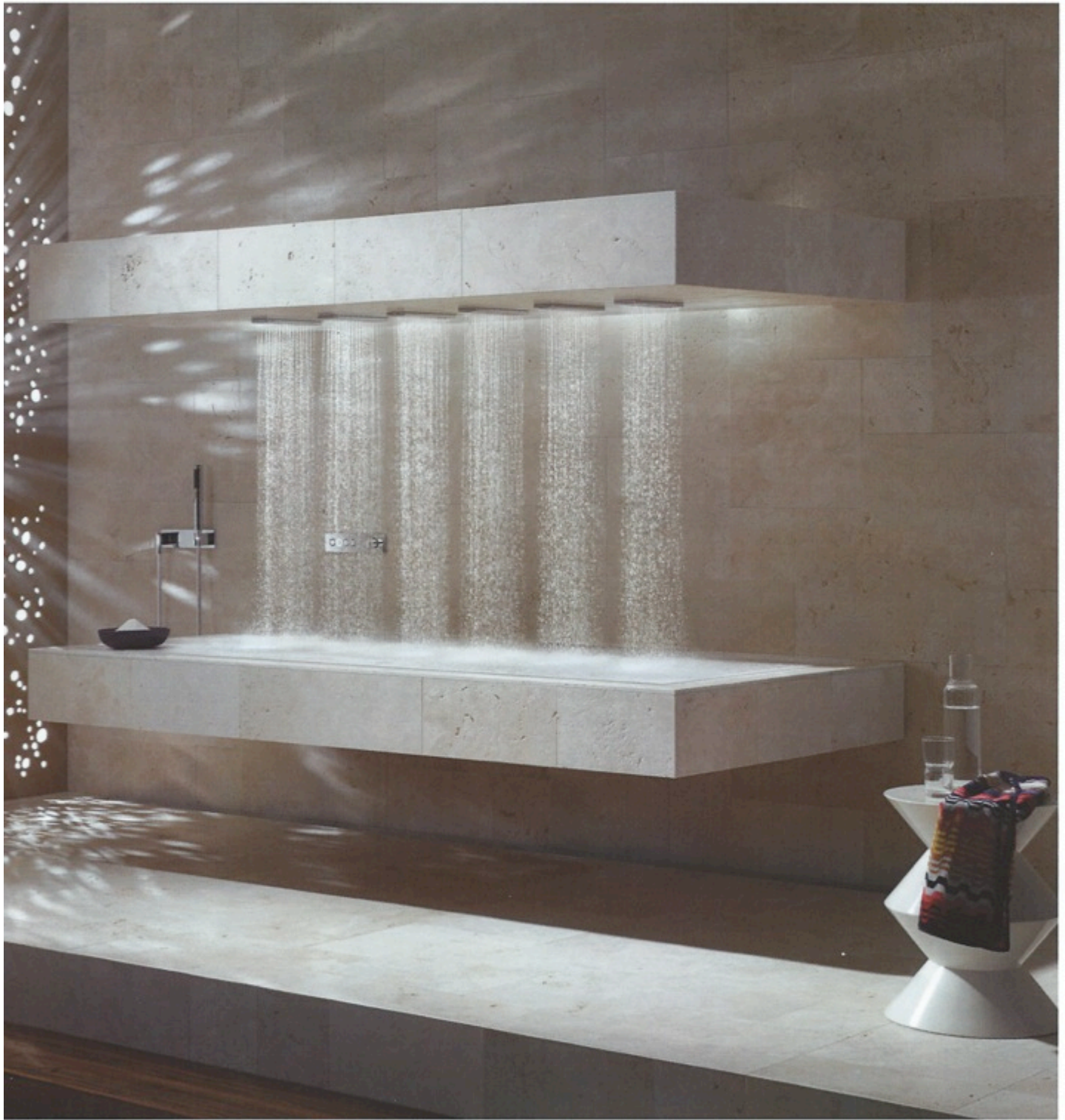
Leading the pack in upscale bathroom fixtures are the offerings from Dornbracht. A family run business with more than sixty years of innovative design under their very chic belt, this German company is no stranger to the upscale market.

