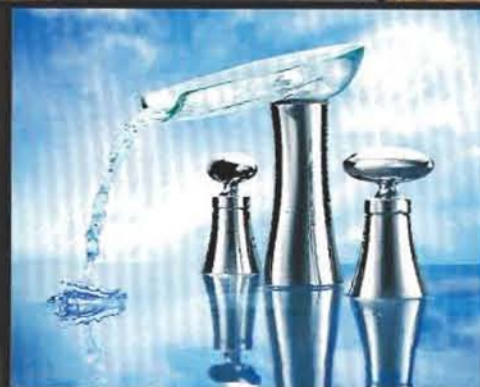


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## Product Trend Report

1 | Creative Specialties International offers the Parkview Collection of bath accessories, which features a combination of chrome and white for a clean, sleek design. Accessories include a robe hook, pivoting paper holder, towel ring (shown), towel bars, double towel bar and decorative glass shelf.

Circle No. 155 on Product Card



2 | Zehnder America, Inc., with Villeroy & Boch, is introducing a line of towel radiators that provide radiant heat plus warm, dry towels via an infrared programmable controller with eight heat levels. The electric towel radiators are available in colors to match the Villeroy & Boch line of bath fixtures, as well as a range of other colors.

Circle No. 156 on Product Card



3 | The Beaded Bath accessory collection from Liberty Hardware Manufacturing Corp. features a traditional style with a petite beaded detail. The collection is offered in Venetian Bronze and Brushed Satin Pewter.

Circle No. 157 on Product Card



4 | Mr. Steam offers a collection of towel warmers in wall, floor and pivoting models for the bath. Available in electric or hot water versions, the towel warmers are made of 100 percent brass and finished in polished chrome, satin nickel or oil-rubbed bronze.

Circle No. 158 on Product Card



5 | The Luxury Grab Bar from Jaclo Industries can be deck mounted on a tub for safety and stability. Shown in Antique Copper, the grab bars are offered in 14 finishes.

Circle No. 159 on Product Card

# A PERSONAL TWIST

The trend of customization extends into the bath, right down to the hardware, while aging Boomers create a leap in demand for the decorative grab bar and other luxury amenities.

By Denise D. Vermeulen

Today's bathrooms are all about the details. And whether that bath is designed as a retreat from the stresses of the world or a well-planned and highly organized place to prepare for the day, it's the little things that make the bath environment so appealing. That means every style choice counts—right down to the hardware and accessories.

Indeed, hardware is one of the most customizable areas of

the bath, since there is a virtually limitless array of choices, in every imaginable shape, size, color, finish and design.

According to manufacturers recently surveyed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*, bath hardware has become an increasingly important element in the bath, one that consumers and designers are both paying more attention to. Although it may seem like a little thing, hardware can create a big design presence, making a traditional space more contemporary, or giving a modern look a bit of timeless appeal.

## Product Trend Report



**6** | Among the hardware offerings from North River Mint is this knob from a selection of 31 designs in the Japanese category. The company's hardware is handmade in the U.S. and is offered in antique pewter or ancient bronze.

**Circle No. 160 on Product Card**



**8** | RK International offers an extensive line of cabinet hardware, bath accessories, grab bars, hooks and other hardware items.

Shown are a range of decorative grab bars in multiple designs and finishes.

**Circle No. 162 on Product Card**



**7** | The Plymouth Collection of bathroom faucets and accessories from Danze provides a range of options for a custom look, including such finish combinations as Brushed Nickel with Polished Brass Accents and Chrome with Polished Brass Accents. Accessories include towel bars, double towel bar, paper holder, robe hook and towel ring (shown).

**Circle No. 161 on Product Card**

Additionally, accessories that promote luxury and safety are increasingly becoming "must-haves" in the bath, from the super hot decorative grab bar to floor and towel warmers.

### ANYTHING GOES

When it comes to hardware, it's all about the finishes. But, while the general consensus says satin nickel and oil-rubbed bronze are the most popular finishes for bath hardware, Melissa Nathan, co-owner and designer for MNG Hardware in Southampton, PA, says, "Anything goes. People are using all kinds of finishes in the bath."

