

The Robb Report COLLECTION™

REAL ESTATE AND HOME DESIGN



Kitchens & Baths

Brilliant bathrooms, new accessories and design trends

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the eFlo system is completely customizable: You can input your favorite water temperature and flow settings and store them for future use. You can also turn them—and your shower, sink or bath—on remotely from your home computer. You can even interact with your shower or bath from your sink, turning on the shower as you finish brushing your teeth. Once you enter the shower, you can call up your favorite DVD, song or website as long as it is connected to your home network. And then there is the bonus for those who do not put in their contacts until they step out of the shower, says Andy Marsh, the company's director.

"The system has voice recognition, so you can say a website or a command and have the system read the news to you," he explains. "There's also a pause option on the sink, so you can temporarily turn off the water while brushing your teeth."

The \$3,900 system, which comes with touchpads and a touchscreen for the sink, bath and shower, respectively, is currently available for purchase from the Australian website, and will be available in the U.S. at the end of the year.

For those who like the idea of "pausing" a sink, Technical Concepts, out of Mundelein, Ill., is offering technology that turns any home sink faucet into an automated faucet, just like the ones you find in public restrooms and high-end hotels. Called a Radius Touch-Free AutoFaucet, it can turn any manual faucet into an automatic one.

Smart Seat

Bemis, a toilet seat manufacturer based in Sheboygan Falls, Wis., is taking a stationary product and giving it new life. The company's \$799 Purite (pronounced pur-it-TAY) toilet seat incorporates bidet functionality into existing toilets.

"The Purite installs like a standard toilet seat and works with standard mounting, but gives you the bidet experience without the need to leave the toilet," explains Brian Pomplun, the company's senior North American products manager.

Both the water in the bidetlike device and the seat itself are heated so you never have to sit down and get a chill in the middle of the night. An air dryer continues working until you turn it off.

Home Spa Accoutrements

An increasing number of homeowners are indulging in home saunas, and the fun accompaniments that are available today.

Keysbackyard, based in Garland, Texas, recently introduced a line of resort-quality infrared saunas ranging from \$1,999 to \$3,999. Infrared saunas, which use light instead of heating elements to warm the air, transfer heat to the body without



Technical Concepts automated faucet

using steam or connectivity to a water source. The Keysbackyard models come with a built-in CD player, two digital controls, a built-in shelf and bench seating.

Those who prefer a steam experience have new accessories for their units. Mr. Steam recently introduced several new sauna add-ons, including an aromatherapy injector pump, speakers and chromalights. For example, the \$949 Aromasteam System is an electronic oil delivery system that infuses aroma into a sauna's steam line without changing the look of the actual steam enclosure.

"All you see is an on-off switch," explains Martha Orellana, vice president of sales at Mr. Steam. The same can be said for the \$289 Chromasteam product, which incorporates LED lights into the spa experience to help change the mood of the sauna and the sauna user.

Spa manufacturer Jacuzzi, based in Dallas, is making it easier for those people who like the functionality of having a TV in the bathroom, but do not want to see it once they are done using it. In April the company announced its Lift-It system, an aluminum-frame elevation system for plasma and other flat-screen TVs. Basically, the system tucks your TV out of sight with the push of a button.

In the future, says Magnolia's Peterson, technology will tie all of these products' functionalities together.

"I see a future where you'll tell your tub to fill using your BlackBerry and be able to queue up your favorite CD and DVDs at the same time," he says. "Form is definitely going to follow desire." □

Magnolia, a Best Buy company, www.magnoliaau.com

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Keysbackyard, 866.776.0999, www.keysbackyard.com

Mr. Steam, 800.767.8326 (East Coast), 800.727.8326 (West Coast), www.mrsteam.com

Jacuzzi, 800.288.4002, www.jacuzzi.com