

Expansive & Adaptable

Open shower enclosures incorporate spa-like features designed to personalize the space.

BY ELIZABETH RICHARDS

Busy lifestyles often mean an increase in showering and less time spent lounging in a tub. A consumer move away from bathtubs elevates the expectations for the showering space. As a result, large, luxurious showers are on the rise, with enclosures trending toward open, spacious designs that highlight beauty and style. Shower features and technologies are varied and multifunctional, and consumers are more often choosing low- and no-threshold options for easy accessibility. That's according to manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*.

"The bathroom square footage space isn't necessarily getting larger, but the square footage dedicated to the shower space is – where homeowners are often opting for smaller tubs or no tubs at all to accommodate a larger shower area," says Greg Weyman, v.p./marketing for Basco Shower Enclosures in Mason, OH.

"The tub-to-shower conversion is the biggest remodeling project in North America," states Robert Sears of Trending Accessibility based in Pensauken, NJ. "Consumers want to remove the largest physical barrier in the room, the bathtub," he says. "We see a large demand for European Wet Rooms that are a whole room solution for waterproofing the room and providing a curbless result," he adds.

Designers must also cater to the desire for pampering, and strive to create spaces that incorporate products that bring a personal touch to the space. Chris Bishop, marketing brand manager at Graff in Milwaukee,



Duravit has updated its OpenSpace foldable shower with OpenSpace B, a version expanded to include new sizes. OpenSpace B can be combined with any Duravit shower tray or placed directly on the tiled floor. The optional mirrored door conceals the tap fittings and shower attachments.

Circle No. 155 on Product Card



Acquadolce from Fantini is an in-wall, ceiling mounted showerhead featuring rain, waterfall and mist functions on the same panel, or on two different panels if so desired. The shower system features user-friendly touch-screen technology on a frosted glass panel to activate the different functions.

Circle No. 156 on Product Card



The design of the Elan Vital Shower collection from Watermark Designs is reminiscent of industrial steam pipes from the 18th century, according to the company. Modern touches include a 1.5 gpm aerator (finished with intricate knurled metal) and a small exposed thermostatic valve for a clean finish.

Circle No. 157 on Product Card



KWC's ELY blends together cylindrical and elliptical forms to create a distinctive design and direct its jet of water where needed. The ELY offers two spray settings: fitjet for a full-surface spray and powerjet for a powerful water massage.

Circle No. 158 on Product Card

WI, sees a trend toward creating spa-like comfort with added personalization. "For designers, this allows them to explore the space and physical elements that will enable the greatest user experiences," he says.

GRAND SCALE

Regardless of the size of the bathroom, showers are claiming more square footage. Consumers want what they want, and these days that means room to accommodate larger showerheads or more than one option.

Ryan Ramaker, director of product development for Alpharetta, GA-based Hansgrohe, sees more square footage being devoted to baths. "People spend at least 15 minutes of their day in the shower. They want larger spaces for a more comfortable experience," he says.

"Bigger is better," agrees Judd Lord, senior director of industrial design for Brizo Kitchen & Bath Co. in Indianapolis, IN. "Homeowners are increasingly renovating their baths with double showers to include oversized raincan showerheads with separate handshowers to allow for both a customized and luxurious showering experience."

"Shower enclosures continue to become larger and more spacious," adds Larry Allen, CEO/managing director for Gessi North America in Anaheim, CA. In master baths, he says, a 72"x36" size is becoming more common.

Regional influences have some impact on shower size. In the Northeast, says Sears, there's still an abundance of 59"x32" shower pans, mimicking



Low spout architecture and octagonal details define the Rook Bath Collection from **Brizo**. The shower options in the line include a ceiling-mount showerhead as well as multi-function H2OKinetic Hydrati 2/1 shower, H2OKinetic wall-mount showerhead and H2OKinetic handshower.
Circle No. 159 on Product Card



Cal-Green compliant StyleTherm, **California Faucets'** advanced thermostatic technology, features a two-outlet diverter allowing it to stay within 2.0 gpm water efficiency, and operate up to two applications independently. The Cal-Green version still allows exact temperature dial-in and full volume control.
Circle No. 160 on Product Card



VOLA's collection of in-shower spa products, distributed by **Hastings Tile & Bath**, were created in collaboration with Aarhus Arkitekterne. Designed to be used 'cold' for a cleansing, invigorating shower, they can be combined with standard shower mixers to be used as both hot and cold.
Circle No. 161 on Product Card



The Perrin & Rowe Deco Therm Shower Package, available from **Rohl**, is part of the new Deco Bath Collection that takes its inspiration from the Art Deco movement in London during the late 1920s. This shower package is complemented with either lever handles or cross handles.
Circle No. 162 on Product Card



