



Baths Extraordinaire

Bathrooms take center stage as homeowners seek relaxing retreats

By JENNIFER KINGSTON
Special to Real Estate Weekend

How things change! Only about a century ago, homes first began to have a dedicated room for bathing and grooming. Today, however, the bathroom plays a starring role on the home stage.

As lifestyles become ever-faster-paced, people increasingly want their homes to provide peaceful sanctuaries from the outside world, and the bath has become a prime place for creating such a retreat. Architects and builders are devoting more square footage to these spaces in order to accommodate all the features on homeowners' wish lists, such as separate, often frameless showers; whirlpool tubs; TV screens; and furnishings like chaise lounges, armoires and accent tables.

Even the view from the bathroom has become more important, and windows might be larger than in the past. If privacy is an issue, a homeowner can use landscaping to shield a window so that it is still possible to look out, as well as to let in natural light, but others cannot see in.

Often, the tub becomes the centerpiece of a master bath. Tubs are available in a variety of shapes — circular, square and octagonal, as well as the traditional rectangle — and might accommodate two people instead of one. If you decide on a tub for two, however, remember that it will take much more water to fill.

There is more to tub style than the shape, of course. A tub enclosed in wood can provide the look of fine furniture. A whirlpool tub allows you to turn the bathing experience into either a relaxing — or an invigorating — massage. You can choose one with water jets, or one with air jets that shoot streams of bubbles and creates a tingling that makes you feel as if you are sitting in a tub filled with champagne.

A frameless glass shower adds visual drama to your bathroom and makes the space

look larger. By adding water jets — located so they hit different places on your body — you can have a massage experience even when you don't have time for a luxurious bath.

The addition of steam will enhance the spa-like feel. You can also select a shower head that will give you the feeling of standing in a gentle summer rain.

One popular trend now is vessel sinks that sit on top of counters. These can be beautiful, but they might be more difficult to keep clean than a traditional sink, especially if they are made of clear or colored glass.

Fixtures installed in the backsplash, rather than on the basin itself, impart an elegant ambience.

Don't be afraid to combine a variety of materials, such as wood, chrome, porcelain and glass. Some designers are using stainless steel in baths to create a modern, contemporary look.

As for colors: Neutral and earth tones are seen most often, but using accessories to add splashes of brighter hues can create stylish flair.

Lighting is important. You will need some bright lights for applying makeup and other tasks, but you might also want indirect illumination, especially around the tub, to set a relaxing or romantic mood.

In a bathroom with a high ceiling, a chandelier can add elegance and drama (these elaborate fixtures aren't just for the dining room anymore).

Don't forget to plan adequate storage. A vanity with shallow drawers will help to keep cosmetics and other necessities organized, while a closet or open shelves offer space for fluffy towels.

Your bathroom should be a place where you can withdraw from the stress of the outside world.

Make sure it is an environment where you can easily relax and rejuvenate.

The opinions expressed in Real Estate Weekend are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Palm Beach Post.



Today's master baths often serve as private sanctuaries, so views have become more important. If privacy is a concern, landscaping can shield a window from outsiders while allowing natural light to enter. This home, on Fisher Island in Miami, was designed by Affiniti Architects and built by Coastal Homes.



A chandelier lends elegance to the master bath in this home designed by Affiniti Architects and built by John McDonald at the Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter.



A whirlpool tub large enough for two is the centerpiece of this master bath, in a home designed by Affiniti Architects and constructed by Terence Cudmore Builders at The Sanctuary in Boca Raton.



Recessed lighting, combined with a chandelier, allows the creation of different moods with illumination in the master bath of this home, designed by Affiniti Architects and built by Taylor Woodrow at Mediterra in Naples.

NEW HOMES

MARTIN, ST. LUCIE, INDIAN RIVER COUNTIES

This is only a partial listing of new area homes. For a complete list, see the "Real Estate Weekend Locator Directory" on pages 12 and 13.

The Estates at Tradition

PORT ST. LUCIE

The Estates at Tradition, a 90-acre gated community in the town of Tradition, features 188 single-family homes by Toll Brothers. Four three- to five-bedroom floor plans range from 2,740 to 3,880 square feet of air-conditioned living space and include a covered outdoor lanai and a two- or three-car garage.

Price: From the high \$400,000s to the high \$500,000s.

Special features: Views of a lake or preserve, foyers, volume ceilings, kitchens with General Electric Profile appliances, master suites with walk-in closets and a bath with whirlpool tub and separate showers, laundry rooms with washer and dryer, and coffered ceilings.

Community amenities: Gated entrance, landscaped entry boulevard, on-site retail stores and offices, and a performance pavilion.

To visit: Take Interstate 95 to Exit 118 (Tradition Parkway/Gatlin Boulevard). Go west to Community Boulevard. Turn left on Westcliffe Drive, then left on Tremont Avenue. Follow the signs to the sales center.