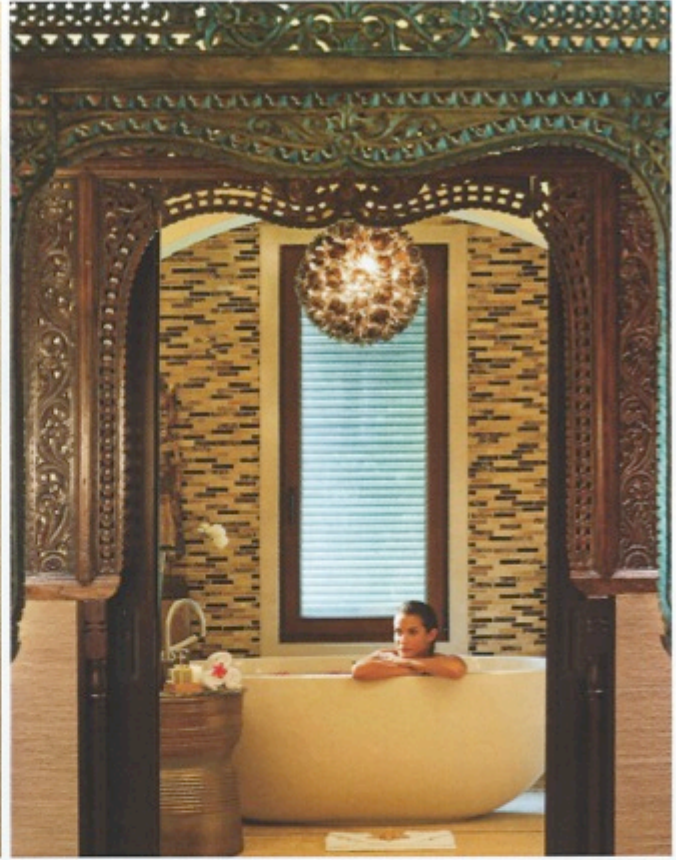
While the elegant reach of Dornbracht extends to a complete line of sleek and sigh worthy fixtures, the crown jewels of their collection are, arguably, the amazing shower options. High on the "must-have" lists of designers and clients and boasting a veritable treasure trove of indulgence; classifying these hedonistic beauties as simply showerheads would be akin to referring to the Maserati Quattroporte as a nice little family sedan.

What does it take to elevate a shower to Dornbracht standards? For starters, you don't even have to stand up. Their Horizontal Shower drenches you with six water bar sprayers inspired by the baths at Vichy. The effect for those inclined to recline is not unlike having a private, watery masseuse at your disposal.

If you're more of a stand up traditionalist, they've engineered the sublime Sensory Sky System to mimic the effects of nature. The Sensory Sky's repertoire includes everything from a soft drizzle, replete with delicate scents and foggy mist to an invigorating summer storm that offers water glistening with programmable LED color – all controlled by the intuitive Ambience Tuning Technique, ATT for short. With Dornbracht's ATT technology, you are the maestro with the ability to create your own perfect shower of Eden.







Opposite page clockwise
from top: Dornbracht's
Vertical Shower with
Ambience Tuning
Technique, Tyrrell & Laing's
Imperial Tub sited in Villa
Manzu, Costa Rica and
Tyrrell & Laing's Imperial
Tub sited in Gayatri Park
Hotel, India

For those who prefer a sensual soak rather than a symphonic shower, the Imperia tub from Tyrrell & Laing International is a head turner. Despite its monolithic measurements (76" x 45") and impressive depth, this freestanding beauty has surprisingly graceful lines and a stately, quiet elegance. Quite possibly the largest stock ready tub available on the market today; the Imperia is sized generously enough for even the biggest bath lovers – not to mention an entire fleet of rubber ducks.

Looking for something a bit more rustic? The custom crafted concrete soaking tubs by artisan Greg Bossie (Stone Soup Concrete, Inc. – Easthampton, MA) are spectacular, sculptural marvels. In addition to being exquisitely handsome focal points, these custom vessels absorb and retain heat to ensure that your hot soak doesn't end up giving you the cold shoulder. What's more, the concrete used in creating these pieces is a green, sustainable and locally sourced product; so you can feel good about settling down to a long, languid dip.

Even with bathing options this opulent, sooner or later you'll have to venture out and dry off. When that time comes, it will take more than your basic towel to maintain a spa-worthy experience.

Frette and Porthault continue to produce world renowned linens that are nothing short of iconic. Still, more and more luxury linen lovers are discovering scores of other designers who have expanded their lines to include high end offerings. Thick, thirsty and gorgeous; bath towels by designers including Donna Karan, Ralph Lauren, Natori and Calvin Klein can be found in a seemingly endless choice of rich colors and textures.

To take your hand selected linens to the next level of comfort; a towel warming rack is a *de rigueur* accoutrement to any well-appointed bath. Warming racks are available in myriad styles and finishes to complement just about any bathroom design. You may choose to have your towels made toasty with racks that are directly plumbed into your existing heating system. Installed, those racks function as an additional source of heat for cold bathrooms on chilly mornings - particularly nice if you live in a frosty part of the world. If heated towel racks were a detail inadvertently (gasp!) overlooked when your bathroom was designed, don't despair. You can still add a free standing unit that simply plugs into a standard outlet. Either way, it's one of life's delicious little details that one quickly grows accustomed to.

All in all, with the choices and lux finishes available today; the once lowly bathroom may soon become your favorite room in the house.