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# Wwb.

WASHROOMS AND BEYOND

A dynamic splash of clear water against a teal background. The water forms a large, circular ring in the center of the page. Numerous smaller droplets and bubbles are scattered throughout the splash, creating a sense of movement and freshness.

2<sup>nd</sup>  
Anniversary





# Fun Washrooms

Do away with plain Jane and the nose-in-the-air look. Mood lifters are making a splash in the trendy washroom !

**W**ashrooms tend to evoke different emotions in people. They also convey a variety of things. Today, the empowering sentiment of 'me time' and 'individual spaces' leads to the idea of luxury and comfort.

As designers and even washroom majors repeatedly underline, customers usually have some definite idea about what they expect their bathroom to be. While their expectations might be more conservative or perhaps even indifferent in the case of public washrooms – where the main concern is good design, cleanliness and efficient maintenance – the latter recently have added another element to make things more interesting. We explore this...

## The fun element

Although it is still to catch the public's fancy in India, washrooms with an interesting twist are steadily making their presence felt. Since individual clients usually prefer a more sedate approach, often due to not wanting to break the status quo of design, public washrooms in some upmarket properties are coming out with bold and interesting designs.

Jimmy Mistry, Chief Architect & Managing Director of Della Technica Group, feels that the element of fun and light-heartedness is singularly missing in the discourse of public design in India. While this could be attributed to a general idea of conservativeness, the reactions of the public to a quirky and out-of-the-routine design conveys an entirely different message.

At Della Adventure Park at Lonavala near Mumbai, the immediate response of guests who happen to use the public washrooms is to be seen to be believed.

The washrooms there are far from prosaic and are in fact, naughty, without being over-the-top, loud or crude. Mistry says, "Hospitality is essentially about an experience that leaves one with pleasant and amusing memories.





Photo Courtesy: Della Teanica Group

To create a happy and fun atmosphere, the washrooms at this property and Café 24, a restaurant and coffee shop, hits between the eyebrows as a pleasant shock.

The men's washroom has a generous use of glass, and the space gives the impression of a catwalk – a ramp with mannequins to complete the effect. With actual smoke and music, the effect is quite electric as guests, used to prosaic and cold interiors, can only smile at the rather conscious walk to the four toilet bowls at one end of the washroom.

Similarly, the women's washroom has a very feline appeal. Across the door, on the opposite wall, ladies are surprised to see a man with his back towards them. This is in fact a mannequin, but the initial surprise gives way to many a bemused smile to see that the faucets have a raunchy, suggestive setting.

Even the locker numbers are done away with at the complex, and in place of numbers there are very distinct quotes and comments on genders and related issues. In the men's showers, the walls have messages especially scrawled and painted, which speak about things that *always brings a smile to their faces.*

#### **Building the mood**

At another restaurant, PNF, the washroom ambience is that of a night club with lit up urinals, film panels and vertical panels creating a heady atmosphere. The three washbasins in the women's washroom here take the cake! The faucets emanate from a mannequin's torso where a lady would least expect it to! While the ambience provokes regular titters, there is often a bee-line to the washroom for more girl-talk at the restaurant, and guests usually return to their tables with broad smiles whenever they use the washroom.

Public life in India can be quite serious at times, and such a design element can uplift moods. "The

idea," says Jimmy, "is to make the design of the washroom interesting without making it insensitive or crude. Good design is about making the user feel good about the experience – the washrooms at these venues do just that."

Hotels have so far depended on glitzy interiors to make a statement of their class, and few have dared to be more offbeat. The Trident and Sahara Star at Mumbai have tried to be different with use of glass in the urinals and interesting back-to-back washbasins, but they are at best 'interesting' and can't really be deemed to be 'fun washrooms'.

Meanwhile, in residences and individual apartments, the spirit to go unconventional has certain limitations. Designers therefore utilise high-end accessories and fancy gadgetry to add that fun element in those areas.

#### **Home design and accessories**

A bathroom is where we refresh and pamper ourselves. It is a place where everyone in the household spends some part of the day and therefore must be decorated with as much care as any other part of the home. Ever since the bathroom went in for an image makeover from just a room of function to a relaxing sanctuary, new-age designers are encouraging their clients to dream about what this special room should look like.

A little forethought in planning can mean not just a user-friendly but a slick and trendy space as well.

The modern bathroom has become a sanctuary that blends in spa-like amenities that redefine luxury. Latest bathing experiences include everything from chromatherapy to air baths, from deep soaking tubs to custom-designed showers.

And, there is good news for bathroom singers as well. They can now install waterproof music systems complete with electronic controls in their shower cubicle for the experience of a lifetime!