Guardian Glass North America ShowerGuard glass features patented ion-beam technology that permanently seals the glass surface with an invisible, protective coating. The result is shower glass that maintains its appearance long term, the firm notes. ShowerGuard includes a lifetime warranty.
Circle No. 163 on Product Card



TOTO's Aero Rain Shower features AeroJet+ technology, which increases each droplet's volume for a drenching experience while saving water. The aerated water falls in short, pulsating intervals, providing the feeling of more water than is being used, according to the company.
Circle No. 164 on Product Card



New from **Delta Faucet**, the Zura bath collection marries rounded, rectangular and triangular elements to create a contemporary look in the bath. The pendant raincan showerhead features H2OKinetic Technology, creating a feeling of more water without using more water, the company notes.
Circle No. 165 on Product Card



Antonio Citterio has again collaborated with **Hansgrohe**, this time on the Axor Citterio E collection of bath faucets and shower components. Easy volume and temperature control is an important feature of the entire collection.
Circle No. 166 on Product Card

the footprint of a typical bathtub. But in the Midwest and other parts of the country, this footprint grows to as large as 59"x59" he notes.

But not everyone sees everything getting bigger. Bishop believes smaller living trends are becoming more common. "If this continues, the challenge will be to deliver an experience that feels large in tighter quarters," he says.

OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE

With a desire for a spacious feel, a move toward tile that is meant to be seen and the need for more accessibility, the demand for glass enclosures, especially the frameless variety, is on an upswing, manufacturers say.

"In addition to offering clean lines, no-step showers benefit the growing senior population by making use easier and safer for people with physical challenges," says Sarah Wansack, interiors segment product manager for Guardian Glass North America in Auburn Hills, MI. That, combined with the desire to maximize natural light, has impacted the rise in popularity of large, frameless glass shower enclosures, she says.

Sears adds, "Bathrooms have been very compartmentalized and people are looking for open spaces." One way to open up this space is to replace the enclosure with a single glass panel that deflects the water, he says.

"A luxury heavy glass enclosure opens up the space, keeps water contained and helps show off the elaborate tile or marble within," says Weyman. And since no two spaces are the same, the need for custom-fit

glass units remain vital, he adds. Even in smaller spaces, heavy glass adjustable units are growing significantly, and he notes, "These products offer the frameless clean lines and heavy glass, with some standard sizing that serves more of the value-priced market."

Clear glass dominates, but there is also demand for frosted styles like Basco's Silk glass, says Weyman. Low-iron glass, which reduces the green edging found in larger panels of glass, is also on the rise, he notes.

Frameless enclosures are trending in both small and oversized models, according to Richard Caplan, director of marketing at Aston in Dallas, TX. These frameless models require thicker glass, he states, and that means they also need strong, tested hardware material, like stainless steel. Caplan also sees the demand for frosted glass trending upwards.

Frameless enclosures also aid in accessibility. "Enclosure choices may include barrier-free entries and/or showers without a door," notes Mike Reffner, senior manager, bath category, for the wholesale business unit at Moen in North Olmsted, OH. "These showers provide ease of entry for consumers of any age or ability."

Lea Mendoza, senior product designer for TOTO USA in Morrow, GA, says there has also been an increase in "aging-in-place" amenities. In addition to the low-threshold entry, these include grab bars and shower benches. "As designers work with these clients, they should work to make showering both a peaceful escape and an easy and convenient experience."



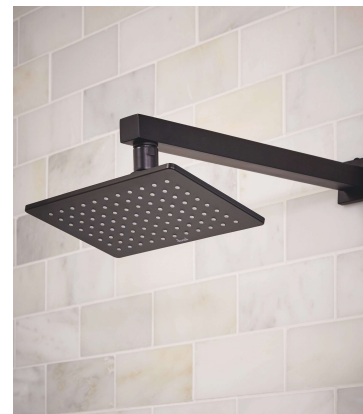
The Rainshower SmartControl from **Grohe** features a combined push-and-turn button that starts the flow of water and controls water volume, and textured edges for easier control with wet fingers. TurboStat technology is a metal thermostat handle that delivers preferred water temperature. Circle No. 167 on Product Card



The Fascino shower system from **Gessi North America** includes a wall-mounted showerhead in mirror steel with a 21 5/8" projection. A wall-mounted showerhead and a companion hand shower set are offered in chrome, gold CCP, satin nickel, polished nickel PVD, copper PVD and black metal PVD. Circle No. 168 on Product Card



The Gridscape GS4 Series Mondrian Edition from **Coastal Shower Doors** is characterized with geometric aesthetics and customizable features. A segmented hinge appears continuous, creating a multidimensional element when the door is opened. Circle No. 169 on Product Card



