

Warm up to the idea of a new shower



JULIE MCNICOL

BEFORE AND AFTER

With so many people looking to replace their bathtubs with shower stalls I thought it would be good to show how you can achieve a custom shower on both generous and cost efficient budgets.

It is important to note that I am selecting items from one manufacturer for ease of comparison. However, most plumbing fixture manufacturers will have their own versions of higher and lower end product lines.

The most popular items in showers right now are rain heads, handheld showerheads, steam, and technology (yes, that's right, a computer in your shower!).

When selecting a rain head, think about your ceiling height and how far the water is going to fall before reaching you.

If your ceiling height is tall, consider a rain head suspended from the ceiling on an arm. Lowering the fixture closer to your head ensures you experience adequate water pressure and temperature.

If the ceiling is short, consider a flush-mounted rain head. This is usually more expensive but gives a clean, modern look. The high-end, flush-mounted rainheads also come with integrated lighting like the Kohler Watertile with Ambient Rain shown here.

I always encourage my clients to install a separate handheld shower on an adjustable slide bar regardless of what other fixtures they have in the shower. It not only provides convenience for shorter and taller users, it makes cleaning and rinsing the

shower very easy (and it's great for washing the family dog).

Let's talk about steam. Gone are the days of saunas in basements. Now clients want steam right in their showers. And why not?

It's more convenient than traipsing to a basement sauna and then traipsing back upstairs for a shower. It also makes it a more private and relaxing retreat away from the rest of the household.

There are different ways to control the steam. Some systems come with their own control panel to mount on the shower wall. Others can be integrated into an entire technology system.

The high-end technology systems will control not only the steam function but also the water flow, temperature, music (if you have speakers in your shower) and which fixtures, or combinations of fixtures, work together (Kohler DTV II allows up to six shower functions). These systems can even allow users to set their own preferences, making their shower experience customized to what they like.

A more basic technology system, the Kohler DTV Prompt shown here, allows you to control only two shower functions but has features like warm-up mode which delays the water flow until it has reached your desired temperature and tells you when it is ready — a nice water saving feature.

It also allows you to pause the water flow for up to two minutes (enough time to shave!) and a countdown timer that will auto-

matically shut off the water after your specified amount of time (a great way to get your kids to hurry up in the morning!)

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