The sales center, open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, is at 11895 Aventino Drive, Port St. Lucie.
Telephone: (772) 345-2220
Web site: www.tollbrothers.com

Vizcaya Falls

PORT ST. LUCIE

Vizcaya Falls features three-, four- and five-bedroom single-family homes in a gated community by Centerline Homes.

Price: From \$239,900.
Special features: Two- or three-car garages; brick-

paver driveway and walkway; Whirlpool appliance package; and 16-inch tile in select areas.

Community amenities: Lighted tennis courts, clubhouse, pool, fitness center, walking trail, children's water park, sandy beach, lakeside gazebo and picnic pavilion.

To visit: Take Interstate 95 to the St. Lucie West exit. Go east to Northwest Cashmere Boulevard and turn left. Proceed 1 1/2 miles (past the kindergarten through eighth-grade school) to the traffic circle and bear right. Go to Northwest East Torino Parkway and turn right. Proceed 1 1/2 miles to the entrance on the right.

Telephone: (772) 336-6115
Web site: www.centerlinehomes.com

Seasons at Orchid

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

M-R Homes offers four floor plans, with up to 3,084 square feet of air-conditioned living space, at Seasons at Orchid, a West Indies-inspired gated community.

Price: From the \$700,000s.
Community amenities: Clubhouse with heated pool and spa, fitness center, tennis and croquet court, catering kitchen, media center.

To visit: Take Interstate 95 to Exit 147 (State Road 60). Go east to State Road A1A and turn north. Proceed about seven miles to Wabasso Road and turn left at the entrance on the left.

The sales center, at 2125 Wabasso Road, is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily.
Telephone: (772) 388-3120
Web site: www.seasonsatorchid.com

The Oaks

HOBE SOUND

M/I Homes offering three-, four- and five-bedroom homes at The Oaks at Hobe Sound, with available lakefront sites.

Floor plans in this gated

community range from 1,777 to 3,288 square feet of air-conditioned living space. Residences include tile floors, a home-security system, granite kitchen countertops, a brick-paver driveway, 42-inch wood cabinets and General Electric appliances.

Prices: From the \$300,000s to the \$600,000s, including home site.

Community amenities: Pool, cabana, playground, lake and preserves.

To visit the off-site sales center: Take Interstate 95 to Bridge Road/Hobe Sound. Go east to U.S. 1 (Federal Highway) and turn left. Proceed four miles to Seabranche Boulevard. Turn left at the first street (Southeast Crooked Oak Avenue) and follow the signs to the sales center.

The sales center is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.
Telephone: (772) 219-9202
Web site: www.mihomes.com/oaks

Falcon Trace

VERO BEACH

Falcon Trace, by G.L. Homes, offers Mediterranean-style single-family homes on lakefront, cul-de-sac, corner or oversize sites.

The Princess and Windsor collections feature two to five bedrooms, two to 3 1/2 baths, and a two- or three-car garage.

Price: From the \$300,000s to the high \$400,000s.

Community amenities: Clubhouse with a kitchen, fitness center, pool with sun deck, wading pool, playground and pavilion.

To visit: The sales center is at 2655 Heron Bay Lane S.W. Take Interstate 95 to Indrio Road. Go east to Emerson Road (State Road 607) and turn left. Proceed about three miles to the sales center on the right.

The sales center is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.
Telephone: (772) 770-5995
Web site: www.glhomes.com

Verano

PORT ST. LUCIE

Verano, by Kolter Communities, features a variety of amenities and home designs in a Tuscan-inspired setting. Seventeen floor plans include one- and two-story, two- to four-bedroom single-family homes, as well as two- to four-bedroom attached homes.

These homes range from more than 2,000 to almost 3,300 total square feet.

Price: Single-family homes from the \$400,000s; manor homes from the \$300,000s.

Special features: Impact-resistant windows and doors, S-tile roofs, volume ceilings, architectural accents, 16-inch tile and carpeted flooring. Kitchens feature European-style wood or Thermofoil cabinetry, granite countertops and General Electric appliances. Two-car garages also are included.



The Estates at Tradition, by Toll Brothers, offers 188 single-family homes in a gated Port St. Lucie community.

Community amenities: Guardhouse; recreational amenities include a clubhouse, three nine-hole golf courses, wellness center and spa with fitness facilities, indoor and outdoor pools, gymnasium for basketball and volleyball, tennis center, softball field, computer center and library.

To visit: Take Interstate 95 to St. Lucie West Boulevard

Exit 121. Go west toward the entrance to PGA Village. Take the second right and turn in to the sales center at 9700 Reserve Blvd.

The sales center is open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.
Telephone: (772) 429-3533 or (877) 777-8372.
Web site: www.veranoflorida.com



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1-95 TO ST. LUCIE WEST BLVD., EAST TO CALIFORNIA, NORTH TO TORINO, EAST (RIGHT) 2 MILES TO GRAND ENTRY

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