Noah Taft agrees. As v.p./marketing & sales for California Faucets in Huntington Beach,

CA, he notes, "Americans like flexibility and are not afraid to express themselves through color or customizing." Taft believes that consumers want everything to match, and there are so many finishes available that they can, in fact, match almost anything they can conceive of.

Nathan believes that designers are becoming more creative with hardware, and points out, "The biggest change we are seeing is the willingness to use different types of hardware in the bathroom." She adds that even two years ago, most bath showrooms were not displaying and selling a variety of hardware – yet today it's everywhere.

And for those who can't commit to one style, different hardware styles can be chosen for each bath in the home. "For instance, the master bath might be contemporary with sleek hardware, the kids' bath might be colorful and fun with theme hardware, the guest bath might be more traditional," says Nathan. She adds, "Consumers are making a personal statement when they redo any part of their home at any level. Whether changing the knobs or redesigning the entire

bathroom, there are choices. They have options they simply didn't have a couple of years ago."

While creativity is key, most people still want a look that is all "pulled together," according to Judd Lord, director of industrial design for Delta Faucet Co. in Indianapolis, IN. Lord adds, "Consumers can be dramatic by incorporating different styles and design elements throughout their homes, yet many seem to desire a coordinated look for each room. This can be done by combining different trends but by keeping a common element – such as the same finish option."

"Today's consumers want to be surrounded by good design in products that are luxurious to the senses and express their individuality and creativity," says Marta Nova, marketing specialist-communications for Liberty Hardware in Winston-Salem, NC. "The new millennial style is not one direction; instead it is a mix of decorating styles and design cues taken from the past to be combined with a personal twist."

**12** | Griffform Simplistic Shower Pans are made from DuPont Corian and are designed to retrofit standard fiberglass sizes. More than 22 color choices are offered, including Aqua, Bisque, Black Quartz, Linen, Peach and Sandstone.

**Circle No. 166 on Product Card**



**13** | The Contemporary series of bath accessories from Creations by Alno from Alno Inc. features clean lines for a contemporary look. A range of products and finishes is available.

**Circle No. 167 on Product Card**



**14** | Northern California's wine country was the inspiration for the Vineyard collection from Century Hardware. The hardware features grapes, vines and other symbols of the locale as part of its design.

**Circle No. 168 on Product Card**



**9** | Engineered Glass Products offers the Thermique heated glass towel warmer, which incorporates Thermique heated-glass technology to warm the glass.

**Circle No. 163 on Product Card**



**10** | Rohl LLC's luxury soap dispensers are available in six styles – three deck-mounted, two freestanding and one wall-mounted.

**Circle No. 164 on Product Card**



**11** | The RSVP Bath Suite from Brizo is a complete bath collection that includes faucets, shower systems and accessories. Designed to follow the curves of a woman's silhouette, RSVP's

selections are offered in Polished Chrome, Brilliance Brushed Bronze and Brilliance Brushed Nickel, and include Strass Swarovski crystals.

**Circle No. 165 on Product Card**

**15** | Towel warmers from the Artos collection from Westover Co. are available in a range of traditional and modern styles. The freestanding or wall-mounted towel warmers are offered in a variety of finishes.

**Circle No. 169 on Product Card**



**16** | The Savoy line of hardware from Hickory Hardware, inspired by the Roaring '20s, includes cabinet knobs and pulls. Three finish options – chrome, oil-rubbed bronze highlighted and black nickel vibe – enhance 1" and 1-1/4" knobs and pulls in 3", 96mm and 128mm.

**Circle No. 170 on Product Card**



**17** | Decorative grab bars from California Faucets complement the company's faucet designs, and are available in a choice of flanges to create a range of styles – from classic to contemporary to art deco. The grab bars range in sizes from 12" to 36", and are offered in over 35 finishes.

**Circle No. 171 on Product Card**



18 | Lulu is a collection of faucets, fittings and accessories from Dornbracht that features a slender linear shape and modern proportions. Accessories in the line include a wall-mount shelf (shown), towel bar and storage products, available in green, magenta and orange as well as a mix of materials such as wood, porcelain and glass.