This Satin Black showerhead - **Danze's** Mono Chic 5"x8" - is available with its Midtown shower trim. The rain shower-inspired showerhead features a thin profile and Air Injection technology, operating at 2.0 gpm. It also has 88 easy-to-clean jets to prevent mineral build up, the firm reports. Circle No. 170 on Product Card



ThermaSol showcases the Serenity Light Sound Rain Head, controlled by the ThermaTouch in-shower 7" LCD touchscreen controller. ThermaTouch allows personalization, from steam duration, temperature setting and individual memorized presets, to Tranquility, a visual and sound-effect experience. Circle No. 171 on Product Card



Inspired by the petals of a dahlia, **Kohler's** Exhale spray face, fashioned from silicone, delivers a showering experience designed to calm the mind and invigorate the body. Available in two sizes and flow rates, each showerhead and handshower offers up to four sprays. Circle No. 172 on Product Card



Sonoma Forge has added the WaterBridge Exposed Shower System in a new application - mounted on a glass wall. The industrial chic look is enhanced by new accessories that conceal the mounting hardware, providing a clean appearance when installed directly to glass shower enclosures. Circle No. 173 on Product Card



Aston's Langham frameless sliding shower collection now offers oversized 72"x75" door models. Configured without a base, it can fit alcoves 68"-72" in width. The line is available with stainless steel or chrome finish, 10mm (3/8") thick premium clear or frosted ANSI-certified tempered glass. Circle No. 174 on Product Card

PERSONALIZED FUNCTION

One of the factors behind the larger shower sizes is the number of items people want to put into these spaces. A single showerhead is no longer enough. From seating to multiple body sprays and other accessories, requirements for the space have become more complex.

"With the larger shower spaces, consumers are adding more devices like handshowers, bodysprays and multiple showerheads," notes Reffner. "These may be laid out on one, two or three walls, and may even utilize the ceiling to mount showerheads." An upgrade with major impact is a shower system that features both handshower and fixed showerhead, he states.

Even if there's no space for a larger shower, investing in new shower products can enhance the showering experience, Ramaker says. For instance, the addition of a handshower can create the illusion of more space, as it offers freedom of movement and allows the user to direct the water spray exactly where it is needed. Seats in the shower are also a rising request, he adds, for shaving legs as well as meeting ADA applications.

Of course, sometimes the desire for seating has more to do with pampering than practicality. "Shower seating has become more popular as well, with tubs becoming less prevalent," says Allen. "The seating provides the relaxation experience of a tub, making it more comfortable to relax and linger for a personal wellness experience."

TECHNICAL IMPACT

With the frantic pace of technological advances in the modern world, it's no surprise that there are many developments to consider with shower systems. From elements that impact the actual functioning to those that enhance the overall experience, technology impacts the rising trends.

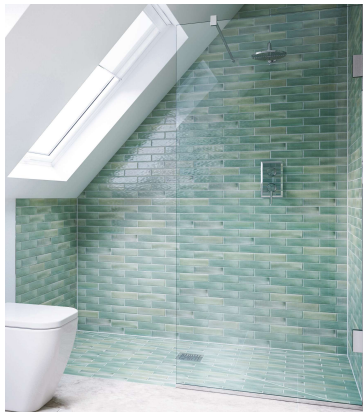
"We live in a world of possibility," says Bishop. "How digital becomes woven into the experience is the next leap. Imagine being able to talk to your shower and never have to touch a handle to set a temperature, set the water pattern and flow rate and possibly see your water usage if rules begin to limit the amount one can use. The possibilities are endless."

Even if some of those possibilities haven't come to pass yet, many changes are happening in the here and now, including integration of different therapies, water delivery options and steam.

"With the spa-like experience desired at home, Basco continues to see tech enter the market and continues to explore integration of unique functionality demands of today's homeowner like steaming, lighting and integration monitor/TV displays," says Weyman.

Mendoza agrees: "Although some clients are going without tubs, they still crave a spa-like experience." This means an increase in steam showers, body sprays and lighting options, from task lighting to chromatherapy.

Allen says that popular elements include larger showerheads with higher water delivery efficiency and misting functions in both showerheads



The Adjustable Fusion Shower Pan System from **Trending Accessibility** is installed directly on the joists and allows a true curbless shower with no buildup in the floor or at the door jamb. The whole room is then waterproofed, turning it into a European Wet Room. Circle No. 175 on Product Card



Strom Plumbing By Sign of the Crab has a full line of exposed shower units available. This thermostatic unit is equipped with an oversized rain head, a handshower unit as well as a spout for a foot wash. The water is set at a 104-degree temperature setting, with the allowance of a manual override. Circle No. 176 on Product Card