Circle No. 172 on Product Card



20 | This hand-hammered copper mirror from Native Trails is part of the company's Sedona Mirror Collection. The collection offers mirrors in three options – The Arch and The Rectangle at 26"x22", and The Large Rectangle (shown) at 30"x35". The mirrors are also available in antique or brushed nickel finishes.

Circle No. 174 on Product Card



21 | WarmlyYours has added the ClearlyYou mirror defogger to its Bathroom Spa Package. The electric defogging system transmits warmth across a mirror's surface to prevent moisture from forming during a bath or shower. Wafer-thin, the defogger is installed behind any wall-hung mirror.

Circle No. 175 on Product Card



22 | Runtal North America, Inc. offers towel radiators in either self-contained electric models or hydronic models that integrate into a closed loop hot water heating system. Model types and sizes allow for variations in heat outputs that enable a towel radiator to be a supplemental heater or sole source of heat for a room.

Circle No. 176 on Product Card

19 | The Longhorn hook from Doug Mockett & Co. can be used as two hooks when the prongs are up, or as a single with the horns down. The hook protrudes 1-1/2", and can be finished in polished chrome or satin chrome, with a polished chrome base.

Circle No. 173 on Product Card



## SIMPLE AND SUBDUED

When it comes to hardware styles, traditional tastes still tend to dominate the market, although there has been a rise in contemporary styles, particularly those influenced by European design, according to manufacturers. There is also an increase in demand for the transitional look.

Tim Bitterman, senior product/brand manager for Inspirations by Moen & Donner, Creative Specialties International, a division of Moen Inc. in North Olmsted, OH, says, "Transitional and traditional styles are driving the bath hardware market. Consumers are gravitating toward

transitional styles of bath hardware because they allow for more design flexibility within the bath. The overall popularity of traditional décor continues to spur its popularity within bath hardware."

But in spite of the continued demand for a traditional look and the increased interest in the transitional style, many consumers are broadening their tastes. Bitterman attributes this growth to a number of factors. He says, "...consumers have become much more eclectic in their decorating preferences over the last five to seven years. [Accordingly], the influence of minimalist European styling is seen more and more, while designs influenced by Asian culture, organic items and other forms of inspiration have resulted in unique designs that consumers use to make a statement in their baths."

"We definitively see a greater demand for more contemporary, progressive designs," explains Oliver Bleich, brand communication & marketing manager for Dornbracht Americas, located in Duluth, GA. As architecture becomes more modern, the fittings must follow suit, he believes, noting,

"The influence of European designs is becoming more prevalent here in America, particularly with retailers such as IKEA, DWR and Target, which are bringing a stronger awareness of contemporary designs to the masses."

Most manufacturers agree that the softer finishes are hot and a trend toward a simpler, cleaner look is on the rise. According to Ed Detgen, v.p./marketing for Danze, Inc., in Bolingbrook, IL, "Brushed and other softer finishes continue to be extremely popular versus high-gloss finishes." Detgen adds, "Our emerging 'hot' finish is brushed nickel. People like the more subdued, subtle look of a brushed finish."

"Consumers prefer hardware that is relatively unadorned and is casual or traditional in design," adds Nova. "Preferences are for simple, restrained styles. They also seek hardware that is durable yet not too bulky, and functional." Nova also explains that consumer preferences include easy-to-clean hardware, and

23 | The Eva Collection from Moen comes with a complete line of bath accessories, including a robe hook, paper holder, towel ring, 18" and 24" towel bars and tank lever, in chrome, LifeShine brushed nickel and oil rubbed bronze.

Circle No. 177 on Product Card



24 | Bemis Manufacturing offers its Alesio seat, made of Coralink, with a slow-closing metal Easy•Close hinge. With the slow-closing hinge, tapping the seat lightly forward will quietly return the seat and cover to the closed position.

Circle No. 178 on Product Card



25 | The R. Christensen Designer Series from Berenson Corp. has new offerings in the Jefferson and Adagio collections. A shower basket in a triangular corner shape is featured in oil-rubbed bronze from the Adagio assortment, while the Jefferson collection includes a 24" towel bar, a double robe hook and single-arm tissue holder in the same finish.

Circle No. 179 on Product Card



26 | Brondell Inc.'s Swash 800 model toilet seat can be installed on most existing toilets, and provides a larger seating area as well as warm water washes.

Circle No. 180 on Product Card



28 | The Home Spa Towel Warming Drawer from Jacuzzi Whirlpool Bath holds up to four towels simultaneously for warming. The drawer, offered in 36" and 24" sizes, warms towels to 120 degrees in 15 minutes.

Circle No. 182 on Product Card

## Product Trend Report



**29** | Atlas Homewares offers the Zanzibar Collection, which showcases a combination of metal and leather on a range of hardware and bath accessories. Included in the line are cabinet pulls, towel rings, hooks and towel bars, offered in a combination of brushed nickel or chrome with brown or black leather.

**Circle No. 183 on Product Card**



**31** | Among the bath accessory collections available from Kohler Co. is Pinstripe, a series that depicts the Art Deco style of the 1930s. Designed to coordinate with Pinstripe faucets, the line includes 18", 24" and 30" towel bars, towel ring (shown), robe hook, toilet tissue holder and 24" double towel bar.

**Circle No. 185 on Product Card**



**32** | Dominic Accessories from the Franz Viegner collection from Barclay Products Ltd. feature a rectilinear motif. Accessories include a shelf, towel bars, a tumbler with holder, soap dishes, a robe hook and a toilet paper holder. Chrome or matte chrome finishes are available.

**Circle No. 186 on Product Card**



**33** | The Shower Seat from Bristol and Bath features a contemporary design, and is constructed of acrylic and chrome. It can support up to 300 pounds and is available with a backrest. The height of the seat can be adjusted to suit the user.

**Circle No. 187 on Product Card**



**30** | Cool Lines USA introduces stainless steel soap and shampoo tub/shower baskets and organizers. The baskets and organizers are available in six sizes and configurations.

**Circle No. 184 on Product Card**

her research shows that consumers match the hardware to the faucet finish 60% of the time.

As v.p./marketing for Hickory Hardware in Nashville, TN, John Pelka has found a growing demand for darker finishes. He says, "Oil-rubbed bronze with an underlying bronze or copper patina is showing a lot more strength than we've seen in the past. In fact, contemporary products that we've sold in cool satin nickel finishes are giving way to warmer finishes like copper and bronze. However, chrome finishes are still popular choices for the bath as they offer a simple, clean feeling and coordinate well with bathroom accessories."

Pelka also points to another trend, noting that people are looking for "a tactile experience" when choosing hardware. As an example, Pelka suggests "pulls that have strong textures or that use mixed-medium materials, such as leather and brass, to create style and add function."

### THE RIGHT ACCESSORIES

The demand for a coordinated, upscale look in the bathroom spills over to accessories, from the

function-oriented to the super luxurious. Whether adding warmth, saving space or adding a touch of style, today's accessories help to finish off the bath.

Without a doubt, today's biggest trend in accessories is the demand for high-style decorative grab bars. Once viewed as primarily a device for the elderly and the infirm, grab bars have become not just the newest bath staple, but also a testament to elegance and style.

Credit for this probably goes to the Baby Boomers. "We are seeing a correlation between increased demand for style in bath safety products like decorative grab bars and the aging of style-conscious Baby Boomers. All research points to this trend continuing over the next 10 to 20 years," says Bitterman.

Dana Egert, v.p. for Jaclco Industries, located in Mountainside, NJ, agrees. "The most important trend is the grab bar. As Baby Boomers age, they are becoming more safety conscious and are first adding grab bars to designs for vacation and second home locations and then adding that same comfort level to their existing homes. In general, this population is used to upscale designs and chooses luxury decorative grab bars."

Egert adds, "Many designers are turning the [grab bars] horizontally so they can double as a towel rack and match the décor, even mounting them on tub decks for safety and to hold towels." In fact, grab bars have been so popular, Jaclco has coined the term "Boomer Bars."