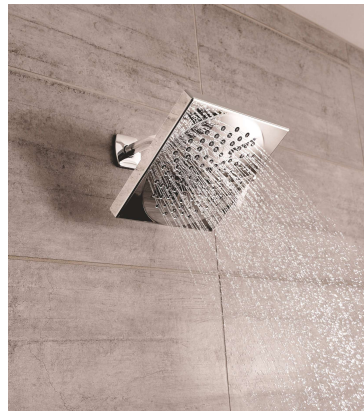
Basco Manufacturing has introduced the Celesta CELA-935 and Rolaire ROLA-935 custom heavy glass shower enclosures. The Celesta CELA-935 adjustable-width enclosure in the RODA series is a luxury door and panel design that requires minimal out-of-square or out-of-plumb alignment. Circle No. 177 on Product Card



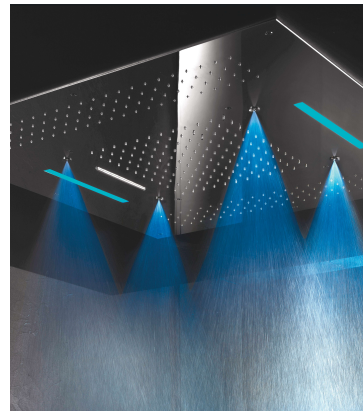
The new Hydro-Switch Thermostatic Valve System from **Isenberg Faucets** features push-button technology, with sleek graphics that denote shower or hand shower. The new line features on/off water flow buttons combined with thermostatic valves to create a straightforward but luxurious shower experience. Circle No. 178 on Product Card



Contemporary, linear shower control sets from **Artos** feature escutcheons that can be lined up horizontally or vertically for a personalized look. The shower control sets are offered in minimalistic round or square handle for a modern look. Circle No. 179 on Product Card



Moen's Square Velocity Rainshower Showerhead is a square-shaped version of its popular Velocity rainshower showerhead. For the first time, this advanced design is available in a modern style to work in contemporary bath designs. Velocity offers two distinct spray functions. Circle No. 180 on Product Card



Combining Italian design with Swiss engineering, **MGS** introduces its ceiling-mount showers with multiple spray options. The solid stainless steel SO613 offers a sleek, architectural design with customized mist, rain shower, waterfall and chromatherapy options, providing a therapeutic sensory experience. Circle No. 181 on Product Card



Lightness and strength are the principles that inspired Angeletti Ruzza Design when creating the Sento Exposed Shower System from **Graff**. It features a minimal design defined by clean and simple yet sensual lines. The series offers a wide range of options. Circle No. 182 on Product Card

and body showers. When it comes to controls and features, consumers and designers are looking for greater flexibility in design, he adds.

“Steam showers, which are increasingly gaining in popularity, feature many new technologies and design features that didn’t exist three to five years ago,” says Caplan. These steam showers, like Aston’s Ovato series, feature Bluetooth streaming technology, efficient steam creating modules, aromatherapy, chromatherapy and increased water-efficient jets, he adds.

Ease of use is critical, according to Sears. “I see push-button mechanical technology coming into play, where you select the shower functions with buttons with icons. I see the same technology on showerheads,” he adds.

Customizing the bathing experience is another popular trend, and temperature presets are in demand, Reffner notes.

INTEGRATED STYLE

Shower design trends follow overall bath trends, with clean lines and simple style, as the design must also be connected to the rest of the space. “When designing the bath, homeowners desire a fully integrated space with a bathroom collection that creates one seamless design concept connecting the shower fixtures to the tile on the floor to the lavatory fixtures,” says Lord.

While manufacturers see chrome, brushed nickel and oil-rubbed bronze as top finish choices for fixtures and hardware, there are some new shades creeping in as well. Allen sees darker colors like matte black in demand.

Lord cites a recent trend toward jewel tones and gold finishes for fixtures. “Jeweled-inspired details and finishes in buffed gold with subtle iridescences give the sense of long-lasting opulence,” he says.

Mendoza agrees that, while white porcelain products and chrome fixtures continue to be the most specified color and finish, a growing trend in gold, copper and matte black finishes has emerged.

SUSTAINABLE SHOWERING

Concern for the environment and regulations that demand less water usage also impact what is happening with showers. “Reduced flow rates and operational restrictions on multiple shower devices have forced manufacturers to look much more closely at form, fit and function,” says Gessi.

Bishop adds, “Water is precious. Our industry is in constant reinvention and adaptation of the many different regulations from one area to the next. Our goal is to both meet the regulations and to deliver the experience the consumer demands. Exploration of aeration, atomizing and other options to deliver the right outcome are always being developed, but the biggest water saver will be time of use, and that’s a slippery slope.”

Conservation remains a hot topic, and Lord states, “We continually see interest in water-saving products that do not impact the overall user experience.”

Mendoza says it’s up to manufacturers to create products that meet new standards without sacrificing functionality or the user experience. ■