Jerry Bougher, product manager for accessories for Kohler Co., in Kohler, WI, says that the grab bars of the past just "screamed 'I need help.'" The idea of Universal Design is becoming increasingly important for that boomer generation, explains Bougher. As long as there is a desire for more decorative accessories such as the grab bar, the industry will acknowledge that and move in that direction.

Likewise, the toilet tank lever has gotten a new, stylish overhaul, according to Bitterman, who sees the newest lever designs "adding a decorative touch to an often overlooked area of the bathroom." The toilet tank levers made by Bitterman's company feature hinged arms that allow the levers to work on a variety of mountings on the flush tanks. Consequently, consumers can match their finishes and décor in almost any design situation.

Since maintaining an uncluttered look in the bathroom is also a priority, other popular accessories focus on maintaining organization, extending the room's clean lines and allowing for easy maintenance, manufacturers agree. In fact, according to Nova, research done by Liberty Hardware points out that no matter what part of the country a consumer lives in, he or she is looking for simple, uncluttered and clean interiors that require little maintenance.

Detgen agrees: "As part of the never-ending effort to reduce clutter, we are also seeing increased interest in providing in-deck

## Bathroom Hardware and Accessories Trends at a Glance

■ Today's upscale consumer continues to see the bathroom as a luxurious sanctuary, and that means the details matter – right down to the hardware and accessories.

■ More and more designers and their clients are adding their own stamp of originality on every design decision. This is evident in the dazzling array of options offered by manufacturers in everything from hardware to accessories.

■ Soft, brushed finishes are very popular, with brushed nickel and oil-rubbed bronze leading the pack. Manufacturers also point to a rising trend in requests for darker, warmer finishes such as copper and bronze. Chrome also continues to play a large part in bathroom hardware.

■ Designers are increasingly opting for a clean, simple and uncluttered

look. This is often a reflection of European or Asian influences.

■ The traditional look continues to dominate in U.S. bathrooms, although the transitional style is gaining popularity. These style choices influence hardware and accessory choices.

■ Grab Bars couldn't be hotter! But only the stylish ones with a finish and look coordinated to the bathroom's décor will do for upscale consumers.

■ The attraction of safety accessories such as the (decorative) grab bar is a direct reflection of our aging – yet still style-conscious – population.

■ Curved shower bars and towel rings are enjoying an increase in demand.

■ There is a small but growing interest in towel warmers, provided the client's budget and space allow for them.

## Product Trend Report



**34** | Among Classic Hardware's introductions for 2007 are Antique Reproductions from Japan. The clean lines of geometric shapes are softened by Asian influences in these hardware pieces.  
**Circle No. 188 on Product Card**



**39** | This freestanding towel holder from Valsan measures 33"x32-1/2"x13-1/2". It is made of solid brass and is offered in three finishes: chrome, polished nickel and satin nickel.  
**Circle No. 193 on Product Card**



**35** | MNG Designer Hardware's Woven Strands handles in an oil-rubbed bronze finish are featured on the lower mahogany cabinets in this leather bath.  
**Circle No. 189 on Product Card**

**36** | Premier Hardware Designs offers the PHDK-34 shell knob, which is hand cast in solid pewter and is available in seven finishes. Matching wall tiles are also available.  
**Circle No. 190 on Product Card**



**37**

**37** | Cole & Co. is offering vanity stools to complement its Bathroom in a Box vanities. The Dreamer Stool is upholstered in fabric with the words laugh, love, remember, believe, dream and imagine mounted on an early Victorian style X-stool, while the Francesca Stool features an upholstered animal print atop a stool influenced by Spain's late 18th Century period.  
**Circle No. 191 on Product Card**



**36**

the words laugh, love, remember, believe, dream and imagine mounted on an early Victorian style X-stool, while the Francesca Stool features an upholstered animal print atop a stool influenced by Spain's late 18th Century period.  
**Circle No. 191 on Product Card**



**38** | The Lockwood Bath Collection from Delta Faucet Co. includes bath accessories that complement a range of faucet, tub and shower products. Towel bar options include 18" and 24" towel bars, 24" towel bar with robe hooks and a mini 8" towel bar. Also featured are tissue holder, towel ring, robe hook, glass toothbrush tumbler, soap dispenser, 24" tempered glass shelf and tank lever. Finish options include chrome, Brilliance stainless and aged pewter (shown).  
**Circle No. 192 on Product Card**

coordinated soap and lotion dispensers at lavatories in place of countertop-style dispensers. The day of bar soap has long since past, and the convenience and ease of use of an installed pump that complements the other accessories in the bath is pretty evident to those who think of it."

Nova points out the demand for coordinating finishes and designs in bathroom accessories. Nova says that several categories of products are key to consumers: table-top accessories, bath safety bars, magazine racks, double towel bars, glass shelves, toilet flush levers and mirrors.

Adds Bougher, "toilet paper holders are key specifiers – you have to have one." He sees the trend going toward freestanding holders.

Manufacturers interviewed also note a growing interest in wall-mounted make-up mirrors, as well as a slowly growing interest in towel warmers.

Bougher says, "More and more people want towel warmers as an option." He concedes, however, that finding the space for them can be challenging. The other challenge is the price: Most upscale models run between \$3,000 and \$5,000, so these are more likely to turn up in upscale master baths.

Towel hooks and double towel rods are also popular. In fact, the hooks that were originally meant for the bathroom are finding their way into other rooms, including the kitchen and laundry room, as a space-saving device that has the bonus of being available in a variety of options and design styles.

Bitterman concludes, "I see the trend of individualism continuing over the next five to 10 years as consumers continue to make bolder choices in their designs. Overall, I think we will see a flattening of the style bell curve." **KBDN**

## Dealers Favor Decorative Grab Bars and Clean-Lined Hardware Choices

Hardware is getting softer and more streamlined according to designers recently interviewed by *Kitchen & Bath Design News*. For instance, Marge Ling, CKD, CBD, designer and sales consultant with Custom Kitchen Bath Center in Fremont, CA, has noticed a "cleaning up of some things." She refers to requests for less fussy designs and a move toward a softer, more contemporary look. And, that demand has crossed over to include hardware and accessories, she notes.

Ling explains that it's possible today to find matching hardware – or at least complementary hardware – for almost any design, thanks to the many options now offered by manufacturers.

The most popular finishes she's seen for hardware are brushed nickel and burnished bronze, which Ling believes add character to a bath.

Carrie Adams, CKD, assistant store manager for Kurtis Kitchen & Bath Centers in Livonia, MI, adds that she is receiving a lot of requests for hardware finishes in oil-rubbed bronze, darker pewter tones and distressed brass. No one is ordering stainless these days, and everyone seems interested in the darker, warmer tones, says Adams.

In West Hartford, CT, an area of traditional tastes, Kate DiBattista, designer for Holland Kitchens & Baths, says she's seeing more interest in an aged, darker look. Oil-rubbed bronze and brushed nickel are especially popular, as is copper. And, the cleaner, softer look is definitely in demand, she believes.

Dealers are also getting requests for all sorts of luxury accessories in the bathroom, including more electronics, such as radios, televisions and telephones. According to DiBattista, there is demand for built-in niches in the shower for toiletries, and for hotel-look towel racks and shelves.

Ling sees the demand for mounted baskets on the upswing. These baskets, designed to hold a variety of bath products, are available in different finishes and are often coordinated with the look of the faucet. Designers also get occasional requests for wall-mounted, magnified and sometimes lighted make-up mirrors, those interviewed note.

Designers also get requests for heated towel racks but, while this luxury item sounds like a great idea, some designers believe these can be a tougher sell due to the expense and the fact that they take up a lot of space, making them better suited for a more spacious master bath.

The one thing designers do agree on, however, is the popularity of decorative grab bars. Ling says her customers are conscious of aging and want to be safe. And the wide array of design options make these far more acceptable than in years past.

In fact, she notes that she has even installed more than one grab bar in a bathroom. For instance, she notes, one can be installed vertically at the entrance to a shower, just over the threshold, with another mounted horizontally or diagonally on the long wall of the shower.